



**2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant**  
**Request for Applications**

Applications due 11:59pm on March 8, 2026

**Applications received after that time will not be considered.**

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## **Purpose**

The [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program \(SCBGP\)](#) is a competitive grant program operated by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) in which funding from the United States Department of Agriculture is awarded to eligible applicants to support Utah's specialty crop industry. The SCBGP is designed to support all sectors of Utah's specialty crop industry and improve the performance of specialty crops within local, domestic, national, and international markets. Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture — including nursery crops, and more. [Click here for a complete list of eligible specialty crops.](#)

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligible Entities**

This grant is open to producers, schools, trade associations, non-profits, farmers markets, farming and ranching co-ops, etc. headquartered in Utah. Potential projects may include a broad range of focus such as improving marketing, research, training, certifications, food safety, pest control, plant health and beyond for specialty crops. Candidates must demonstrate the ability to enhance the competitiveness of Utah grown specialty crops and benefit more than one producer or organization. Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. The program will not fund a project to start or expand a farm or business venture.

### **Examples of Ineligible and Eligible Projects**

#### **Ineligible Projects**

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop to make a profit, or to expand production of a single business or organization.
- A non-profit organization uses grant funds to purchase produce and then sells that produce to other entities at cost or a higher price than the purchase price while competing with other private companies who sell produce in the area.
- A sole proprietor requests grant funds to redesign her/his logo in order to make her/his specialty crop value-added product stand out at the local farmers' market.
- A single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase membership in the organization.

#### **Eligible Projects**

- A State requests funding to contract with a university to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which will be shared with many growers throughout the State during the project.

- A single grower requests funds to demonstrate the viability of organic small fruit production and partners with Cooperative Extension to publicize the working model of diversification to other regional growers.
- A single company requests funds to provide a viable pollination alternative to specialty crop stakeholders in a region that currently does not have one.
- A single non-profit organization requests funds to conduct an advertising campaign that will benefit their specialty crop members.
- A single farmer erects high tunnels on his/her property to extend the growing season of tomatoes and lettuce and conducts a field day and farm tour to encourage other small family farmers to adopt the production methods.

### **Ineligible Projects and Costs**

- Ineligible grant costs include, but are not limited to:
  - Acquisition of land or buildings
  - Lease-to-own equipment
  - Equipment for purchase (unless qualified as special-purpose equipment)
  - [Review USDA SCBGP Terms and Conditions for more information on allowable and unallowable costs.](#)

### **FUNDING PRIORITIES**

Projects must address one or more of the program priorities identified by UDAF:

- Strengthening the supply chain (including aggregation, distribution, storage, processing, and developing food hubs)
- Market access (including marketing, consumer education, and developing local, international, and institutional markets)
- Research and development (including developing new seed or plant varieties, pest & disease management, and conservation practices)
- Producer education and workforce development
- Enhancing food safety and regulatory compliance

### **FUNDING AMOUNTS**

Individual project awards will be capped at \$100,000. There is no minimum award.

### **TIMELINE**

Grant applications will be accepted beginning January 23, 2026, and ending at 11:59pm on March 8, 2026. Please see the list of important dates below.

- Applications Open: January 23, 2026
- Application Close Date: March 8, 2026 at 11:59pm
- Application Review Period: March 2026

- Awards Provisionally Announced: April-May 2026
- Final USDA Award Approval: May-June 2026
- Contracts signed and completed: September 2026
- Project Start Date: September 30, 2026

## HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are required to complete and submit their proposal online using the Submittable system, which can be found through the UDAF SCBG [website](#).

Please note that all applicants must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) before they can submit their application. UEI's are required to do business with the federal government and can be acquired free of charge at [SAM.gov](#). A guide on how to get a UEI is available [here](#). This process may take some time, so we strongly encourage all applicants to begin the process early and to check on the process regularly.

## Application Information

The application form on Submittable will require the following elements.

1. **Project Title**
2. **Duration of Project:** Please use 9/30/2026 as the beginning date and nothing later than 9/29/2029 as the end date.
3. **Project Partner and Summary:** Provide a project summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. This should include a very brief (1 sentence) description to include the name of the organization; concise outline; and description of the general tasks to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal.
4. **Project Purpose:** What is the specific issue, problem, or need that the project will address? (5000 character limit)
5. Provide a listing of objectives that the project hopes to achieve.
6. **Project Beneficiaries:** Estimate the number of beneficiaries; will the project benefit socially disadvantaged farmers or beginning farmers?
7. **Statement of Solely Enhancing Specialty Crops:** Check the box to confirm the project will specifically enhance specialty crops.
8. **Continuation Project Information:** If this is a continuation of a previously funded project, please provide the award number(s) and project titles, and describe how it will differ from the build on the previous efforts. Provide a 3 to 5 sentence summary of the outcomes of the previous efforts and lessons learned on potential project improvements.
9. Describe the likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on grant funds.

10. **Other Support from Federal or State Grant Programs:** This grant will not fund duplicative projects. Did you submit this project to a Federal or State grant program? Please identify the grant if applied, and how this project differs.
11. **External Project Support:** Describe the specialty crop stakeholders who support this project and why. (Must be other than the applicant and organizations involved.)
12. **Expected Measurable Outcomes:** Select at least one of the seven Outcome Measures provided on the application. Choose at least one Outcome Indicator from the “SCBGP Performance Measures” document that corresponds with the measurable outcome. Details on performance measures are available at USDA-AMS’s website.
13. **Miscellaneous Outcome Measure:** In the unlikely event that the outcomes and indicators are not relevant to your project, you must develop a project-specific outcome(s) and indicator(s) which will be subject to approval by USDA/AMS.
14. **Data Collection to Report on Outcomes and Indicators:** Explain how you will collect the required data to report on the outcome and indicator.
15. **Budget Narrative:** All expenses described in the budget narrative must be associated with expenses that will be covered by the SCBGP. Please use the following as a guideline when preparing your budget narrative.
  - a. **Personnel:** List the organization’s employees whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to project activities. Include the number of hours or %FTE for each person. Provide justification for each individual by describing the activities and when they will occur.
  - b. **Fringe Benefits:** Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project’s salaried employees described in the Personnel section that will be paid with SCBG funds.
  - c. **Travel:** Explain the purpose of each trip request to include destination; purpose of travel; type of travel (air, car); number of days/miles; cost per day/mile; hotel rate per day; number of travelers. Justification must include when the trips will occur and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project.
  - d. **Equipment:** Purchases of general purpose equipment is not permitted. Special Purpose Equipment is allowable when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval. The following criteria must be met:
    - i. Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant agreement;
    - ii. Not otherwise reasonably available and accessible;
    - iii. The type of equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization;
    - iv. Acquired in accordance with organizational practices;
    - v. Must be used solely to meet the legislative purpose of the grant program and objectives of the grant agreement;
    - vi. More than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment;

- vii. Must not use special purpose equipment acquired with grant funds to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services; and
- viii. Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR § 200.313 as applicable.

Examples of special purpose equipment in the agricultural sector include, but are not limited to: sorting equipment, packing and labeling equipment, food processing equipment essential to the grant-funded project, purpose specific vehicles or trailers, such as refrigerated vans that will not be used as personal vehicles.

- e. **Supplies:** List the materials and supplies that cost less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the project. Justification should include the purpose of the supply and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objectives and outcomes. Please be as detailed as possible when listing supplies, including unit/cost.
  - f. **Contractual/Consultant:** Provide for each of your real or anticipated contractors listed above a description of the project activities each will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project. Each section should also include a justification for why contractual/consultant services are to be used to meet the anticipated outcomes and objectives. Include timelines for each activity. If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area, provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses. See the RFA section on Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities for acceptable justifications. If the Contractor has not yet been identified or is TBD, please indicate how you will announce the opportunity, evaluate candidates, and select the contractor for the position/work to be completed.
  - g. **Other** – Include any expense not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. This section may include meetings, conferences, advertisements, publication costs and data collection expenses. Justify the expense and why it is important to the success of the project.
16. **Indirect Costs:** UDAF will not be allowing indirect costs.
17. **Program Income:** This is gross income generated by the grant and must be reinvested back into the project to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

## **Review Process**

The review process for this round of funding has two stages, an initial eligibility review followed by a selection committee review. Projects that only benefit one applicant, are centered on ineligible crops, contain only ineligible costs, or projects with incomplete applications will be disqualified.

## **Rating Criteria:**

Projects will be rating on the following:

- Objectives are measurable and aligned with overall goals of the project (5 points)
- The budget directly supports the activities in the grant application (10 points)
- Is the cost per beneficiary reasonable? (10 points)
- Is the data collection plan sufficient, realistic, and achievable? (15 points)
- Project strongly relates to the following funding priorities (additional weight will be given to projects addressing higher priority areas or multiple priority areas) (20 points total):
  - Strengthening the supply chain (including aggregation, distribution, storage, processing, and developing food hubs) (up to 18 points)
  - Improving market access (including marketing, consumer education, and developing local, international, and institutional markets) (up to 16 points)
  - Research and development (including developing new seed or plant varieties, pest & disease management, and conservation practices) (up to 14 points)
  - Producer education and workforce development (up to 12 points)
  - Enhancing food safety and regulatory compliance (up to 10 points)
- Project includes a clearly identified issue, problem, or need, and sufficient details on how the project will address the stated issue, problem, or need. (20 points)
- Project demonstrates how it will increase the competitiveness of Utah grown specialty crops (20 points)