

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)
Notice of Funds Availability
Inviting Applications for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announces the availability of approximately \$259,115 in block grant funds to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Eligible candidates interested in obtaining grant program funds are invited to submit applications to WSDA.

Purpose

The SCBGP is authorized under section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 and is implemented under 7 CFR part 1290. The SCBGP assist state departments of agriculture in enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crops. This year the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing Service (USDA-AMS) announces the availability of approximately \$8,440,500 in grant funds to the states to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. The State of Washington's portion of that funding is \$259,115. WSDA will submit a single combined grant application to USDA for the state's allotment.

Complete details about this opportunity and examples of previously-approved projects can be found on the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Fruit and Vegetable Program's Web site: www.ams.usda.gov/fv/.

Eligibility

Industry groups, academia, community-based organizations, commissions, public entities, and associations that represent Washington agricultural and food producers are eligible to apply. Applicants must be a legal entity and have the legal capacity to contract. The Washington constitution forbids lending state funds to private individuals and companies, therefore private individuals and companies are not eligible. WSDA encourages organizations to provide a cash or in-kind match for their projects. All projects will follow federal guidelines.

Types of Projects and Eligible Activities

Specialty crop block grant funds can be requested to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Under this grant program horticulture (i.e., turf grass sod) is not eligible.

Examples of enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops include, but are 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, reduced costs of distribution systems, environmental concerns and conservation product development, and developing cooperatives.

Grant Funds Available

The total grant funds available for this program are \$259,115. The maximum grant award to each project is \$50,000.

Project Selection Process

WSDA will administer the Washington State SCBGP projects. This will include the use of cooperative or contractual linkages with other entities through a competitive process to ensure maximum public input and benefit. Applications for funding by WSDA will be reviewed and scored by an internal WSDA review team. Recommendations for award will be submitted to the

Director of Agriculture who will make the final award determinations for inclusion in the Washington State grant application to USDA. A preliminary announcement of grant awards will be made by WSDA at this time. An application to WSDA that builds on a previously funded SCBGP project may also be submitted. In such cases, the application should indicate clearly how the project complements previous work. The Director or the review team may adjust monetary grant request, project proposals scope of work, and/or project budgets.

Criteria for Selection by WSDA

- Project has clear identifiable goals and demonstrates tangible benefits for the industry segment and for Washington's overall food and agriculture economy.
- Project has a minimum of two measurable outcomes by which to evaluate the success of the project. The expected outcomes must be verifiable, measurable and realistic for the scope of the project.
- Project has a high probability of achieving its goals.
- Project has strong industry support.
- Priority will be given to projects that have already received committed resources from the industry, such as matching funds or a previous market/opportunity assessment.
- Project will benefit many companies in the industry sector.
- Project must demonstrate how it enhances, in measurable terms, the competitiveness of the industry.
- Project must demonstrate consistency with the strategic goals of the organization.

Contract Requirements

Upon USDA approval, WSDA will negotiate and execute contracts with each sub-grantee with a one-year performance period. Each contract will specify milestones, outcomes, deliverables and a payment schedule for these deliverables. Each sub-grantee must submit intermediate reports throughout the project work and a final report following project completion. Reports are due before final payment. The sub-grantee must be able to document expenditures of grant funds. Each contract will incorporate federal guidelines. All administrative and overhead costs will be the responsibility of the sub-grantee.

Timeline

November 5, 2008	Announcement
January 7, 2009	Applications due, (COB)
January 8-23, 2009	Internal WSDA review and recommendation
January 30, 2009	WSDA Director's decision
February 3, 2009	Preliminary announcement of grant awards
February 10-13, 2009	State grant application submitted to USDA
March 18, 2009	Final grant award announcement by USDA/WSDA
March 18-31, 2009	Negotiate & execute contracts with sub-grantees

Application Due Date

Project applications must be sent electronically via e-mail in Microsoft Word format. The deadline to submit applications is January 7, 2009, (COB). Send applications to:

Larry Oline, SCBGP Coordinator
Washington State Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560
Phone: (360) 902-2001 E-mail: loline@agr.wa.gov

APPLICATION COVER SHEET
Washington State USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Name of Organization:

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP:

Federal Tax ID #

Contact:

Name:

Title:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Industry Sector and Specific Commodity/Food for Promotion: (e.g. Fruit: Apricots)

Fruits:

Vegetables:

Tree Nuts:

Dried Fruits:

Nursery Crops:

Floriculture:

Project Title:

Brief Project Description (200 words or less):

**Total
Project Cost: \$**

**Grant
Request: \$**

**Cash
Match: \$**

**In-kind
Match: \$**

Certification: I certify to the best of my knowledge that the information in this application is true and correct and that I am legally authorized to sign and submit this application on behalf of this organization, which is legally eligible to enter into a grant contract.

 Printed Name of Authorized Signatory

 Signature

 Title

 Date

Application Instructions

Washington State Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Your application must include the following information in the same order as presented in this document with the same headings. This will not only be helpful to the evaluators of the applications, but should assist you in preparing a thorough response.

1. Application Cover Sheet: Include the lead agency for administering the plan and an abstract of 200 words or less for your project. Use the form on the previous page for this part and fill it out completely.

2. Project Purpose: On a separate sheet of paper, clearly state the specific issues, problems, interest, or need to be addressed. Explain why your project is important and timely.

Example:

- *Sustain and grow the industry through access to business and management information and tools.*
- *Create new opportunities for suppliers to expand their produce offerings to state, national and international buyers resulting in increased sales and market share.*
- *Complete research and technology improvements that will reduce costs and help maintain and improve competitiveness and open new markets.*

3. Potential Impact: Discuss the number of people or operations affected, the intended beneficiaries of your project, and/or potential economic impact if such data are available and relevant to the project.

Example: Proposed program will increase sales by 25% and improve market share by \$7 million dollars over the next year for the XXX industry.

4. Financial Feasibility: For each project, provide budget estimates for the total project cost. When submitting one plan for both fiscal year 2009 and 2010 grant funds, identify which fiscal year funding is utilized for each project. Show uses for the grant funds as well as the sources and uses for your cash and in-kind match.

Use a template similar to the following. Provide additional details or explanations as needed.

COST CATEGORY	WSDA Grant Request	Amount and Source of Cash Match	Amount and Source of In-Kind Match	Total Project Cost
Personnel (Salary and Benefits)				
Contracts and Contractors				
Promotional Materials (printing of brochures, etc.)				

Travel (airfare, hotel, meals, etc.)				
Other (describe):				
TOTAL				

5. Expected Measurable Outcomes: Describe at least two distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcomes that directly and meaningfully support each project's purpose. The outcome measures must define an event or condition that is external to the project and that is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries and/or the public. Examples of outcome measures may include per capital consumption, consumer awareness as a percent of target market reached, market penetration based on sales by geographic region, dollar value of exports, or Web site hits.

Example: The XXX project will have two outcome measures. First, over 50% of the 700 producers will complete the project assessment and develop action plans resulting from assessment. Second, 25% of the producers completing the action plans will implement them within two years.

6. Goals: Describe the overall goal(s) in one or two sentences for each project. Include what you expect to change and the outcome of that change.

7. Workplan: Explain briefly how each goal and measurable outcome will be accomplished for your project. Be clear about who will do the work. Include appropriate timelines. Expected measurable outcomes may be long-term that exceed the grant period. If so, provide a time frame when long-term outcome measure will be achieved. The workplan should follow the template below:

Task/Activity	Who's Responsible	When completed

8. Project Oversight: Describe the oversight practices that provide sufficient knowledge of grant activities to ensure proper and efficient administration.

9. Project Commitment: Describe how all grant partners commit to and work toward the goals and outcome measures of the proposed project.

10. Multi-State projects: If a project is a multi-state project, describe how the states are going to collaborate effectively with related projects. Each state participating in the project should submit the project in their state plan indicating which state is taking the coordinating role and the percentage of the budget covered by each state.

11. Support letters: Enclose letters of support and evidence of match commitments along with the application materials.