

# 2010 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

## Final Questions and Answers

**1. Q – Is there a limit to the number of proposals that one entity can submit?**

A – No, there is no limit.

**2. Q – Are indirect costs eligible for this program?**

A – Indirect costs are not allowed for this program. Part C in the Application Template details the eligible budget categories and page 7 in the RFP explains eligible expenses.

**3. Q – Can budget information exceed the two page limit?**

A – Part C of the Application Template (Budget Information) cannot exceed two pages; however, if necessary, appendices providing additional details are allowed.

**4. Q – If 20% of a project is focused on specialty crops but the remainder of the project is related to non-specialty crops, can we request 20% of project funding from this grant program?**

A – Grant funds may ONLY be used to benefit eligible specialty crops. In the event that a project also benefits other ineligible commodities, the applicant must describe how they will ensure that grant funding is being used to enhance the specialty crop portion of the project and how non-grant funds will cover the non-specialty crop portion. The description must be included in Part B of the Application Template (Project Details), and should include the estimated percentage of the project that specifically benefits specialty crops and non-specialty crops. Applicants will be required to maintain adequate documentation to support this requirement.

**5. Q – If a project includes some non-specialty crops that grant funds will not be used for, should the non-specialty portion be listed in the budget form or listed separately?**

A – In addition to describing how the applicant will ensure that grant funds are being used only for the specialty crop portion of the project (as addressed in question #4), details regarding the budget, including a breakdown of grant funds and non-grant funds, should be listed in the “Other Funds” column of the Budget Summary (see Part C of the Application Template). They can also be listed separately as long as the requirements described above and in the RFP are met.

**6. Q – The RFP states that applications cannot be faxed or submitted electronically. Why is that?**

A – The Department does not have a program or software dedicated to accepting and/or tracking faxed or electronic submissions.

**7. Q – Does a proposal have to include more than one specialty crop?**

A – A proposal may include more than one specialty crop but it does not have to.

**9. Q – If more than one specialty crop is included in an application, will the proposal receive more points?**

A – An application will not necessarily receive additional points simply because it includes multiple specialty crops; however, if multiple eligible specialty crop

commodities are involved in a project it is possible that it could affect the project's Potential Impact or other funding criteria components (listed in pages 8-9 of the RFP).

**10. Q – Will questions submitted by e-mail be answered directly to the individual asking the question or will the answer be posted on the website?**

A – An answer will be sent to the individual asking the question and subsequently posted on the Department's website.

**11. Q – If I just need a quick clarification, do I still need to e-mail my question?**

A – Yes.

**12. Q – In a multiple year project where the outcomes are long-term, how can you quantify measurable outcomes throughout the life of a project?**

A – The goal of any project should include some long term impact(s) (e.g. more efficient industry, stronger local economy, environmental benefits, etc.). The measurable outcomes that an applicant would track and report during the life of the project are the short and intermediate term impacts that will need to be achieved in order for that long term impact to happen. For example, what will it take, or what must happen, in order to measure and verify a stronger local economy? Some possibilities could include new businesses that form in the community, more profitable businesses that expand by hiring more local employees and/or using more local services. In order for these businesses to become more profitable the owners may need to make certain investments in their business and/or change production practices, marketing channels, decision making approaches, etc. In order to make these changes they may need to acquire new awareness, knowledge, or skills. In order to acquire new awareness, knowledge, or skills they may need to participate in some educational or experiential learning program or activity. So the outcomes an applicant would measure throughout the project may include any or all these essential steps. In this example, this might include participation in educational programs, documented changes in knowledge and skills, practice changes implemented in businesses, and the impact of these changes on profitability, spending in the community or hiring. Any long term outcome requires the attainment of certain short and intermediate term steps along the way so other similar examples can be constructed. For additional examples and guidance regarding measureable outcomes, please see the Application Examples Guidance Document and Webinar Presentations by Dave Grusenmeyer or Steve McGrattan, which are posted on the Department's website.

**13. Q – Is an individual grower/packer/shipper eligible for this program?**

A – As stated on page 5 of the RFP, for-profit organizations are not eligible; however, for-profits may partner with not-for-profits provided that the not-for-profit (NFP) is the lead applicant.

**14. Q – Could Cooperative Extension be an eligible partner?**

A – Yes. The Department strongly encourages collaborative efforts between not-for-profits, educational institutions, government applicants and private for-profits in order to achieve the goals and objectives of this program.

**15. Q – Should an applicant who didn't get funded last year re-apply this year?**

A – The Department cannot advise individuals whether or not they should apply; however, it is important to note that changes to the program have been made since last year's RFP. Applicants who were not awarded grant funds in 2009 may request information regarding the reasons their application was not selected for funding.

**16. Q – Do you or your colleagues have any technical or topical suggestions for my association's application?**

A – Department staff cannot advise individuals on the development of their projects. Generally, the Department is seeking proposals that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops and benefit the greatest number of beneficiaries. Interested applicants should see pages 5 -6 of the RFP for a list of project examples. The list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive. An organization may have other project ideas they wish to submit, based on their member's needs and priorities.

**17. Q – Is it accurate that a project cannot benefit a single commodity?**

A – Projects must illustrate that grant funds will benefit/produce measureable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single commercial product, organization, institution, or individual. For example, a project that solely markets the "Big Wizard Caramel Apple" only benefits that one commercial product and is not allowable. This does not mean that a single commodity cannot benefit from SCBG funds; therefore, a project that solely benefits apples is allowable.

**18. Q – Could the lead on the project be an incorporated not-for-profit who has applied for tax-exempt status but not yet received it?**

A – Yes.

**19. Q – Can the same collaborators apply to both the 2010 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and the 2010 Regional "Buy Local" Campaign Development RFPs?**

A – Yes.

**20. Q – We may have access to a grant writer who is willing to only receive payment if the grant is funded. Could we include the payment to this person in the grant budget?**

A – The costs to hire a grant writer are not allowable because such costs are not necessary to comply with the proposed delivery schedule or period of performance after the date of the award. The below federal regulation language provides further detail regarding this issue.

*"Pre-agreement costs. Pre-award costs are those incurred prior to the effective date of the award directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the award where such costs are necessary to comply with the proposed delivery schedule or period of performance. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the award and only with the written approval of the awarding agency."*

**21. Q – Are nursery crops (i.e. ornamental trees, shrubs and perennials) considered a specialty crop for the purposes of this block grant program?**

A – Intensely cultivated nursery crops are considered eligible for this program. Horticultural plants collected from wild populations are not eligible.

22. **Q – Are specialty crops sourced from farmers for use in recipe research, development and taste-testing eligible costs?**  
A – Specialty crops purchased would be considered "materials and supplies" and subject to cost principles identified in Appendix A of the RFP.
23. **Q – With respect to the Work Plan Table, do Project Oversight and performance measure details need to be repeated as Tasks/Project Activities since they are delineated elsewhere in the narrative? If the information does have to be included in the table, do you suggest including a more complete Measurable Outcome discussion as an attachment?**  
A – Information included in the Work Plan could be expanded upon in other sections of the application (or vice versa). The specifics and extent of detail provided is up to the applicant and should be based on the specific questions/instructions provided in the RFP and Application Template. Also, please note that an attachment as described, which provides project details beyond the 4 page limitation, may not be reviewed by the evaluators.
24. **Q – The RFP states that commodity grains are excluded from the project, but would a project that involves research and/or marketing for “specialty” grains, (i.e., wheat, rye destined for local milling) and farm-direct sales (farm to manufacturer, e.g.) for locally branded items be eligible?**  
A – Regardless of the milling location or intended market, grains such as wheat, rye and others listed on page 15 of the RFP, are ineligible for this program. For additional information about eligible specialty crops, as defined by USDA, please visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateJ&navID=DefinitionofSpecialtyCrops&rightNav1=DefinitionofSpecialtyCrops&topNav=&leftNav=CommodityAreas&page=SCBGPDefinitions&resultType=&acct=fvgrntprg>
25. **Q – Would it be appropriate to ask growers for letters of support?**  
A – The Department cannot make specific suggestions regarding who an applicant should ask for a letter of support from. Generally speaking; however, as stated on page 9 of the RFP, points will be given for support letters from industry organizations or leaders that are representative of the industry, possess expertise in appropriate subject matter(s) and that indicate strength of their support. This may include growers or others with expertise/knowledge that could speak to the merit/value of the proposed project activities and/or the project's potential impact on the industry. Please note that applicants must include commitment letters from any project partners.
26. **Q – Is the \$235,000 available for *Consumer Outreach and Market Development* category all that will be available to cover multiyear projects? (i.e. if we applied for \$235,000 for 3 years, would we be applying for all of the funding available for that category?)**  
A – \$235,000 is the total amount available for all applications submitted under the *Consumer Outreach and Market Development* category, regardless of the length of the project. Some applicants may choose to request smaller amount of grant funds for a one-year project while others may propose multi-year projects asking for higher amounts. Please keep in mind that, as stated on page 10 of the RFP, awards will be a minimum of \$30,000 and a maximum of \$100,000, regardless of the length of the project.

**27. Q – Can you please clarify the process by which the Department of Agriculture & Markets applies to the USDA? Does the Department submit proposals to the USDA and receive funding from the USDA up to the amount specified in the two funding categories?**

A – Each year, each State submits an application that is reviewed and approved by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of USDA. In 2010, New York State is eligible for \$1,244,624.63 from USDA. The Department has allocated \$835,000 for this competitive RFP. The two categories included in the RFP were created based on input from the industry regarding needs and priorities. For additional information regarding USDA's application requirements and process, please see [www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&navID=SpecialtyCropBlockGrant0Program&rightNav1=SpecialtyCropBlockGrant0Program&topNav=&leftNav=CommodityAreas&page=SCBGP&resultType](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&navID=SpecialtyCropBlockGrant0Program&rightNav1=SpecialtyCropBlockGrant0Program&topNav=&leftNav=CommodityAreas&page=SCBGP&resultType)

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