

GDA 2018 USDA/AMS SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (SCBGP) REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice of Federal Grant Funds Availability – FY 2018
Administered By: Georgia Department of Agriculture
19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive SW, Ste 216
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) is pleased to announce the competitive solicitation process to award the 2018 USDA/AMS (Agricultural Marketing Service) Specialty Crop Block Program grant (SCBGP).

Individual project award funding requests require a minimum request of \$20,000 up to a maximum of \$175,000. Awarded projects will have up to three years to complete the requirements of the grant.

NOTE THAT THE AWARDING OF THIS GRANT IS CONTINGENT UPON FUNDING FROM USDA

The application process through GDA consists of two steps:

1. Submittal of a **Request for Concept Proposal Application** form to GDA. This will be scored against all other concept proposals submitted and only the top twenty highest scoring projects will go on to step #2. It is imperative that you *read* the directions on the Concept Proposal carefully and not skip any fields, as you will not be able to make corrections once submitted.
2. Invitation (on 2/28/18) from GDA to submit a full project proposal application package.

Please refer to the link available on the GDA grants webpage located at www.agr.georgia.gov/grants.aspx for the grant Concept Proposal pre-application form .

ELIGIBILITY

Proposals will be accepted ONLY from: IRS-designated 501(c)(3) current non-profit organizations, commodity commissions, grower associations, state and local government entities, and colleges and universities. Applicants must reside in or their business or educational affiliation must be in Georgia. **Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply.**

NEW since 2017: Non-profit organizations are *strongly encouraged* to partner with a Principal Investigator (PI) from a Georgia college or university, preferably from either of Georgia's Land Grant institutions (UGA or FVSU). Those who do not may receive lower scores on their Concept Proposals, especially if they have never received a SCBGP grant.

If you have submitted the same project to GDA twice in the past and it has not been funded, it cannot be submitted again. You are welcome to submit a new project.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the SCBGP is to provide funding for projects that *solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops* in Georgia. The project proposal must focus on research, education, or marketing and benefit the specialty crop industry.

Specialty crops are defined as: fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, Christmas trees, turfgrass/sod, nursery and greenhouse crops, including floriculture. Please see the specific listing of eligible crops on the USDA/AMS website located at www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgp

FUNDING PRIORITIES/FOCUS AREAS

The following have been identified as funding priorities for the 2018 SCBGP for Georgia:

- Increasing consumption of specialty crops in Georgia's schools by expanding child knowledge of and improving access to the nutritional benefits of specialty crops;
- Enhancing specialty crop food safety, particularly in regard to helping farmers/growers/producers prepare for and comply with the provisions of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA);
- Assisting all entities in the specialty crop production/distribution chain in developing "Good Agricultural Practices," "Good Handling Practices," "Good Manufacturing Practices," and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers and processors;
- Research projects, including those which focus on helping specialty crop growers reduce the financial costs and/or environmental impact of their operations, including improved pest and disease management techniques, efficient water management, integrated pest management, and/or sustainable production;
- Developing and researching new and improved specialty crop varieties that are better adapted to Georgia's soils and climate and/or result in longer shelf-life;
- Increasing sales and marketability and driving demand for commercially grown specialty crops.

Note that the public is welcome to suggest additional funding priorities to be considered by GDA for future SCBGP solicitations.

GDA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to Georgia's specialty crop producers, in relation to each dollar spent. Concept Proposals will be scored based on the IMPACT the projects will likely have on Georgia's Specialty Crop industry.

Additionally, PARTNERSHIPS are strongly encouraged for this grant and proposals/applications that show input/buy-in from all interested parties in Georgia will score higher than ones that don't.

Note that *no* indirect/administrative/F&A costs can be charged for this grant. This is because USDA caps it at 8% for SCBG and GDA retains that entire amount to administer the program for the state.

PROJECTED TIMELINE (subject to change)

FEBRUARY 1, 2018 – Thursday

Announcement of 2018 SCBGP grant opportunity; Request for Concept Proposals (pre-screening).

FEBRUARY 21, 2018 - Wednesday

Deadline for submission of Concept Proposals; must be received by **NOON** (no exceptions) to

Jen.Erdmann@agr.georgia.gov

FEBRUARY 28, 2018 – Wednesday

GDA will send out Requests for Full Applications to organizations for the 20 applications with approved Concept Proposals. Those *not* invited to apply will receive notice by email by March 2, 2018.

MARCH 30, 2018 - Friday

Project Proposal/Application submission deadline to GDA by **NOON** (no exceptions) in Word format only to Jen.Erdmann@agr.georgia.gov

EARLY-MID APRIL 2018

GDA staff review of full applications: revisions and clarifications requested from applicants.

LATE APRIL to EARLY MAY 2018

GDA/Specialty Crop Review Committee evaluation of applications.

MID-LATE MAY 2018

Notice to applicants of acceptance/denial of their project proposals by Review Committee.

Revisions made to projects before submission to USDA/AMS-SCBGP; Most applications will require scope/budget revisions to projects based on Review Committee recommendations.

JUNE 2018

Georgia's full State Grant Application Request will be sent to USDA/AMS-SCBG.

MID-LATE SEPTEMBER 2018

Award letters and contract agreements will go out to awardees/sub-grantees.

Announcement of grant awards through press release/GDA website.

OCTOBER 1, 2018

3-year grant period will begin.

MARCH 31, 2020

Grantees should have requested reimbursement for at least 50% of their grant funds by this date.

Unspent funds are subject to recapture and reallocation.

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

3-year Grant period ends. NO EXTENSIONS. Projects must be completed by this date and absolutely no 2018 grant funds can be spent after this date.

For questions or additional information please contact:

Jen Erdmann

Grants Specialist

Georgia Department of Agriculture

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