



# **Specialty Crop Block Grant**

Assistance Listing Number 10.170

## **2026 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**Applications due by 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on February 11, 2026**

12/17/2025 (RFP release date)

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

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# Grant Summary

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## Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the 2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program. SCBG funds projects that will increase the competitiveness of Minnesota-grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Funding for this program is made available through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). All information about the program is available on the [Specialty Crop Block Grant](#) webpage. Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. CT on Wednesday, February 11, 2026.

The USDA defines specialty crops as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Feed crops, food grains, livestock, dairy products, seafood products and oil seed crops are **not** eligible. See the detailed [USDA list of eligible specialty crops \(PDF\)](#) for more information.

SCBG is authorized under section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. Section 1621 note) and amended under section 10107 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, Public Law 115-343 (the Farm Bill).

## Funding availability

The MDA anticipates awarding approximately \$1.25 million using a competitive review process. Project funding is contingent on USDA AMS making funds available to the MDA. The maximum award is \$125,000 and the minimum award is \$25,000. We expect 12 to 15 grants will be awarded, but the final number depends on the size of awards.

We anticipate that grant contract agreements will be effective from November 2026 through April 2029; they may be extended through September 29, 2029.

If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, the grant has reached its effective date, and the grantee has been notified by the state's authorized representative that they may begin work.

## Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grantmaking. [Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities. Applicants conducting projects that impact or serve Native American Tribal communities are encouraged to apply.

**This grant will prioritize proposals that address the following priorities:**

- Marketing and promotion to increase sales of specialty crops
- Aggregation and distribution to increase access to/sales of specialty crops
- Control and prevention of biological threats (pests/diseases) to specialty crops

In addition, we are prioritizing projects that benefit beginning farmers and first-time specialty crop producers. A beginning farmer is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.

## **How to apply**

Applications are due by **4 p.m. CT on Wednesday, February 11, 2026.**

- If your organization does not have a federal Unique Entity ID (UEI), request one through the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#). Do this early in the application process.
  - This 12-character, alphanumeric value is different from a social security number (SSN) or employer identification number (EIN).
  - Because SCBG are federal subawards, you don't need to complete a full registration for your entity – you only need to request the UEI, which is free.
  - Watch this video, [Get a Unique Entity ID in SAM.gov](#), for step-by-step instructions. Contact us if you need help.
- Apply for the 2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant using our [online application system](#).
  - If you're a new user, you need to create an account first. Use this [how-to guide \(PDF\)](#) to help set up your account.
  - Once logged in, select "2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant."
  - Once the application is submitted you will receive a confirmation email. Email [MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us) if you do not receive this email.
- The MDA will not accept late applications.
  - Apply early so that there is enough time to get help with the online application system. It's best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance.
  - We are not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in a late submission. It is your responsibility to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.

Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP; these materials will not be considered nor evaluated. The MDA reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the requirements of this RFP.

By submitting an application, the applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for a potential grant award. Submitting inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available to the State, by law. All costs incurred in responding to this RFP are the responsibility of the applicant.

## How to submit questions

For questions about the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **4 p.m. CT on Wednesday, February 4, 2026**.
- Email [MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us) with “2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant” in the subject line.

The MDA will post responses to program questions on the Questions and Answers (Q&A) section of the [Specialty Crop Block Grant](#) webpage as we receive them. You can also read answers to past questions on this webpage.

MDA employees are not authorized to give advice on any applications. Applicants who solicit or receive advice from unauthorized MDA employees may be disqualified from eligibility for a grant award.

For help using the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500 or
- Email [MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us) with “2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant” in the subject line.

## Timeline and deadlines

December 2025 .....	Application period begins.
February 4, 2026, 4 p.m. CT .....	Deadline to ask questions.
February 11, 2026, 4 p.m. CT .....	Applications due.
February to March 2026 .....	MDA review.
April 2026 .....	Applicants notified of provisional approval and denial.
Summer 2026 .....	USDA review.
Fall 2026 .....	Applicants notified of decisions; grant contracting begins.
November 1, 2026 .....	Anticipated project start date.
Winter 2027 .....	Grantees publicly announced.
April 30, 2029 .....	Planned project end date.
September 29, 2029 .....	Latest project end date.

If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed (signed by all parties), the grant agreement has reached its effective date, and the grantee has been notified by the state’s authorized representative that they may begin work.

## Application guidelines

- Use plain, easily understood language. Write for reviewers who have general knowledge but may not have a thorough or deep understanding of your project, your organization or industry.
- Answer all questions completely within the character limits specified in the grant application.
- Although some questions are labeled as optional, we strongly recommend responding to those questions or uploading the appropriate documents.
- Ensure your application is your own, a unique proposal designed to respond to the RFP.
- Include just one to three clear objectives rather than trying to accomplish too much. Simple projects with only a few clear objectives tend to work better.
- Make sure your budget is realistic and includes only eligible items and clearly explain how the money will be spent.
- Review the Evaluation Profile included in this RFP, as it is used to score and compare grant applications.

## Eligibility

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### Eligible applicants

Applicants must meet the following minimum requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity.

Applicants must:

- Be a producer organization, nonprofit organization, government agency, university, Tribal nations or other organization involved in Minnesota agriculture and authorized to do business in the state of Minnesota.
- Be in good standing with the State of Minnesota:
  - No back taxes owed.
  - No defaults on Minnesota state-backed financing for the last seven years.
  - Acceptable performance on past MDA grants if previously received.
  - Be appropriately licensed and compliant with current state regulations.
  - Not debarred or suspended from doing business with the State of Minnesota or the federal government.
  - No conviction of felony financial crimes of its principals for the past 10 years.
  - Registered with the [Minnesota Attorney General's office](#) and compliant with annual reporting requirements, if applicable under [MINN.STAT. 309.515](#), [309.52](#), and [309.53](#).
  - Compliant with current state regulations and statutes.

Projects proposed by individual producers, for-profit businesses, or commercial entities are eligible only if they demonstrate a significant benefit to the broader specialty crop industry. Projects proposed by such applicants must provide knowledge that is transferable to other entities and incorporate a clear plan for disseminating the results of their research, production methods, etc., to provide value to the specialty crop industry at large.

Applicants may submit more than one application but may be asked to prioritize those projects.

MDA employees and their spouses, farms, or businesses principally owned or operated by them are not eligible applicants and are not eligible to receive funds from this grant program.

## **Collaboration**

Eligible applicants may, but are not required, to collaborate or partner with producers, industry, academia, or other public or private agricultural organizations. If eligible applicants are submitting a joint application with collaborators, they must determine which organization will have the grant contract agreement with the MDA and will work directly with the MDA to meet grant reporting requirements. Note that this entity will receive a 1099 from the State of Minnesota for income tax purposes.

## **Eligible projects**

A project is a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed time period and within specific limitations (e.g., cost, resources specific to project, performance, etc.). Eligible projects must enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops that are or will be grown in Minnesota by:

- Leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops;
- Assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops;
- Expanding availability and access to specialty crops; or
- Addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers.

Each project is required to demonstrate external support from specialty crop stakeholders, including specialty crop growers, grower-level groups, processors, and distributors. Applications for grant funds should describe how the project impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry or the public, who will benefit from the project, and how the results and outcomes of the project will be evaluated. Projects that address problems or opportunities that cross state boundaries are eligible.

Applicants requesting funds for a previously funded SCBG should indicate how the project complements and further advances the competitiveness of the specialty crop market sector and does not duplicate previous work. Ongoing projects must also list the specialty crop stakeholders, other than those involved in the project, who support the continuation of the project.

Projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product; provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual; or result in unfair competition with private companies that provide equivalent products or services are not allowed and will not be awarded.



## Eligible expenses

The categories of allowable expenses include:

- Personnel (salaries and wages)
- Personnel (fringe)
- Travel
- Equipment (rental or purchase, with exceptions)
- Supplies
- Contractual costs
- Other costs (such as rental costs or costs associated with project evaluation)

Within each of the expense categories, there are exceptions and limitations to what is an allowable or unallowable cost. Regardless of the category, all costs must be reasonable, necessary, justifiable, and directly tied to your project. We encourage applicants to review the [USDA AMS 2025 General Terms and Conditions Updated \(PDF\)](#), Section 8.0, when determining if a specific cost may or may not be eligible.

State, local, or Native American tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, colleges, and universities can find further guidance on cost principles in [2 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 200 Subpart E](#). For-profit organizations can find further guidance in [48 CFR Subpart 31.2](#). You can also contact us with questions about eligible expenses.

If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed (signed by all parties), the grant agreement has reached its effective date, and the grantee has been notified by the state's authorized representative that they may begin work.

## Ineligible project expenses

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Costs considered unallowable in AMS 2025 General Terms and Conditions Updated.
- Costs incurred before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever is later, or those incurred after the grant contract agreement expires.
- Indirect costs, except MDA projects.
- Expenses paid for with cash.
- Business startup or farm expansion costs.
- Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land.
- Construction and renovation of buildings and structures.
- Costs for projects that will disparage the mission, goals, or actions of another organization.
- Donations and in-kind contributions, including property and services, made by the applicant (regardless of the recipient).
- Advertising, public relations, entertainment, alcohol, and amusement costs.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes.

- Fines, penalties, and other settlement expenses resulting from failure of the applicant to follow federal, state, local, or Tribal nation laws and regulations.
- Fundraising.
- Payments to lobbyists and political contributions incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of purpose for which funds will be used and political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act ([5 United States Code 1501-1508](#) and [7324-7326](#)).
- Late payment fees, finance charges, bad debts, or contingency funds.
- Fees for legal services and compensation for accountants, consultants, and grant writers.
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state. Contact us for exceptions.
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal, state, or local government funding or other grants. Projects receiving funding from another grant may not receive funding for the same activities and expenses (i.e., no “double-dipping”). However, SCBG funds may be used to build on the successes of prior funding to fund subsequent activities.

## Program income

SCBG projects occasionally result in the grantee generating income through the grant-supported activity or earned only because of the grant contract agreement during the grant period of performance. This includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (including items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); registration fees for conferences; etc. Program income earned during an active agreement must be re-invested into the project and used to further the objectives, and it does not have to “offset” any awarded or allocated SCBG funds.

## Matching funds

There is no matching funds requirement.

# Application Review

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## Review process

Funding will be awarded through a competitive process. MDA staff and external reviewers will evaluate all eligible applications based on the criteria and weight provided in the Project Evaluation Profile. External reviewers may include growers, private industry members, university faculty or staff, public agency staff, and representatives from nonprofits who have interest and expertise in specialty crops, research, food marketing, or agricultural systems.

Reviewers and staff recommend projects for funding to the Commissioner of Agriculture, who reviews the recommendations and is responsible for finalizing the recommendations that will be forwarded to the USDA for their review and approval. Reviewers, staff, and the Commissioner may consider geographic distribution, services to prioritized populations, and other information, such as rural or urban location when evaluating applications. The MDA reserves the right to offer partial awards based on an assessment of the proposal, the pool of applicants, funding availability, or overall objectives of the grant program.

Applicants will be notified after the MDA review process whether their proposal was selected for submission to USDA.

Once applicants selected to advance to the USDA review phase are notified, we will ask them to compile their project information into USDA's project profile template for inclusion in our state plan. Be prepared for a very short turnaround (a few days) to return the completed template to the MDA.

During Summer 2026, we will conduct pre-award risk assessments of any applicants with project profiles included in our state plan.

After USDA approves our state plan, we will notify successful applicants and begin to draft grant contract agreements. We expect to be able to notify awardees in September 2026 and to draft grant agreement documents in October, with the earliest projected project start date of November 1, 2026.

## **Pre-award risk assessment**

The MDA is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance and financial and operational capacity before awarding grants.

Relevant statute and policies:

- [MINN. STAT. 16B.981, Subd.2-5](#)
- [OGM Policy 08-02: Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#)
- [OGM Policy 08-06: Pre-award Risk Assessment of Potential Grantees \(PDF\)](#)

All applicants' capacity to perform work related to the grant including previous experience performing similar work and performance on MDA grants will be evaluated as part of their response to this RFP. Applicants being considered for an award of any amount may also be required to submit additional documents, such as financial reports, descriptions of internal controls, or information about the performance on previous state grants, prior to being approved by MDA for an award.

## **Applicants being considered for an award of \$50,000 or less**

Applicants being considered for an award of \$50,000 or less must submit the following:

- Certification that you or your entity have not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Documentation that your entity is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State and registered with the Attorney General's office, and current on annual reporting if required for your organization.

## **Applicants being considered for an award of \$50,000 or greater**

Applicants being considered for an award of \$50,000 or greater will be required to submit additional documents to enable the MDA to complete the required pre-award risk assessment.

Nonprofit organizations must submit the following:

- A description of your in capacity to complete the project; this may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agencies in the last five years.
- A copy of your organization's two most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ with the Internal Revenue Service. If the non-profit has not been in existence long enough or is not required to file Forms 990 or Forms 990-EZ, then they must submit the following information:
  - Proof of its tax-exempt status
  - Board-reviewed financial statements for the two most recent business years, or for new organizations, actual financial statements for the periods that are available and pro forma financial projections for at least a two-year period.
  - Documentation of its internal controls
- The two most recent certified financial audits if required to complete one under [MINN.STAT. 309.53, Subd. 3](#) (if the organization has received total revenue in excess of \$750,000 for the 12 months of operations covered by the statement).
- Certification that you or your entity have not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Documentation that it is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Verification of annual reporting status to the Minnesota Attorney General's office for nonprofit organization soliciting donations as applicable under [MINN.STAT. 309.515](#), [309.52](#), and [309.53](#).
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

For-profit businesses must submit the following:

- A description of your in capacity to complete the project; this may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agencies in the last five years.
- A copy of the business' two most recent years of federal and state tax returns. If the business has not been in business long enough to have a tax return, then they must submit alternative documents, including documentation of internal controls.
- Financial statements including, annual balance sheets, income statements, and statements of cashflows, for the two most recent years. If the business has not been in existence long enough, financial statements for the periods that are available, and/or pro forma financial projections for at least a two-year period can be accepted.
- Certification that you or your entity have not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Documentation that the business is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Certification that the business is not under bankruptcy proceedings and disclosure of any liens on assets.
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Municipalities, political subdivisions, and individuals must submit the following:

- A description of your in capacity to complete the project; this may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agencies in the last five years.
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

All applicants who are recommended for funding must also register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, or confirm that the information in SWIFT is still correct.

## **Award notice**

The MDA will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing.

## Conflicts of interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers ([MINN. STAT.16B.98](#) and [OGM Policy 08-01: Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making \(PDF\)](#)).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to give impartial assistance or advice to the MDA due to competing duties or loyalties.
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to, revising the grant work plan, amending the grantee duties in the grant contract agreement to mitigate the conflict of interest, requesting the grant applicant to submit a conflict of interest mitigation plan, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

## Privacy notice and data classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a Specialty Crop Block Grant. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. Applicants may decline to complete this application without any legal consequence. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant; incomplete applications will not be considered.

Data provided in this application is initially classified by the [Minnesota Data Practices Act](#) as private or nonpublic, although some or all of the data will generally become public at various points of the application process unless the data are otherwise classified by state or federal law. Access to private or nonpublic data is limited to those authorized by law, including but not necessarily limited to MDA staff and contractors with a valid work assignment to access the data, parties authorized by the applicant, parties identified in a valid court order or federal subpoena, Minnesota Management and Budget, Minnesota Department of Administration, the state auditor, and the legislative auditor. If necessary, the MDA may also share the data with law enforcement or the Office of the Attorney General.

Per Minnesota's statute on grants ([MINN. STAT. 13.599](#)):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants, and the grant amount requested, will be public data once application responses are opened.
- All remaining data in application responses (except for data otherwise classified by law, including trade secret information, see below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information, see below) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.

## Procedure for claiming protection of trade secrets:

Trade secret information is classified as not public data. In order to qualify as trade secret information, the data in question must be provided to the MDA by the affected person (i.e., the data must be about the applicant) and otherwise meet the legal definition found in statute ([MINN. STAT. 13.37, subd. 1\(b\)](#)). In order for an applicant to assert trade secret protection for data submitted as part of this application: the applicant must: 1) clearly identify the specific formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or process that the applicant believes to be trade secret information; 2) describe what efforts the applicant takes to maintain the secrecy of the data; and 3) adequately explain how the data derive(s) independent economic value from not being generally known to, and not readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons. Merely asserting trade secret protection does not, in and of itself, classify the data in question as not public; determining what data meet the definition of trade secret information is ultimately the legal responsibility of the MDA, and the MDA cannot guarantee that data identified as trade secret information by an applicant will be classified as such. If the MDA determines that data do not meet the definition of trade secret information, the data in question will be available to the public unless the applicant secures a court order saying otherwise.

All persons, businesses, and individuals applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must comply with applicable laws. Under the law titled Right of Setoff ([MINN. STAT. 270C.65, subd. 3](#)), a grantee consents to disclosure of its social security number, federal employer tax identification number, and/or Minnesota tax identification number, already provided to the State, to federal and state tax agencies, and to state personnel involved in the payment of state obligations. These identification numbers may be used in the enforcement of federal and state tax laws which could result in action requiring a grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

## Requirements for Projects Receiving Grant Funds

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### Grant contract agreement

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant contract agreement with the MDA. The grant contract agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grant contract agreement templates are available for review on the [Office of Grants Management Forms and FAQs webpage](#). The MDA reserves the right to adjust these templates.

Upon approval of an application, completion of the pre-award risk assessment, and before beginning work on the grant project(s) and incurring any grant expenses, the applicant must:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form and register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, or confirm that the information in SWIFT is still correct.
- Submit other required documentation within 15 days of award notification.
- Read and sign a grant contract agreement within 30 calendar days of being sent to the grantee. Failure to sign the contract within 30 calendar days may result in the award being rescinded.

The grant contract agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grantees should read the grant contract agreement, sign, and once signed, comply with all conditions of the grant contract agreement.

Once the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever is later, you will be notified by the State's Authorized Representative that work may start. You must comply with the conditions and of the grant contract agreement and all applicable state requirements.

The funded applicant will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the work plan and compliance with all applicable state requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance and reporting as well as any applicable federal requirements.

Some changes may become necessary during your project. Many of these changes require pre-approval from the MDA and/or USDA and may require an amendment to the grant contract agreement or state plan. These include changes that alter the scope, objectives, or outcomes, or involve key personnel or personnel time devoted to the project or changes to the budget, including among cost categories.

## **Accountability and reporting**

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to monitor progress on state grants by requiring grantees to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all of the terms in the grant contract agreement have been met. Additional information about the long-term impact may also be collected for up to three years after the grant period.

There are three types of progress reports:

- Interim reports are brief progress reports in between annual reports.
- Annual performance reports describe activities done to accomplish the project objectives and collect data on outcomes and are required for the reporting period that ends on September 29 of each year of the grant agreement. Annual reports are submitted by the MDA to the USDA to provide updates on project progress.
- Final performance reports describe the activities performed and accomplishments made to assist in fulfillment of the project's objectives, outcomes, and indicators; the impact the accomplishments had on the project's beneficiaries; and quantifiable results for each outcome or indicator. Any corrective actions or project changes conducted to overcome challenges or developments and lessons learned are also explained in this report. The USDA may share project information on their website to share project findings with federal and state agencies and with the public. The MDA may also post links to project publications and results on the state's SCBG website.



Progress reports will be required according to the following schedule:

Due Date	Date Range Covered by the Progress Report	Type of Progress Report
April 30, 2027	Contract Effective Start Date – March 31, 2027	Interim
November 15, 2027	April 1, 2027 – September 29, 2027	Annual Performance
April 30, 2027	September 30, 2027 – March 31, 2028	Interim
November 15, 2027	April 1, 2028 – September 29, 2028	Annual Performance
April 30, 2029	September 30, 2028 – March 31, 2029, or end date	Interim or Final Performance
November 15, 2029	April 1, 2028 – September 29, 2029, or end date	Final Performance

All reports must be submitted in a format specified by the MDA. The MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements throughout the grant. Grant payments will not be made on grants with past-due progress reports or if required documentation related to the invoice or financial reconciliation is missing, unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension. Information reported to the MDA may be classified as public data. Grantees who do not submit reports on time or submit incomplete reports may be required to return previously disbursed funds and may be removed from consideration for future funding.

## Monitoring

The MDA monitors grantees to ensure that work is progressing within the required time frame, outcome data is being collected, financial procedures are followed accurately and appropriately, and verify purchases made with grant funds”. The MDA will perform at least one monitoring visit for all grantees with awards greater than \$25,000 before approving final payment. Other grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA.

Monitoring visits are typically done at the project site, in-person but may also be done via phone or video conferencing and include review and discussion of financial and program information (sometimes called “desk audits”).

The MDA will perform a financial reconciliation of at least one invoice on grants greater than \$25,000. Financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA. For this purpose, the grantee must provide cost documentation showing proof of purchase and payment, such as invoices, expense receipts, employee timesheets, cleared checks, bank or credit card statements, and any other supporting documents requested by the State.

## Payments

Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the contract has been signed by all parties and the grant contract agreement has reached its effective (start) date, whichever is later.

Grant funds are dispersed on a reimbursement basis. All requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget and be tied to documented progress on the approved workplan. The MDA shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date, and the latest grant progress report before approving payment.

Reimbursement requests must include an itemized invoice, along with financial reports from your financial accounting system (including payroll and purchase cards), and any additional supporting documentation requested by the grant administrator.

Reimbursement requests should be submitted according to the same schedule as progress reports. If requested by the grantee or required by the MDA, a quarterly reporting and reimbursement schedule may be arranged. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the MDA no later than 60 calendar days after the grant end date.

The MDA may retain up to 10% of the total award until the final report is received and approved by the MDA. The MDA may request that grantees who do not submit a timely or acceptable final report at the completion of the performance period return grant funds.

## **Contract and bidding requirements**

All grantees must abide by the state's bidding requirements when buying supplies or services for your grant project, based on their entity type.

### **Nongovernmental entities**

Grantees that are nongovernmental entities, such as businesses and nonprofits, must use these guidelines:

- Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost \$100,000 or more must use a formal notice and bidding process.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three verbal quotes or bids or be awarded to a targeted vendor.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two verbal quotes or bids or be awarded to a targeted vendor.
- The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:
  - [Office of State Procurement – Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged, and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#)
  - [Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business \(MCUB\) Program Directory](#)
  - [Central Certification \(CERT\) Directory](#)
- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- The MDA may waive bidding process requirements when:
  - Vendors included in the response to a competitive grant request for proposal process were approved and incorporated as an approved work plan for the grant; or
  - It is determined there is only one reasonably able and available source for such materials or services and that the grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.

- The grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules, as applicable ([MINN. STAT. 177.41](#) through [MINN. STAT. 177.50](#)).
- The grantee and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government. See [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#) and [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).

## **Municipalities**

Grantees that are political subdivisions or municipalities must use these guidelines:

- Municipalities are required to comply with the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law ([MINN. STAT. 471.345](#)).
- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- The grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules, as applicable ([MINN. STAT. 177.41](#) through [MINN. STAT. 177.50](#)).
- Municipalities and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government (See [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#)) and [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).

## **Grantee website and publicity**

All grant projects must publicly credit the MDA and USDA-AMS funding in all public communications, presentations and printed materials and include that information on the grantee's website. Additionally, the website of grantees who are nongovernmental entities or municipalities must list the names and contact information for the grantee's leadership and the employee(s) or other person(s) who directly manages and oversees a grant contract agreement on behalf of the grantee (the authorized representative). ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 5 \(d\)](#))

## **Audits and record retention**

The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the Commissioner of Administration, the MDA, the State Auditor, the Attorney General, and the Legislative Auditor as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 8](#)). This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Grantees are responsible for the retention of documents and records relevant to their grants. Grantees should maintain a project file containing copies of all invoices, [If the payroll is an eligible expense: "payroll records,"] receipts, proofs of payment, reimbursement requests, important correspondence with the MDA, progress reports, and any other documents associated with the project. Upon request by state or federal agencies, the grantee shall produce a legible copy of the records saved in their project file.

## Federal compliance

Grant recipients are required to comply with all applicable provisions of [2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#), and the AMS 2025 General Terms and Conditions Updated.

## Civil rights

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights enforces the state human rights law that prohibits discrimination in public services because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or public assistance status. For more information or to file a complaint, contact:

Griggs Midway Building  
540 Fairview Ave North, Suite 201  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-539-1100 (local)  
1-800-657-3704 (toll free)  
[info.MDHR@state.mn.us](mailto:info.MDHR@state.mn.us) (email)  
<https://mn.gov/mdhr/> (website)

## Affirmative action and non-discrimination policies

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified ([MINN. STAT. 363A.02](#)). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship ([Minnesota Rules, part 5000.3500](#)).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the [Minnesota Human Rights Act](#).

## Voter registration requirement

The grantee will provide voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee ([MINN. STAT. 201.162](#)).

## Grantee evaluation

Prior to the closeout of the grant, the MDA will evaluate the performance of all grantees. The evaluation will include the purpose of the grant; the amount provided to the grantee; information about the grantee's timeliness, quality, and overall performance in meeting the terms and objectives of the grant; if the grant was terminated; and any concerns with grantees use of State funds. Evaluations of grantee performance for grant contract agreements greater than \$25,000 must be provided by the MDA to the Minnesota Department of Administration as provided under [MINN.STAT. 16B.98, subd. 12](#). Evaluations are considered public ([MINN. STAT. 13.599](#)).

## Right of Cancellation

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This RFP does not obligate the MDA to award a grant. The MDA reserves the right to cancel this RFP, if in the best interest of the program, agency, or the State of Minnesota. The State also reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this RFP. The State does not intend to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of any response made to this RFP or pay for information solicited or obtained.

## 2026 Evaluation Profile

Evaluation criteria	Maximum score
<b>Potential impact</b> Does the project have the potential to have a significant impact on the competitiveness of a specialty crop industry or segment in Minnesota? How well will the project accomplish the purpose of the SCBG program? Is the proposal well organized and does it clearly explain how the project will achieve its proposed goals?	15
<b>Project purpose</b> How well does the applicant define the need for and purpose of the project? Are the objectives clear and appropriate for this grant program? Is the project purpose important and timely?	15
<b>Funding priorities</b> How well does the proposal address one or more of these funding priorities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and promotion to increase sales of specialty crops</li> <li>• Aggregation and distribution to increase access to/sales of specialty crops</li> <li>• Control and prevention of biological threats (pests/diseases) specialty crops</li> </ul>	10
<b>Project beneficiaries and external project support</b> Will the project meaningfully impact a significant number of beneficiaries? Are effective letters of support from stakeholders (growers, grower organizations, processors, and distributors) included in the proposal? Is the project likely to succeed in serving these beneficiaries?	15
<b>Benefit beginning farmers</b> Does the proposal show strong evidence that this project has the potential to benefit beginning farmers or first-time specialty crop producers?	5
<b>Measurable outcomes and indicators</b> Does the project include at least one outcome and indicator that measures the project's achievements? Is each indicator relevant and achievable within project period? Is there a clear plan for collecting data to report on each outcome and indicator?	15
<b>Budget and narrative</b> Is the total grant amount and budget line items requested reasonable and appropriate including compensation rates for personnel and contractors? Does the budget narrative adequately explain and justify each budget line item?	15
<b>Personnel and contractual responsibilities</b> Does the applicant adequately describe each activity needed to accomplish the goals and purposes of the project? Do they state when those activities are taking place and who is responsible for each? Does the plan make sense?	10
<b>Maximum points</b>	<b>100</b>

# Application Questions

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These questions are provided for your convenience. You will answer these questions in the MDA's online application system. Application information will be used to complete your project profile that will be submitted to USDA.

Answer all questions completely within the specified character limits.

## Contact information

(Part of registration in the online application system)

- Name of organization
- Name of contact person
- Phone
- Email address
- Address
- City
- State
- Zip

## Background

- Project title
- Principal investigator (PI) name, title, phone number, email address
- Authorized representative name, title, phone number, email address
- Organization website
- Industry sector(s) or specific specialty crop(s) targeted (e.g., tree fruit: apples)
- Grant amount requested
- Project start date
- Project end date
- Unique Entity ID (UEI)

## Eligibility

Confirm that the following statements. You must respond “True” to all the statements to be eligible to apply for this grant. If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification for these statements.

- The applicant does not owe the State of Minnesota any back taxes and has not defaulted on any State of Minnesota backed financing in the last seven years. (True or False)
- The applicant is compliant with current state and federal regulations, or this project will support the organization becoming compliant. (True or False)
- The applicant is not suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government? (True or False)

- The applicant in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State. (True or False)
- The applicant is registered with the Attorney General, if required. (True or False)
- The applicant's current board members or staff with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. (True or False).
- The applicant or principal investigator is not an MDA employee, spouse of an employee, or a business owned by one of them. (True or False).

### **For-profit business eligibility**

- Is your organization a for-profit business? (Yes or No)
- If yes, the applicant is not under bankruptcy proceedings and, if required as part of the pre-award risk assessment, will disclose any lines on assets as part of the pre-award risk assessment. (True or False)

## **Attestations**

Attest to the following statements. You must respond "Yes" to all the statements to apply for this grant. If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification for these statements.

- The MDA is unable to reimburse for any work that is performed prior to the effective start date of the grant contract agreement. I attest that work has not started on the proposed project and we will not before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever is later. (Yes or No)
- I attest that all information supplied in this application is true, correct, and reliable to the best of my knowledge. (Yes or No)
- I attest and understand that the submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject me and my organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law. (Yes or No)
- I attest and understand that the supporting documentation for the claims and assertions made within this application is available to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for its review. (Yes or No)

## **Overview**

### **Project summary**

Include a project summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. A project summary provides a very brief (one sentence, if possible) description of your project. A project summary includes:

- The name of the applicant organization that if awarded a grant will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to lead and execute the project;
- The project's purpose, deliverables, and expected outcomes; and
- A description of the general tasks/activities to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal.



Example: The ABC University will mitigate the spread of citrus greening (Huanglongbing) by developing scientifically based practical measures to implement in a quarantine area and disseminating results to stakeholders through grower meetings and field days.

### Project purpose

Provide the specific issue, problem, or need that the project will address. Explain how this project is timely and will enhance the competitiveness of this specialty crop or industry. (5,000 characters, including spaces)

### Project objectives

In the table, list each main objective that this project aims to achieve on its own line. Objectives must be realistic and achievable during the grant. You may list up to five objectives.

In the "Objective name" column provide a short title that summarizes each of your objectives, (e.g., Objective 1: Create Consumer Education Materials, Objective 2: Hold Grower Workshops, etc.). (250 characters per objective name, including spaces)

In the "Objective description" column list provide a very brief description of what you will accomplish and a general plan on what you will do to accomplish the objective within the time frame of the grant. (250 characters per description, including spaces)

Objective name	Objective description
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

### Project beneficiaries

List the number of people and organizations who will directly benefit from the project, including a one- to two-word descriptor for each type of beneficiary (e.g., 500 K-6 students, 20 hazelnut producers). (500 characters, including spaces)

Enter the total number of all beneficiaries (sum of all beneficiaries listed above).

Does this project directly benefit beginning farmers or first-time specialty crop producers as defined in the RFP? (Yes/No)

- If yes, describe how your project will directly benefit beginning farmers or first-time specialty crop farmers? (1,000 characters, including spaces)

## Statement of enhancing specialty crops

By checking this box, I confirm that this project enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops in accordance with and defined by the Farm Bill. See the detailed [USDA list of eligible specialty crops \(PDF\)](#) for more information.

## Continuation and other federal and state support

Does this project continue the efforts of a previously funded Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) project? (Yes/No)

- If yes,
  - Provide the award number(s) and project titles of related previously funded grants. (1,000 characters, including spaces)
  - Describe how this project will differ from and build on the previous efforts. (2,500 characters, including spaces)
  - Provide a summary of the outcomes of the previous efforts. (1,500 characters, including spaces)
  - Provide lessons learned on potential project improvements. What was previously learned from implementing this project, including potential improvements? (1,500 characters, including spaces)
  - How are lessons learned and improvements being incorporated into the project to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting goals and outcomes? (1,500 characters, including spaces)

Have you previously received any grants from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, such as an AGRI Crop Research or AGRI Sustainable Ag Demonstration grant, within the last five years? (Yes/No)

- If yes, briefly describe your previous grant project(s), including project title(s), date(s), amount(s) awarded, and funding source(s), and how this project will differ from and/or build on the previous projects. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

The SCBG will not fund duplicative projects. Has this project been submitted to another grant program or is another grant program currently funding the project? (Yes/No)

- If yes,
  - Identify the federal or state grant program(s).
  - Describe how the SCBG project differs from or supplements the other grant program(s) efforts. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

Describe the likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not being indefinitely dependent on grant funds. (1,500 characters, including spaces)

## Project support

Describe the specialty crop stakeholders (e.g., growers, grower level groups, processors, and distributors) who support this project and why each stakeholder supports this project. (1,500 characters, including spaces)

Attach letters of support from specialty crop stakeholders. Stakeholder letters of support are not required but are part of the scoring criteria. Only letters that are signed and dated and provided prior to MDA's application deadline will be considered by grant reviewers.

List all project partners and collaborators and provide a brief summary of each of their contributions to this project and a short description of their relevant abilities and qualifications. (3,500 characters, including spaces)

- A **partner or partnership** is a relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.
- A **collaborator or collaboration** is a person or organization that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project but is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Affirm that each partner and collaborator listed understands their role and has indicated they are willing to participate and commit adequate time to this project.

## Outcomes

In this section, you must select at least one outcome and provide a realistic and measurable numeric value for at least one of the indicators within that outcome. Enter numeric values for the indicator(s) that are relevant to your project. If there are multiple sub-indicators listed under the indicator, select and provide at least one sub-indicator. If none of the indicators under this outcome are relevant to your project, you should leave the section blank. You will be required to report the measures of each indicator chosen in annual and final reports. If none of the indicator(s) are relevant your project, a project-specific indicator(s) may be developed (Outcome 8), which is subject to approval by the USDA.

### Outcome 1: Increasing consumption and consumer purchasing of specialty crops

Outcome 1 indicators	Numeric value
1.1 Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about specialty crops:	-
1.1a Of the total number of consumers in 1.1, the number who are adults:	-
1.1b Of the total number of consumers in 1.1, the number who are children:	-
1.2 Total number of consumers who consumed more specialty crops:	-
1.2a Of the total number of consumers in 1.2, the number who are adults:	-
1.2b Of the total number of consumers in 1.2, the number who are children:	-
1.3 Number of additional specialty crop customers counted:	-
1.4 Number of additional business transactions executed:	-
1.5 Increased sales measured in:	-
1.5a Dollars:	-
1.5b Percent change:	-
1.5c A combination of volume/average price due to enhanced marketing:	-

## Outcome 2: Increasing access to specialty crops and expanding specialty crop production and distribution

Outcome 2 indicators	Numeric value
2.1 Number of stakeholders that gained technical knowledge about producing, preparing, procuring, or accessing specialty crops:	-
2.2 Number of stakeholders that reported producing, preparing, procuring, or accessing more specialty crops:	-
2.3 Total number of market access points for specialty crops developed or expanded:	-
2.3a Of the total access points in 2.3, number of new online portals created to sell specialty crops:	-
2.3b Of the total access points in 2.3, number with expanded seasonal availability:	-
2.3c Of the total access points in 2.3, number of existing market access points that expanded specialty crop offerings:	-
2.3d Of the total access points in 2.3, number of new market access points that established specialty crop offerings:	-
2.4 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about more efficient and effective distribution systems:	-
2.5 Number of stakeholders that adopted best practices or new technologies to improve distribution systems:	-
2.6 Total number of partnerships established between producers, distributors, or other relevant intermediaries related to distribution systems:	-
2.6a Of the total number in 2.6, number formalized with written agreements (i.e., MOU's, signed contracts, etc.):	-
2.7 Total number of new and improved distribution systems developed. Of those, the number that:	-
2.7a Of the total number in 2.7, number that stemmed from new partnerships:	-
2.7b Of the total number in 2.7, number that increased efficiency:	-
2.7c Of the total number in 2.7, number that reduced costs:	-
2.7d Of the total number in 2.7, number that increased specialty crop grower participation:	-
2.7e Of the total number in 2.7, number that expanded customer reach:	-
2.7f Of the total number in 2.7, number that increased online presence:	-
2.8 Total number of specialty crop-related jobs created or maintained:	-
2.8a Of the total number in 2.8, number of jobs created:	-
2.8b Of the total number in 2.8, number of jobs maintained:	-
2.9 Total number of new individuals who went into specialty crop production as a result of marketing:	-
2.9a Of the total number in 2.9, the number who are beginning farmers or ranchers:	-
2.9b Of the total number in 2.9, the number who are first time specialty crop farmers:	-
2.10 Number of market access points that reported increased:	-
2.10a Revenue:	-
2.10b Sales:	-
2.10c Cost savings:	-

### Outcome 3: Increase food safety knowledge and processes

Outcome 3 indicators	Numeric value
3.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about prevention, detection, control, or intervention food safety practices, including relevant regulations to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) and GHP (Good Hygiene Practices):	-
3.2 Number of stakeholders that:	-
3.2a Established a food safety plan:	-
3.2b Revised or updated their food safety plan:	-
3.3 Number of specialty crop stakeholders who implemented new or improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention practices, tools, or technologies to mitigate food safety risks to improve their ability to comply with the FSMA or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP:	-
3.4 Number of prevention, detection, control, or intervention practices developed or enhanced to mitigate food safety risks:	-
3.5 Number of stakeholders that used grant funds to:	-
3.5a Purchase food safety equipment:	-
3.5b Upgrade food safety equipment:	-

### Outcome 4: Improve pest and disease control processes

Outcome 4 indicators	Numeric value
4.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about science-based tools to combat pests and diseases:	-
4.2 Number of stakeholders that adopted pest and disease control best practices, technologies, or innovations:	-
4.3 Number of stakeholders trained in early detection and rapid response practices to combat pests and diseases. Of those:	-
4.3a As a result of training in 4.3, the number of additional acres managed using integrated pest management:	-
4.4 Number of stakeholders that implemented new diagnostic systems, methods, or technologies for analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases:	-
4.5 Total number of producers or processors that enhanced or maintained pest and disease control practices:	-
4.5a Of the total number in 4.5, the number that reported reduction in product lost to pest and diseases:	-
4.5b Of the total number in 4.5, the number that reported improved crop quality:	-
4.5c Of the total number in 4.5, the number that reported reduction in labor costs:	-
4.5d Of the total number in 4.5, the number that reported reduction in pesticide use:	-
4.6 Number of producers or processors improving the efficiency of pest and disease control diagnostics and response testing:	-
4.6a Of the total in 4.6, the number that reported improving efficiency by improving speed:	-
4.6b Of the total in 4.6, the number that reported improving efficiency by improving reliability:	-
4.6c Of the total in 4.6, the number that reported improving efficiency by expanding capability:	-
4.6d Of the total in 4.6, the number that reported improving efficiency by increasing testing (i.e., survey work for pests):	-

**Outcome 5: Develop new seed varieties and specialty crops**

<b>Outcome 5 indicators</b>	<b>Numeric value</b>
5.1 Number of cultivar and variety trials conducted:	-
5.1a Of the total in 5.1, the number that advanced to further stages of development:	-
5.2 Number of cultivars and seed varieties developed:	-
5.3 Number of cultivars and seed varieties released:	-
5.4 Number of growers adopting new cultivars or varieties:	-
5.5 Number of acres planted with new cultivars or varieties:	-

**Outcome 6: Expand specialty crop research and development**

<b>Outcome 6 indicators</b>	<b>Numeric value</b>
6.1 Number of research goals accomplished:	-
6.2 For research conclusions, the number that:	-
6.2a Yielded findings that supported continued research:	-
6.2b Yielded findings that led to completion of study:	-
6.2c Yielded findings that allow for implementation of new practice, process, or technology:	-
6.3 Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders who engaged with research results:	-
6.4 Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals:	-
6.4a Of the total in 6.4, number of views or reads of published research and data:	-
6.4b Of the total in 6.4, number of citations counted:	-

**Outcome 7: Improve environmental sustainability of specialty crops**

<b>Outcome 7 indicators</b>	<b>Numeric value</b>
7.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies:	-
7.2 Number of stakeholders reported with an intent to adopt environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies:	-
7.3 Number of producers that adopted environmental best practices or tools:	-
7.4 Number of new tools and technologies developed or enhanced to improve sustainability, conservation, or other environmental outcomes:	-
7.5 Number of additional acres managed with sustainable practices, tools, or technologies:	-
7.5a Of the total in 7.5, number that focused on water quality or conservation:	-
7.5b Of the total in 7.5, number that focused on soil health:	-
7.5c Of the total in 7.5, number that focused on biodiversity:	-
7.5d Of the total in 7.5, number that focused on reduction in energy use:	-
7.5e Of the total in 7.5, number that focused on other positive environmental outcomes:	-
7.6 Number of additional acres established and maintained for the mutual benefit of pollinators and specialty crops:	-

## Outcome 8: Project specific indicator(s)

If the indicator(s) are not relevant to the project, a project-specific indicator(s) may be developed, which is subject to approval by the USDA.

Outcome 8 indicator(s)	Numeric value
Indicator description	-

## Outcome Justification

Explain how the activities will support your selected outcomes. (1,500 characters, including spaces)

Explain how you will collect the required data to report on the results of each outcome and indicator. You may refer to the [USDA SCBG Program Performance Measures \(PDF\)](#) for data collection tips. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

## Budget

Complete the budget tables and justifications.

### Budget table

Expense category	SCBG funds requested
Personnel – salaries	\$
Personnel – fringe benefits	\$
Travel	\$
Equipment (single purchases greater or equal to \$10,000)	\$
Supplies (single purchases less than \$10,000)	\$
Contractual	\$
Other	\$
<b>Total direct project costs</b>	<b>\$</b>
Indirect costs (MDA projects only)	\$
<b>Total SCBG project costs</b>	<b>\$</b>

### Budget narrative

In each budget table, you will be able to include up to 10 lines. You are not required to use every line.

#### Personnel – salaries and wages

List salary and wage costs for people employed by your organization whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to this project's activities.

Personnel expenses are salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for the number of hours or proportion of time an employee devotes to the grant-supported project or program. Under the formally established policies of the organization, salaries, wages, and fringe benefits must be consistently applied, reasonable for the services rendered, and supported with adequate documentation, such as timesheets or payroll reports.

Employee name and title	Level of effort (# of hours or % of full-time equivalents [FTE])	Funds requested
-	-	\$
-	-	\$
-	-	\$
<b>Personnel subtotal</b>	-	\$

### Personnel justification

By name/title, describe the activities each person will complete and approximately when they will occur. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### Personnel – fringe benefits

List fringe benefit rates (e.g., workers comp costs, insurance benefits, retirement benefits, etc.), in percentages, for each of the employees listed in the personnel budget and total grant funds requested for each employee's fringe costs.

Employee name and title	Fringe benefits rate	Funds requested
-	%	\$
-	%	\$
-	%	\$
<b>Fringe benefits subtotal</b>	-	\$

### Travel

List costs for trips or grouping of trips that will be needed to conduct this project or to provide outreach or education on project outcomes.

Travel and subsistence expenses are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy and may not exceed the amounts allowed in Chapter 15 of the current [Commissioner's Plan](#), published by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget.

Trip destination and description	Type of expense (e.g. airfare, car rental, hotel, etc.)	Unit of measure and number/cost per unit (e.g., 5 nights @\$120/night or 1 flight \$500/ticket)	Number of travelers claiming expense	Funds requested
-	-	-	-	\$
-	-	-	-	\$
-	-	-	-	\$
<b>Travel subtotal</b>	-	-	-	\$



## Travel justification

For each trip listed, describe the purpose of each trip and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Include approximate date(s) of travel for each trip. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

By checking this box, I confirm that my organization's established travel policies will be adhered to when completing the above mentioned trips in accordance with the Commissioner's Plan and [2 CFR 200.474](#) or [48 CFR Subpart 31.2](#) as applicable.

## Equipment

List costs for equipment that will be purchased or rented under the grant.

Equipment costs include purchase or rental of special-purpose equipment or rental of general-purpose equipment. Equipment is defined as tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$10,000 per unit.

- Special purpose equipment is equipment used only for research, scientific, or technical activities of the grant award project. Rental costs and acquisition costs of special purpose equipment are allowable provided certain criteria are met, such as not being otherwise reasonably available and accessible (consult with the MDA program coordinator for further criteria).
- Only rental of general-purpose equipment is allowable, and the rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle. Rent-to-own agreements are not allowed. General purpose equipment means equipment that is not limited to technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.
- Equipment is subject to the acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under [2 CFR 200.313](#).

Equipment item description	Rental or purchase	Acquisition date	Funds requested
-	-	-	\$
-	-	-	\$
-	-	-	\$
Equipment subtotal	-	-	\$

## Equipment justification

For each equipment item listed above, describe how it will be used to accomplish the project's objectives and outcomes(s). Be sure to address the allowability criteria for each equipment item as indicated in the [AMS 2025 General Terms and Conditions Updated \(PDF\)](#). (2,000 characters, including spaces).

## Supplies

List costs for supplies that are necessary to the completion of your project.

Supplies are materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$10,000 per unit. Computing devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, etc.), if the acquisition cost is less than \$10,000 and the item is essential to the performance of the grant project, are allowable.

Supplies item description	Cost per unit	Number of units	Acquisition date	Funds requested
-	\$	-	-	\$
-	\$	-	-	\$
-	\$	-	-	\$
<b>Supplies subtotal</b>	\$	-	-	\$

### Supplies justification

Describe the purpose of the supplies listed in the table above and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s). (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### Contractual/consultant

List costs for work on the project that will be performed by individuals or organizations other than the applicant (e.g., consultants, contractors, partner organizations, etc.).

Contractual/consultant services are those performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant that is in a particular profession or with a special skill. These services are paid for through a subcontract.

- Compensation for contractor or consultant services should be reasonable and consistent with that paid for similar services in the marketplace. Contractor hourly rates of pay may not exceed the salary of a [GS-15 step 10](#) federal employee in your area, without a justification for why the rate is higher (e.g., specialized consulting), which will be subject to USDA approval. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, or other expenses. Note that we do not allow indirect costs for contractors and consultants.
- Any subcontract must be a written agreement between the grantee and the third party. The contract must, as appropriate, state the activities to be performed; the time schedule; the policies and requirements that apply to the contractor, including those required by [2 CFR 200.326](#) and other terms and conditions of the grant (these may be incorporated by reference); the maximum amount of money for which the grantee may become liable to the third party under the agreement; and the cost principles to be used in determining allowable costs in the case of cost-type contracts.

Contractual name/organization	Hourly rate or flat rate	Rate value (e.g., \$45/hour)	Funds requested
-	\$	\$	\$
-	\$	\$	\$
-	\$	\$	\$
<b>Contractual/consultant subtotal</b>	-	-	\$

### Contractual/consultant justification

For each contractual line item listed in your contractual budget describe how it is necessary to your project and how it will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. You must also include a justification for why contractual/consultant services are to be used to meet the anticipated outcomes and objectives. Include an estimated timeline for when the contractual work will be performed. If contractor hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 federal employee in your area, provide a justification for why the rate is higher (e.g., specialized consulting). (2,000 characters, including spaces)

By checking this box, I confirm that my organization followed the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations and conform to the Federal laws and standards identified in [2 CFR Part 200.317 through.326](#), as applicable. If the contractor(s)/consultant(s) are not already selected, my organization will follow the same requirements.

### Other

List any costs not covered in any of the previous budget categories.

Other costs may include meetings and conferences; communications; rental expenses; advertisements; publication costs; data collection; and participant support costs, including stipends or gift cards to participants that complete a project survey or take part in a focus group. Meeting meals cannot be associated with entertainment nor included in a per diem travel cost.

Other item description	Cost per unit	Number of units	Acquisition date	Funds requested
-	\$	-	-	\$
-	\$	-	-	\$
-	\$	-	-	\$
Other subtotal	-	-	-	\$

### Other justification

Describe the purpose of each item listed above and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s). For meals, the costs must be reasonable, and a justification must be included to show that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants. (2,000 characters, including spaces).

### Program income

List the program income you estimate will be generated from your grant project.

Program income is gross income – earned by a recipient or subrecipient under a grant – directly generated by the grant supported activity or earned only because of the grant agreement during the grant period of performance. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); registration fees for conferences, etc.

Source/nature of program income	Description of how you will reinvest the program income into the project	Estimated program income
-	-	\$
-	-	\$
-	-	\$
<b>Program income subtotal</b>	-	\$

## Additional attachments

Attach any additional budget information or documents to visualize your project design or supplement your narrative answers. Do not submit a budget document here instead of filling out the budget tables above.

## Applicant certification

### Authorization letter

If required by your organization, you may upload a letter stating you are authorized to submit an application for them (e.g., upload confirmation from University of Minnesota Sponsored Project Administration that you are authorized to submit applications).