

Request for Proposals

IDALS Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Specialty Crop Block Grants are available to Iowa non-profit organizations, cooperatives, specialty crop industry associations/organizations, and producer groups (“eligible applicants”) to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. However, individuals, institutions, and a single organization (“partnering entities”) may participate in this grant program by developing and submitting proposals through an eligible applicant. Eligible applicants must reside, and/or conduct business or be organized in Iowa and must be in good standing.

Grant funds shall be used for projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops that benefit the specialty crop industry as a whole and will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit a particular product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as partnering entities.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. Both fresh and processed specialty crops are included. Livestock and poultry are not considered specialty crops.

Proposals must be received by IDALS on or before 4:00 p.m. on May 21st, 2010. Applicants will receive an email confirmation within 2 business days.

Only one proposal per eligible entity will be accepted.

IDALS encourages proposals that provide matching funds. While matching funds are not required, those requests will be given priority.

Grant awards will be considered up to a maximum of \$20,000. Administrative costs and indirect costs are not allowed.

Projects that support biobased projects and bioenergy and energy programs, including biofuels and other alternative uses for agricultural and forestry commodities, should visit the USDA Energy website at: <http://www.energymatrix.usda.gov/> for information on how to submit those projects for consideration.

Projects that support farmers markets that do not solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops should visit the farmers market promotion program at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fmpp> for information on how to submit those projects for consideration.

Projects that support research and extension activities to solve critical specialty crop industry issues should visit the USDA website at:

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/specialtycropresearchinitiative.cfm> for more information on how to submit those projects for consideration.

IDALS will notify applicants on the status of their proposal after receiving federal approval. The submission of a grant proposal does not guarantee funding.

Proposal Requirements

A proposal must include the following documents:

- Completed Cover Sheet and Abstract
- Completed W-9 Form
- Completed Minority Impact Statement
- Project Narrative
- Budget Worksheet
- Supporting documents including letters or other evidence of commitment by partners, resource providers and documentation of matching funds.
- Federal form SF 424B

Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

Project Format

Project Narrative must be limited to a maximum of 6 pages. IDALS reserves the right to reject any proposals with a Project Narrative over 6 pages in length.

Standard 8 ½” x 11” white paper, one inch margins, typed, 12 point font, double spaced, one side of paper, pages must be numbered, stapled in the upper left hand corner but not bound.

The original must bear the original signature of the authorized representative.

Project Narrative

IDALS encourages single project proposals. Proposals may have more than one project undertaken. However, each project within the proposal must be outlined separately and must include all required sections (except the main Cover Sheet). For example: Project A must have a Title and an abstract, Project Purpose, Potential Impact, Expected Measurable Outcomes, Work Plan, Budget Narrative, Project Oversight, Project Commitment, Budget Worksheet; Project B must have a Title and an abstract and must have Project Purpose, and all the additional sections. However, only one Cover Sheet is necessary.

The following bold type Headings must be used in the Project Narrative.

Project Purpose Clearly state the purpose of the project. Describe the specific issue, problem, interest or need to be addressed. Explain why the project is important and timely. Please indicate if this project will be or has been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program.

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

Expected Measurable Outcomes Describe at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome-oriented objective that directly and meaningfully supports the project's purpose and is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries. The measurable outcome-oriented objective must define an event or condition that is external to the project and that is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries and/or the public. Describe how performance toward meeting outcomes will be monitored. Include a performance monitoring plan to describe the process of collecting and analyzing data to meet the outcome-oriented objectives. (See Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Logic Model and explanation on page 9).

Work Plan

Explain briefly how each measurable outcome will be accomplished. Be clear about who will do the work. Include appropriate time lines. *Please note: Federal approval is not expected until after October 1, 2010. Time lines should not start before this date.*

Budget Narrative

Provide in sufficient detail, information about the budget categories listed on the Budget Form for each project to demonstrate that grant funds are being expended on eligible grant activities that meet the purpose of the program. **IMPORTANT - Refer to appropriate AMS/USDA Appendixes as noted in the Guidelines for your entity type and for allowable costs.**

- PERSONNEL –

Indicate the number of salaried persons, their title, the percent of full time equivalents (FTE), their estimated hours spent on the project and their hourly rate.

Persons employed by the subgrantee entity should be listed in this category. A justification of how that employee will be directly involved in the project must be included in the narrative. General administrative or accounting duties are not considered acceptable. The duties must relate directly to the project plan.

Those employed by others would be listed as subcontractors or consultants, and listed in the contractors/consultants section.

- TRAVEL – If applicable

Indicate the number of people who will be traveling, their mode of travel, the number of days of travel, their destination, and costs of meals, lodging, etc. as applicable. *Please note – Grant funds will not allowed for reimbursement of travel expenses where the cost is over the State government travel requirements. Currently for in-state travel the rates are: Lodging: \$75 plus tax; Mileage: 39 cents; Meals: \$8/\$12/\$23.*

- EQUIPMENT – This category includes items of property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000. If the cost is under \$5,000, then include these items under SUPPLIES.

Provide an itemized list of equipment purchases or rentals, along with a brief narrative on the intended use of each equipment item, and the cost for all the equipment purchases or rentals.

Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct and indirect charges. Capital expenditures means expenditures for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, land), or expenditures to make improvements to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to put it in place. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in transit insurance, freight, and installation may be included in, or excluded from the acquisition cost in accordance with the governmental unit's regular accounting practices. Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of \$5000 or more have the prior approval of IDALS.

General purpose equipment means equipment, which is not limited to research, scientific or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.

Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5000.

Special purpose equipment means equipment which is used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. The special purpose equipment must solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops and benefit the specialty crop industry.

Rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the cost principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR 3015.

- SUPPLIES – This is anything with acquisition cost under \$5,000 and could be anything from office supplies and software to educational or field supplies. For non-typical materials & supplies items, include a brief narrative of how this fits with the project.

Provide an itemized list and estimate the dollar amount for each item.

For example, office supplies such as pens, paper, toner, etc - \$500; Gardening supplies such as soil and fertilizer - \$500. Items such as telephone, postage, fax and express mail are more appropriately listed under the “Other” category.

- CONTRACTUAL – Provide a short description of the services each contract covers and include the flat rate fee OR the total hourly rate fee for each contract

Compensation for contractor/consultant services should be reasonable and consistent with that paid for similar services in the marketplace. Contractor/consultant rates shall not exceed \$130,000 or \$500 per eight-hour day, excluding travel and subsistence costs.

If the contract is for service or maintenance, costs should be in direct correlation to the use of the equipment for the project (i.e., if a particular copy machine is used 50% of the time for the project, the project should only be charged 50% of the service contract paid from Federal funds.)

- OTHER – Provide a detailed description of all other direct costs such as:

Conferences/Meeting - Costs of holding a conference or meeting are included in this category. Some examples are the rental of facilities or equipment for the meeting. Details of costs for each conference or meeting should be broken out and provided in the budget. If grant funds are used to pay for anything other than speaker expenses at a conference, workshop, exposition, or other similar gathering then a full disclosure of income and expenses is required. Any monies generated, in excess of the grant award, at such an event must be declared as program income.

Communications – Mailings, postage, express mail, faxes, and telephone long distance charges. Provide the estimated cost for this category.

Speaker/Trainer Fees- Provide the amount of the speaker’s fees and a description of the services they are providing.

Publication Costs –Provide the estimated cost of printing of brochures and other program materials or scientific or technical journals.

Data collection - Provide the estimated cost of collecting performance data to measure the project outcome measures.

PLEASE NOTE – NEITHER ADMINISTRATIVE OR INDIRECT COSTS ARE ALLOWABLE UNDER THE IDALS SCBGP.

- PROGRAM INCOME – Indicate the nature or source of program income (for ex: registration fees)

If program income is earned it may be used for 1) expanding the project or program; 2) continuing the project or program after the grant or sub grant support ends; and 3)

supporting other projects or programs that further the broad objectives of the grant program.

Project Oversight

Describe the oversight practices that provide sufficient knowledge of grant activities to ensure proper and efficient administration for each project. Who will oversee the project activities? How will oversight be performed?

Project Commitment

Describe how all grant partners commit to and work toward the goals and outcome measures of each proposed project.

Identify project partners and outside supporters.

Subgrantee Responsibilities

Agree to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws in the conduct of the work under the agreement.

Monitor the performance of all activities and ensure that the work is completed within the established time frame

Ensure funds are used only for expenses covered by the approved project

Ensure Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) are followed

Provide IDALS with a copy of any contract or secondary agreement relating to the project.

The following copy must be included on all printed materials, media and electronic materials and advertisements relating to the project: "Funds for this project were provided through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship."

Participate in a post-award Conference call with IDALS and other subgrantees regarding IDALS SCBGP protocol.

A Six-month Progress Report and a Final Report will be required. The Six-month Report template will be provided and will be a brief summary of activities performed, milestones achieved, and a financial report covering expenses to date based upon the approved project. The Final Report template will include results, accomplishments, and a detailed financial report. Any information or data derived from an IDALS SCBGP must be made available to IDALS which reserves the right to share these results with the general public. Projects that are less than six months shall require only a Final Report and detailed financial statement.

Prior Approvals Required:

When the following changes occur on an IDALS SCBGP, the subgrantee must contact IDALS to request prior approval.

- Change in Key Personnel

When it is necessary to change the program contact for a period of more than 3 months, submit a notice to IDALS. Request should contain the new individuals name and contact information to include name, physical address, email, and phone number.

- Change in Scope or Objectives

When it is necessary to modify the scope or objectives of the award, submit a written justification for the change along with the revised scope or objectives of the award to IDALS. If requesting to discontinue all or a portion of the project and add a new project, submit a written justification for the change along with a project proposal to include the project title, purpose, potential impact, expected measurable outcomes, work plan, budget narrative, project oversight, and project commitment.

- Extension of Grant Agreement

Where an extension of time is required on a grant; the extension must be received in writing no later than 60 days prior to the expiration date of the award. The request from the subgrantee contact must contain the following information:

The length of additional time required to complete project objectives and a justification for the extension; a summary of progress to date (status of project timeline and objectives, etc.); an estimate of remaining funds on the scheduled expiration date; and a projected timetable to complete the project for which the extension is being requested.

- Budget Changes

Where a modification to the approved budget is required, the modification must be approved if the cumulative amount of such modifications exceeds 20% of the project's total budget as initially approved by IDALS. A request for budget change shall include a description of the change and a justification for the change. Note that if the cumulative amount of allowable budget changes is less than 20%, prior IDALS approval is not required.

Keep all reports, data, financial information and other pertinent information for a minimum of three years after completion of the project

Proposal Submission Procedures

Applicants must submit one original and one copy of the proposal, including all supporting documentation.

Proposals must include the following documents:

- Completed Cover Sheet
- Abstract
- Completed W-9 Form
- Completed Minority Impact Statement

- Project Narrative
- Budget Worksheet
- Supporting documents including letters or other evidence of commitment by partners, resource providers and documentation of matching funds.
- Federal Form SF 424B

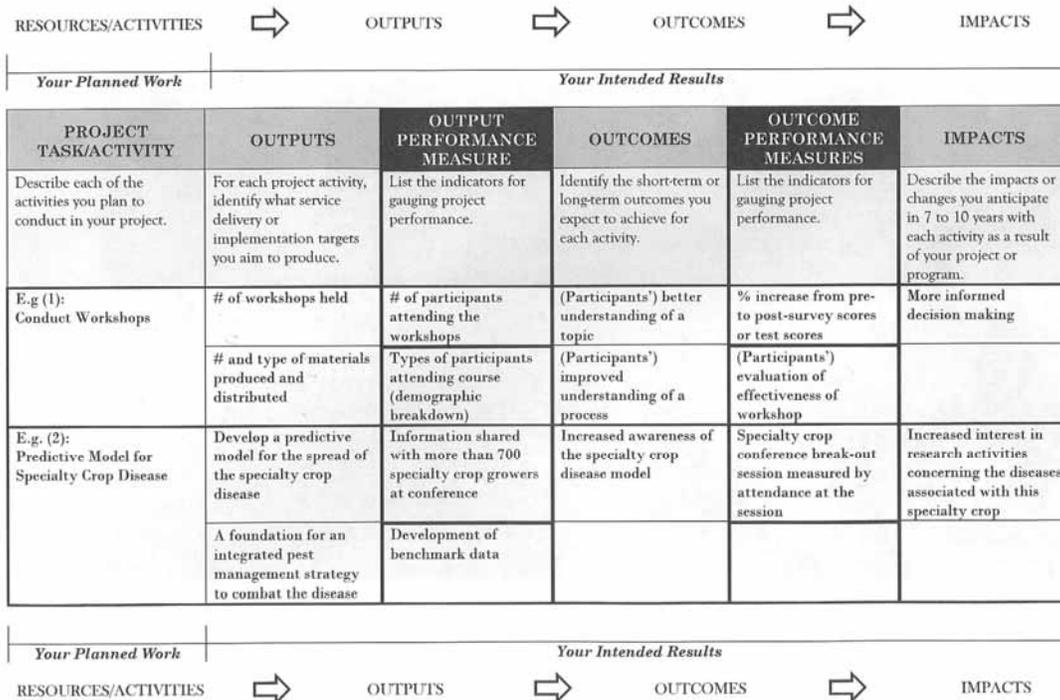
Proposals must be received by IDALS on or before 4:00 p.m. Friday May 21, 2010. IDALS will not accept FAXED proposals. The cover sheet and W-9 form require original signatures so a hard copy is required. All other proposal documents may be mailed as hard copy or on a compact disc or e-mailed as attachments. Applicants are encouraged to use delivery systems that require a signature receipt. You must meet this deadline by delivering the proposal or mailing it sufficiently in advance of the deadline to ensure its timely receipt. IDALS will send applicants an email confirmation within 2 business days of receiving the proposal. IDALS will return late proposals without consideration.

Proposals must be mailed, e-mailed, or delivered to (see previous paragraph for details):

Mike Bevins
Specialty Crops Block Grant Program
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Wallace Building, 502 E. 9th Street
Des Moines IA 50319

For questions about the grant application, contact Mike Bevins at (515) 242-5043 or Mike.Bevins@iowaagriculture.gov

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Logic Model



Developing Expected Measurable Outcomes

When developing a plan, some of the most difficult information to come up with is the performance indicators for a project. Specifically, the expected measurable outcomes can be very challenging to produce. A performance indicator, as defined by Harry Hatry in *Performance Measurement: Getting Results*, is a specific numerical measurement for each aspect of performance (i.e., output or outcome) under consideration.

Specifically, an output refers to the products and services delivered within a project. They are completed products that are the results of project activity: the amount of work done by the organization or by its contractors (such as the number of apple trees planted in an orchard or number of promotional brochures distributed).

Outcomes, on the other hand, are events, occurrences, or conditions that happen outside the activity of the project. These occurrences are of direct importance to the specialty crop industry. An outcome indicator is a measure of the amount and/or frequency of such occurrences. While outputs are what work the grantee/contractor does, the outcomes are what is accomplished by the outputs.

Also, it is important to remember, when developing your plan, that the process required to complete a project is not a performance indicator. The process refers to the workload or activities associated with completing a task; therefore, does not measure the performance of the project.

Please look over the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program logic model as a reference to develop expected measurable outcomes.

The above is an excerpt from AMS/USDA Spring Edition 2009 Grant Management Outreach. Information Source: Hatry, H.P. (2006). *Performance Measurements: Getting Results* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.