

USDA SPECIALTY CROP COMPETITIVE GRANT

ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS IN NEVADA

Guidelines, Instructions and Application

Federal Fiscal Year 2014

Administered by

The Nevada Department of Agriculture

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Nevada Department
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- IV. Authorization Page**
- V. Biographical Sketches-** Provide a Curriculum Vitae resume or other description of each project manager’s qualifications. See Instructions for details.
- VI. Letters of Support -** Attach letters providing evidence of support for the project. Letters must be signed by the organizations authorized official

Separate Attachments (Can be found on-line on web-page)

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THE USDA SPECIALTY CROP COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM

Background

On December 21, 2004, the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) authorized the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide state assistance for specialty crops. In 2006 USDA provided funding to State Departments of Agriculture in order to enhance the competition of specialty crops.

In an effort to achieve specialty crop initiatives throughout the state, the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award funds for projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Nevada. ***Funding for the 2014 SCBGP is contingent upon passage of a Farm Bill and the available funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service.*** The NDA Plant Industry Division will be administering funds for the development of Specialty Crop projects that will support and enhance the competitiveness of Specialty Crops in Nevada. Each application will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria listed in this application. Projects will be scored according to their project/budget feasibility. Therefore, careful consideration should be made when preparing the proposed budget. Projects of \$5,000-\$25,000 will be accepted and reviewed for selection. The Program Manager may increase or decrease the requested amounts based on the project merit and program needs. All NDA-approved projects will then be developed into a single grant submission to the USDA. Upon approval from USDA, NDA will notify applicants (sub-grantees) of their status. Awards will not be made to any sub-grantee until a final grant award is made to NDA by the USDA and approved by the Nevada State Interim Finance Committee.

PART I: QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Intent/Scope of Program: Projects Accepted for Funding

Definition of Specialty Crops:

Eligible Specialty Crops

Fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops (including floriculture) are eligible specialty crops. A full list of eligible crops can be found at: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp

Ineligible Commodities

Alfalfa	Aquaculture	Livestock products
Amylomaize	Clover	Millet
Barley	Cotton, Cottonseed oil	Mustard seed oil
Borage	Dairy products, eggs	Oats
Buckwheat	Dent corn, field corn, flint corn, flower corn, pod corn	Peanut, peanut oil
Canola, canola oil	Flax, flaxseed	Primrose
Quinoa	Rapeseed oil	Range grasses
Rice	Rye	Safflower meal, safflower oil
Shellfish (marine or freshwater)	Sorghum	Soybean oil
Soybeans, soybean oil	Striped Maize	Sugar beets
Sugarcane	Sunflower oil	Tobacco
Triticale	Wild Rice	Wheat

Eligible Grant Projects

Examples of "enhancing the competitiveness" of specialty crops includes, but is not limited to: research, promotion, marketing, nutrition, trade enhancement, food safety, food security, plant health programs, education, "buy local" programs, increased consumption, increased innovation, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, development of sustainable farming systems, school garden programs, farm-to-school programs, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, and developing cooperatives.

- Applications will be accepted from non-profits, tribal organizations, minority groups, disadvantaged farmers, agricultural associations, industry groups, community based organizations, individual producers and academia that seek to improve the competitiveness of specialty crops in Nevada.
- Applicants must be in good standing with all grant funds and required reports associated with NDA in order to be eligible to apply.
- Any individual/organization that has been disbarred or had funding revoked with any state/federal entity will not be considered.
- Applicant projects **Must** benefit more than one individual or organization.

Examples of Acceptable Projects

- A State requests funding to contract with a university to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which can be shared with many growers throughout the State.
- A single grower requests funds to demonstrate the viability of organic small fruit production and partners with Cooperative Extension to publicize the working model of diversification to other regional growers.
- A single company requests funds to provide a viable pollination alternative to specialty crop stakeholders in the region, which currently does not have one.
- A single specialty crop organization requests funds to conduct an advertising campaign that will benefit their specialty crop members.
- A single farmer erects high tunnels on their property to extend the growing season of tomatoes and lettuce and conducts a field day and farm tour to encourage other small family farmers to adopt the production methods.

Non-Eligible Applicants and Use of Funds

Applications will **NOT** be accepted for any of the following:

- Any request for reimbursement of expenses for activities completed prior to submission and approval of the application.
- Grant funds shall supplement the expenditure of Funds, not replace Funds.
- Grant funds may NOT support political activities including lobbying activities (See the provisions of: the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7321-7326) and 31 U.S.C. 1352 regarding lobbying activities).
- Requests to pay for essential government services normally paid for with general taxpayer funds, such as research equipment or faculty salaries.
- Requests to fund permanent infrastructure development or improvement and other capital expenditures such as equipment, buildings, and land. (See Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill Guide at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp)

- Requests that seek to replace operational funding for ongoing projects that have suffered losses of state or federal funding, or to supplant other local, state or federal funding.
- Any request for reimbursement of travel expenses where the cost is over the State travel requirements.
- Any project that benefits a single operator or industry and does NOT advance the overall competitiveness of the Nevada's Specialty Crops in Domestic and Foreign Markets.
- Indirect Expenses are ineligible.

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business.
- A State requests grant funds to make grants to individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual business.
- A sole proprietor requests grant funds to redesign her/his logo in order to make her/his specialty crop value-added product stand out at the local farmers market.
- A company that develops specialty crop value-added products requests funds to train its employees how to make its value-added products.
- A specialty crop producer requests funds to promote their asparagus at a roadside stand.

Program Priorities

Priorities for use of USDA Specialty Crop Competitive Grant Program funds will include, but are not limited to the activities listed below. Additional points will be awarded for new projects and projects that address one of the following:

- Increase nutritional knowledge and specialty crop consumption
- Improve efficiency within the distribution system and reduce costs
- Promote the development of good agricultural, handling and manufacturing practices while encouraging audit fund cost-sharing for small farmers, packers and processors
- Support research through standard and green initiatives
- Enhance food safety
- Develop new/improved seed varieties and specialty crops
- Control pests and diseases
- Create organic and sustainable production practices
- Establish local and regional fresh food systems
- Expand food access in underserved/food desert communities
- Increase awareness and education in specialty crop production for youth

Letter of Intent

Prior to submitting applications, all potential applicants must submit a Letter of Intent. Letters of Intent are due by Tuesday April 15th, 2014 by 5:00 p.m. PST.

Submit Letters of Intent via mail, hand deliver or email to the address listed below. Letters of Intent are designed to identify appropriate projects before allowing a full application. This process allows appropriate utilization of both the applicant's and the State Program Coordinator's time.

Letters of Intent should be single spaced typed and include a brief description of your project, detailed budget outline and how you reached this estimate (include quotes, invoices, etc), and a brief discussion on how your project will enhance the competitiveness of Nevada Specialty Crops in domestic or foreign markets in Nevada. The Letter of Intent should not exceed two pages of content. Projects that benefit a particular organization or provide profit to a single organization, institution, or individual will not be accepted. Projects that involve a single organization but benefit the overall promotion of Specialty Crops in Nevada are appropriate. Letters of intent that are approved may then submit a complete application. Applications received without having prior approval will **NOT** be considered. Please submit the letter of intent to the address in the below application section or e-mail it to kjameson@agri.nv.gov. Please put in subject line 2014 LOI and the entity name that is submitting.

Application Requirements

The application must be typed. Incomplete applications will not be considered so please ensure that you thoroughly read this document and address all questions completely prior to submission. Complete this by completing the required format in a Microsoft Word document. Applications are due by May 13th 2014 5:00 p.m. PST.

- Applications will be accepted via mail, electronic mail, express delivery or hand delivery to the NDA office at 405 South 21st Street, Sparks NV 89341. ***Both an electronic copy and hard copy of your application must be received.*** "When submitting a hard copy, include one signed, unbound original (applications should not be permanently bound or in a notebook) Send applications to both the address and e-mail below:

Attn: Specialty Crop Staff
Nevada Department of Agriculture
405 South 21st Street
Sparks, NV 89431-5557
kjameson@agri.nv.gov
(775) 353-3639

Inquiries regarding the application process should be addressed to the contact information provided on page one.

Timeline/Deadlines

January 13, 2014 – Request For Proposal/ Letter of Intent Document is released by NDA

April 8th 2014- Pre-Proposal/Letter of Intent is due to NDA

April 15th 2014- Notifications sent to potential/denied applicants

May 13th 2014- Full Applications are due to NDA

July 2014- NDA will submit full application to USDA

October 2014- Announcement of Award funds are made. Notification and sub-award agreements/contracts are sent by NDA

November 2014- Sub-awardees must sign agreements/contracts and submit to NDA

December 2014- Release of Grant funds. Projects may commence once contract is signed by both parties and approval is received from the State Interim Finance Committee

Letters of Intent MUST be received by 5:00 PM PST April 8th 2014

Applications MUST be received by 5:00 PM PST May 13th, 2014

Term of Grant

All projects must be completed within three years. All project leaders will be required to submit annual progress reports and a final report. The final report is to be submitted no more than thirty days after the completion of the project. The expenditure of grant funds must occur within the authorized sub-grant period. Failure to fulfill reporting requirements may be cause for withholding funding, withdrawal of funding, or possible rejection of future proposals.

Sub-grant recipients agree to participate in at least one NDA sponsored event (i.e. educational conferences and seminars) designed to disseminate knowledge gained.

Award Requirements

Acknowledgement of Support

An acknowledgement of the USDA Specialty Crop Competitive Grant Program **MUST** appear in any publication or at any significant event based on this project. Terms should include “This project is supported in part by the USDA Specialty Crop Grant Program, through a sub-grant from the Nevada Department of Agriculture.”

Payment of Grant Funds

Upon final approval, all sub-grant recipients must sign a Notice of Subgrant Award Agreement stating that funds shall be used as described in the application. A signed and initialed grant guidelines document must also be submitted in order to demonstrate acknowledgement and understanding of sub-grant requirements. The Department has recently adopted a grants policy and regulations document which all sub-grant recipients will be required to review and sign. Funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis and upon submission of a payment request form and adequate supporting documentation. Reimbursement requests ***Must Be*** turned in on a quarterly basis. Supporting documentation includes receipts, invoices, and copied checks of approved purchases. If receipts do not clearly specify what items were purchased and utilized for grant activities you must specify. Itemized expense reports are strongly encouraged. Payments will be made within 30-45 days after receipt of properly completed reimbursement requests.

DUNS and FFATA Requirements New for 2012 Awards:

FFATA

Under the most recent Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB) grant agreement, State departments of agriculture are required to report sub-awards over \$25,000 and executive compensation. This is in accordance with Award Term and Condition 17.

DUNS

All recipients of SCBGP funds must have a DUNS number. Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) Provides a DUNS Number, a unique nine digit identification number, for each physical location of your business. DUNS Number assignment is FREE for all businesses required to register with the US Federal Government for contracts or grants. **DUNS numbers may be obtained by visiting:** <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp> or calling 1-866-705-5711

Audit and Reports

Financial records, statistical records, supporting documents, and other records pertinent to this award shall be retained for a period of three years from submission of the Final Project Report. Records that relate to audits, appeals, litigation, or settlement of claims arising out of the performance of the project shall be retained until such audits, appeals, litigation, or claims have been disposed of, but not earlier than three years from submission of the Final Project Report. The Program Manager, Plant Industry staff of NDA, or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access to any pertinent documents, books, papers, and records of the recipient organization to make audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcripts.

Site Visits

Program staff or their authorized representatives have the right, at all reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems, and to provide such technical assistance as may be required.

Safeguarding Funds

In no case will USDA Specialty Crop Competitive Grant funds be commingled with the personal funds of, or be used for personal purposes by, any officer, employee, or agent of the recipient; nor will any of these funds be deposited in personal bank accounts for disbursement by personal check.

Changes in Project Leader or Partners

If any leader leaves the recipient organization or otherwise relinquishes control of the project, NDA must be notified immediately. Transfer of the award to other organizations must be reviewed and approved in advance by the SCBG Program Coordinator. Failure to notify the SCBG Program Coordinator will lead to the revoking of remaining funds and the sub-award recipient will no longer be eligible for future awards.

Withholding Payments

NDA reserves the right, upon written notice, to withhold future payments if the recipient fails to comply with the conditions of the award, including reporting requirements.

Program Match

A 20% match of funds is required. This can be in personnel, labor, equipment, supplies, travel, and other expenses presented on behalf of the sub grantee. Please be sure to include in-kind match separate from requested funds.

<h2>Application Evaluation Criteria</h2>

Applications will be reviewed by an evaluation committee which will include NDA Staff, Agriculture Agency Staff, and neutral members of the farming community. Applications will be scored according to their feasibility, number of people benefited by projects, and overall influence towards the objectives of the program (*See scoring sheet attachment for additional information and bonus point information*). Applications will be evaluated according to the application checklist please use the application criteria section to complete your application.

PART II: Specialty Crop Block Grant Application

There are six sections to be completed (please use the Order and Attachments section to be sure to Complete *all* information requested). Proposals that are incomplete and do not satisfy all the requirements are at risk of being disqualified. Include a cover page, budget page, and signature/authorization page. Examples of these can be found below:

I. Application Cover Page

Project Title (No more than 50 characters)		
Name of Organization	Address of Organization	
Employer Identification Number		
PROPOSAL INFORMATION		
Requested Start Date:	Anticipated End Date:	
Requested Amount:	Total Project Cost:	
	PROJECT LEADER	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Full Name		
Title		
Organization		
Telephone Number		
Tax ID#		
Duns#		
E-Mail Address		
Mailing Address		

Signature

Date

II. Application Content

Please complete your proposal in a Microsoft Word Document. The application should be broken into the following sections addressing each listed item. The application should be single spaced and a minimum of 5 pages not to exceed 10 pages of narrative. Please see application examples on-line for formatting at:

http://www.agri.state.nv.us/PLANT_SCBGP.htm

Abstract and Project Title

- Is a project title included?
- Is an abstract of 200 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public included?

Partner Organization

- Is the name of the organization that will partner with the State Department of Agriculture to lead and execute the project included?

Project Purpose

- Does the project enhance the competitiveness of eligible U.S. or U.S. territory grown specialty crops?
- Does this section describe the specific issue, problem, or need to be addressed?
- Does this section discuss why the project is important and timely?
- Are the objectives of the project clearly stated?
- If the project has the potential to enhance the competitiveness of non-specialty crops, does this section indicate the methods or processes the applicant will use to ensure all grant funds will solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops?
- If this project was previously funded by the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB, how does this project differ from the previously funded project?
- Does this section include a statement indicating whether the project has been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program?
- If the project has been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program, does this section identify which Federal and/or State grant programs and describe how the project differs from and supplements efforts of the SCBGP-FB and the other Federal or State grant program and does not duplicate funding efforts? This section MUST disclose all grant funds being applied for or intentions to apply for.

Potential Impact

- Are the specialty crop beneficiaries of this project adequately discussed?
- Have the number of specialty crop project beneficiaries been appropriately addressed?
- Does this section address how the specialty crop beneficiaries will be impacted by the project?
- If available, is a potential economic impact provided under this section?
- Does the project benefit more than one commercial product or individual, or organization?

Expected Measurable Outcomes

(See Attachment: Developing Expected Measurable Outcomes)

- Has at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome that defines an event or condition that is external to the project and that is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries been provided?
- Do the outcomes include a goal, performance measure, baseline, and a target, if applicable?
- Does this section describe how performance toward meeting the outcomes will be monitored?
- Are expected measurable outcomes long term and outside the grant period? If so, indicate how monitoring will occur after the grant period ends without SCBGP-FB funding.

Work Plan (please format as a table, see below for an example)

- Does the work plan adequately describe the activities necessary to accomplish the project objectives?
- Does the work plan indicate who will do the work of each activity, including subgrantees, and/or contractors?
- Does the work plan include the performance monitoring/data collection plan activity described in the expected measureable outcome section?
- Does the work plan include timelines for each activity (at least month and year) and beginning and end dates for the project?
- Does the timeline show that the project will be completed in 3 years and/or within the grant period?

<i>Project Activity</i>	<i>Who's Responsible</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Will hold production workshop		July 2012
Example: Will circulate surveys for Baseline Data on Specialty crop sales, and compile data		Oct. 2012

Budget Narrative

- Does the narrative include; applicable budget information for personnel, fringe benefits, contractual, travel, equipment, and program income?
- Does the budget narrative demonstrate that grant funds are being expended on eligible grant activities that meet the purpose of the program?
- Are costs allowable, reasonable, and allocable?
- Are matching funds shown separately in the budget narrative?
- If personnel costs are budgeted:
 - Does the narrative include each project participant's title,
 - % FTE and corresponding salary;
 - and total personnel costs?

- If fringe benefits are budgeted, does the narrative include:
 - the rate of fringe benefits for each project participant's salary described under personnel and total fringe benefit costs?
- If travel is budgeted:
 - Do travel expenses follow the grant applicant's written travel policies or U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) rates at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100000>
 - Does the narrative include the destination; purpose of trip; number of trips; number of people traveling; number of days traveling;
 - Does the narrative include estimated airfare costs; estimated ground transportation costs; estimated lodging and meals costs; estimated mileage rate and costs for the travel if applicable; and total travel costs?
 - Does the narrative include the total travel costs?

- If supplies are budgeted (defined as purchases under \$5,000), does the budget narrative include an itemized list of supplies and the estimated dollar amount for each item, as well as a total of all supply costs? Include quotes for supplies that led to the estimated budget.

- If contractual is budgeted, does the narrative provide: a short description of the services each contract covers; indicate if the cost is a flat rate fee OR total hourly fee; include the flat rate cost OR hourly rate; list general categories of items the contract covers such as professional services, travel, lodging, indirect costs, etc.; and include total contractual costs?

- If contractual costs are hourly rates, do they exceed the salary of a GS-14 step 10 Federal employee in your area? (For more information please go to www.opm.gov and click on *Salaries and Wages*.)

- If hourly contractual costs exceed the salary of a GS-14 step 10 Federal employee in your area, is a brief description provided that meets an acceptable justification? Please refer to Appendix C: State Plan Format for additional information.

- Under the "Other" cost category, if applicable, are communications such as mailings, express mail, faxes, and telephone long distance charges estimated? Are speaker fees included and a description of the services they are providing? Are estimated costs of publications described, including the number of publications anticipated? Are estimated costs of performance data collection included? Are all "Other" costs totaled?

If meals are budgeted for reasons other than meals associated with travel per diem, is there an adequate justification for why these costs should not be considered entertainment costs. Please refer to Appendix C: State Plan Format for additional information.

If program income will be generated, does the narrative indicate the nature or source of program income, estimate the amount of program income, and describe how the income will be used to further enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops?

Program Income:

If program income will be earned, indicate the nature of the source of the income, the estimated amount, and how the income will be used to further enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Nevada. (For example if registration fees are being collected at a conference or workshop, indicate the estimated amount, and how that amount will be used once collected.) **Note:** Program Income **Must** be reinvested into the Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

Restrictions:

Capital expenditures for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, land), or expenditures to make improvements to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life are ineligible expenses. This includes the cost of putting a capital expenditure in place. Acquisition cost for equipment include the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired.

Project Partner Oversight

- Have you indicated who or what organization will oversee the project activities?
- How will oversight of the project be performed? For example, will weekly or monthly meetings be held to discuss performance toward the completion of the project?

Project Commitment

- Have you indicated what specialty crop stakeholders outside the organization support this project and how?
- Have you indicated how all project stakeholders will work toward meeting goals and outcome measures?

III. Budget Page (Complete both this section and the budget narrative in the above section)

Provide budget estimates for the total cost. Please use the (Spec. Crop Funds) column to demonstrate your requested budget for the grant expenditures **Only**. Using the (Other*) column indicate any in-kind match. Please be sure to separate in-kind using the column provided. Indicate any state, federal, or local government funding that will be invested in the project. Indicate any private funding in the (Private) column.

Proposed Project Budget

	Spec. Crop Funds	State	Federal	Local	Private	Other*	Total
Personnel Services (Salaries, Wages)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Fringe Benefits							
Travel							
Equipment							
Supplies							
Contractual							
Other							
TOTAL COSTS:	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

IV. Authorization

By signing this Application, the Authorizing Agent is guaranteeing that the information contained in this Application is correct and verifiable. The Authorizing Agent is also affirming that the funds requested herein will be used for the specific purpose outlined in this Application and for no other purpose. (Attach a resolution of the governing body of the applicant organization, authorizing this person to submit the application in the name of the organization.)

Name of Requesting _____

Name of Authorizing _____

Title of Authorizing _____

Address of Authorizing _____

Telephone Number: _____

Signature of Authorizing Agent: _____

Date: _____

Disclosure: By signing this section you are certifying that all the enclosed information is not in conflict with any other federal funding, dually funded, or previously funded by any other federal source.

Date and Initial _____

SUBMISSION ORDER AND ATTACHMENTS

- I. **Cover Page** *1 page*
- II. **Application Content** *5-10 pages*
- III. **Budget Page** *1 page*
- IV. **Authorization Page** *1 page*
- V. **Biographical Sketches-** Provide a Curriculum Vitae resume or other description of each project manager's qualifications. See Instructions for details.
- VI. **Letters of Support** -Attach letters providing evidence of support for the project. Letters must be signed by the organizations authorized official.