

2019 Specialty Crop Block Grant FAQ

1) Where do we find information on what costs are allowable?

The most comprehensive guidance on allowable expenses can be found in the federal cost principals located in [Subpart E of 2 CFR 200](#). We also anticipate that USDA will publish a list of allowable and unallowable costs when they post this funding opportunity. Questions regarding allowable costs can be directed to the SCBG program manager at jauer@mt.gov.

2) If our application is accepted for funds, how will funds be distributed?

Typically, funds will be distributed to an awarded grantee on a reimbursement basis. It is also possible for a grantee to request funds on an advance basis however, documentation standards are higher. Details on grantee payments are listed in the [2016 SCBG Grant Management Manual](#).

3) May we use staff at Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) as a resource in preparing our grant application?

4) Will MDA staff review my application prior to submittal?

MDA staff involved in the making for Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG) may only provide responses to applicant's technical questions with application and process compliance. Involved staff include: SCBG grant coordinator, Agriculture Development Division (ADD) Section Manager, ADD Staff Attorney, ADD Bureau Chief, MDA Deputy Director, and MDA Director.

MDA staff who are not involved in the making of Specialty Crop Block Grants are an available resource to all potential applicants however, unless MDA is listed as a partner on the grant, they may not participate in the writing of a proposal.

Applicants may also reach out to one of the State's Food and Ag Development Centers as a resource in developing their application.

5) In the Objective table, is the description column an appropriate place to describe our project activities?

Yes, the objective description column is the appropriate place to describe activities.

- 6) In previous years, this grant application has required a WorkPlan and Timeline, are these elements required for this year's grant?**

A workplan and timeline are not required to apply for the 2016 Specialty Crop Block Grant

- 7) Are applicants required to design performance measures as described in Appendix D to the application?**

No, only those applications selected for inclusion in the Montana State plan will be required to develop performance measure.

- 8) We're unsure at this point if our project will affect beginning farmer/ranchers or socially disadvantaged farmers/ranchers. Will checking 'no' in those sections negatively impact our proposal?**

Providing services to beginning farmer/ranchers and/or socially disadvantaged farmers/ranchers should be a primary focus of the grant in order to select "yes" in the corresponding boxes.

- 9) May the wording of the performance measures in Appendix D be amended to better fit our project?**

The wording of performance measures is set by USDA and may not be amended.

- 10) Can we count additional staff time (not outlined in budget) used on this project as match funds?**

Because of the added complication of counting match on your grant it is more practical to not count these funds. That said, yes, it is allowable.

- 11) Where can additional information on allowable advertising expenses be locate?**

A detailed list of allowable and unallowable expenses can be found in the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities](#) document on the application website.

- 12) Would it be to our advantage in any way to say that we will request additional training in managing federal grants?**

It is at the applicant's determination as to whether including training in the grant will be advantageous. However, federal grants training is an allowable expense for individuals listed in the personnel section of the proposal budget.

- 13) Under each outcome measure in Appendix D, do all of the indicator measures need to be reported on?**

Under an awarded application, only one indicator need be chosen for the given outcome measure.

14) Can I budget to have a new Specialty Crop Block Grant start before my current award ends?

Yes, as long as the new project you are making a request for is distinctly different from the one you are currently working on, you may start the new project before the current one ends.

15) May Graphs be included in the grant application narrative?

Yes.

16) The RFP states that the applicants are not required to identify performance measures at the time of the application. Is it helpful if we identify the measurable outcomes as a part of the application?

The application should address expected outcomes of the project but, does not need to address a specific measurable outcome from Appendix D.

17) The RFP does not have a work plan as a part of the application. Is a work plan required in the application?

A workplan is not required.

18) The project we will be proposing includes work with specialty and non-specialty crops. Do we need to propose that the % that corresponds to the non-specialty crops will be funded through other sources?

Yes, you should have an allocation plan for all expenses where there is potential overlap between specialty and non-specialty crops. All it needs to do is state how funds will be split (i.e. the percent that will be charged to SCBG) and the rationale for how you arrived at that split.