

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program

Agriculture Finance, Trade, & Development Bureau
Montana Department of Agriculture

Proposals shall be received on or before October 31, 2025.

Legal Authority:

(MCA) Section 80-11-504 Montana Code Annotated
(ARM) Section 4. Administrative Rules of Montana

Marketing Deadline: Proposals submitted under the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program must be received on or before **October 31, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.** Proposals must be submitted through the **UPDATED** WebGrants system at <https://mtagr.webgrantscloud.com/index.do>

To apply:

- **Register Online.** Before you can fill out an application, make sure that you have registered and received a username and password at <https://mtagr.webgrantscloud.com/register.do>

- **Questions about this RFP should be directed to:**

Montana Seed Potato Research & Marketing
Montana Department of Agriculture – Finance, Trade, & Development Bureau
PO Box 200201
Helena, Montana 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402

Dani Jones (Dani.Jones@mt.gov)

MONTANA POTATO RESEARCH & MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PURPOSE : The primary goal of the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program as stated in the enabling legislation: "In order to protect and foster the health, prosperity, and general welfare of the people of Montana, it is declared to be the public policy of this state to encourage and promote intensive, scientific, and practical research into all phases of agricultural commodity culture, production, marketing, and the development of markets for commodities grown or produced in Montana."

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program was created by an affirmative vote of Montana potato producers following the process outlined in MCA 80-11-504 through 519. The Potato Research & Market Development Program will be administered by the Montana Department of Agriculture, which will receive advice from the seven-member Montana Potato Advisory Committee.

The Montana Potato Advisory Committee invites proposals to fund demonstration projects, applied research and market development projects designed to address Montana's potato industry needs and opportunities. All research & marketing project applications will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee at the first regular meeting each year and a recommendation made to the department, which projects they would like funded, and the amount of funding suggested. Recommended projects will be determined by amount of funds, type of project, need and whether the project is new or ongoing. Generally, to qualify for consideration, proposals must have practical, near-term application involving practices or organizational arrangements that will stimulate an expanded potato industry. **Research priorities identified by Montana Seed Potato Growers include management of potato viruses and their vectors, stem and tuber diseases caused by fungi, bacterial diseases including blackleg, scab, soft rot and ring rot, and weeds as alternate hosts for potato pathogens. Improved agronomic practices including water and nutrient management, cover crops, border crops, and rotation. Management of insects and weeds (including volunteer potatoes). Detection and management of potato pathogens. As well as on farm research. Public and private entities and organizations, business and industry, educational institutions, local governments, and individuals are eligible to submit proposals.**

Proposals submitted under this RFP must be received on or before October 31, 2025.

Applicants with questions about information contained in this RFP should contact:

Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program
Montana Department of Agriculture -Finance, Trade, & Development Bureau
PO Box 200201
Helena, Montana 59620-0201 (406) 444-2402

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Proposals for funding will be accepted from:

- Public and Private Agencies and Organizations
- Business and Industry
- Educational Institutions
- Local Governments
- Individuals

If two or more individuals or organizations propose to conduct a project jointly, they should submit one application as co-applicants.

Applicants must demonstrate a proven ability to carry out all elements of the proposed project. In addition, applicants proposing to rely upon the expertise of another individual or organization to undertake any part of the project must clearly define the responsibilities of that party as well as provide evidence of their willingness and demonstrated ability to undertake that area of responsibility.

Employees of the Montana Department of Agriculture and their immediate families, and members of the Montana Potato Advisory Committee and their immediate families are excluded from eligibility for funding under this program. Immediate family includes mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, and children.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Projects that address research programs to improve the quality of seed potatoes, develop and improve control measures for diseases and pests which affect or impact potatoes, improve potato-growing culture, dissemination of such information, or plan, and conduct publicity and sales promotion campaigns will be considered.

Projects should be undertaken in Montana. Proposals for projects to be conducted outside of Montana must present clear evidence that the Montana potato industry will benefit from the activity.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible costs under the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program may include, but are not limited to:

- Salaries and Wages
- Fringe Benefits
- Consultant Services (professional, technical, operational)
- Travel
- Advertising and Promotion
- Equipment (preferably leased versus direct acquisition)
- Supplies and Materials
- Communication (telephone, postage, printing, etc.)

-Data Processing

Program funds cannot be used for the payment of institutional overhead or other indirect costs such as use of land, buildings, or equipment. These costs can be used, however, in calculating the applicant match.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals under the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program must be submitted to the Montana Potato Advisory Committee at the web address listed on the transmittal page of this RFP. Applicants are responsible for timely submission of proposals.

To be considered, proposals must be responsive to the objectives identified in this RFP. Each proposal must be limited to one project or activity only, the title of which must appear on the cover sheet of the application.

The purpose of the proposal application is to provide evaluators with a written statement containing sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed activity is a sound approach to an important area of interest as outlined in the RFP, and that it merits financial support. Proposals will be judged principally on their adherence or conformity to the objectives and criteria indicated in this RFP, and the cost effectiveness of the proposed activity. The applicant may make a presentation in person at the Committee's annual meeting. The Committee will then make a recommendation to the Department whether or not to fund the project and the Department will then notify the applicant within 30 days.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals shall be no more than eight (8) pages in length (excluding the cover sheet, budget form and resumes) and conform to the format described below. Proposals over eight (8) pages in length will not be considered.

COVER SHEET

- Title of proposed project
- Name and title of applicant(s)
- Address and telephone number of applicant(s)
- Duration of proposed project (include beginning and ending dates)
- Name, address, and telephone number of contact person if other than applicant(s)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Briefly describe in one page or less, the problem, need or opportunity to be addressed, the project objectives, a description of the effort and the project's intended benefits. The overall background and approach used to address the need or opportunity should be indicated as well as the role the project will play in achieving the objectives identified in this RFP.

IDENTIFICATION OF NEED OR OPPORTUNITY

Clearly state the specific need, problem, or opportunity to be addressed, indicating its importance. The proposal should also demonstrate the potential for near-term application of technologies, practices and/or organizational arrangements that will be developed because of the project.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

A clear, concise description of the objectives of the proposed activity is required. Consistency with the objectives of the program as indicated in the RFP is critical.

DELIVERABLES

Deliverables are the anticipated product of the proposed project, which will make it useful. This section should clearly describe the deliverables, how these deliverables will be made available and benefit the Montana potato industry after the project is completed.

In addition to a written presentation of findings and recommendations, deliverables may be provided in several forms including, but not limited to one or more of the following:

- publication of "how to" guidelines or instructions
- an analysis of economic, scientific or production feasibility for a specific development project
- publication of a management, business, or marketing plan
- an audio-visual presentation of a new product or technique or methodology, or marketing and promotion effort

PLAN OF WORK

This section should provide a detailed description of how the proposed project is to be carried out. The plan should indicate the tasks to be performed, who will carry them out, where they will be conducted and a timetable for completion. The work plan should demonstrate the feasibility of conducting the proposed activity and achieving the desired results.

POTENTIAL USE

The practical or commercial application of the proposed project activity is important. This section should indicate the means by which the proposed project activity appears to have potential application or may be broadly identified and quantified to the maximum extent possible. It should also identify the groups or sectors that will benefit from the proposed activity, and if possible, the geographic regions of Montana that may benefit.

KEY PERSONNEL

This section should identify the key people who will be involved in carrying out the proposed project activity and their qualifications for doing so. Subcontractors, consultants, and others not directly associated with the applicant must be included. Qualifications of project participants will be an important consideration in granting funds.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

This section should briefly describe the facilities and equipment, if any, required to carry out the proposed work. Items to be purchased with grant funds should be fully described and justified in this section. Wherever possible, it is desirable that capital equipment to be funded under the program be leased.

CURRENT AND PENDING SUPPORT

A minimum one-to-one applicant-funding match is required for all projects. However, the Committee/Department reserves the right to waive the matching requirement.

The match may be provided in the form of cash, in-kind services, or other resources, indirect or overhead costs, or a combination of the above. **Projects with levels of matching above the one-to-one level (or with cash matching funds) may have an advantage in the competitive selection process.** The match may be provided by the project sponsor or other supporter(s). The cost of previous research leading to the proposed project will not be considered as an eligible cost for matching purposes.

Funds from the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program will be provided contingent upon receiving necessary funds from other sources, assuming the desired project timetable will be maintained. This section should identify other sources of funds or resources received or to be received, and when they were or are expected to be provided. Further, this section should also demonstrate evidence of industry support. Evidence of a commitment for other required funds or resources must be provided before Montana Potato Advisory Committee funding allocations will be finalized.

PROPOSED BUDGET

A Proposed Budget (on WebGrants) must be completed for each project submitted. This page should indicate grant funds requested by expenditure category, as well as the amount or value of the applicant's matching contribution. Please refer to the "Current and Pending Support" section of this RFP for matching requirements.

In addition to the Proposed Budget, proposals must indicate a description of project expenditures, including detail on significant cost items. In all instances, consultant services must be detailed. The number and type of personnel directly involved in the project, their hourly or salaried rates, and estimated workdays must be noted. Sources of all applicant contributions must also be indicated, and the amount of sponsor cash contributions noted.

The Montana Department of Agriculture reserves the right to audit an applicant's books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to four (4) years after completion of the project.

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection of successful proposals will be on a competitive basis. All proposals will be judged against the following criteria, consistent with the stated objectives of the program:

1. Degree to which the proposed activity addresses a significant industry need or opportunity and evidence of industry support or such an activity.

2. Demonstrated experience and ability of applicant to undertake proposed activity.
3. Clearly demonstrated potential for near-term commercial application.
4. Adequacy of plan and time frame to achieve the activity goals.

In addition, all proposals must include enough information to allow the above factors to be judged. Only those proposals, which furnish complete information, will be considered for evaluation. No partial proposals will be considered. The Montana Potato Advisory Committee and the Montana Department of Agriculture reserves the right to make a final selection or reject all proposals.

AWARDS

The Montana Potato Advisory Committee will recommend funding of successful projects through grant agreements under the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program. Selected projects must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, licensing and regulations for funds to be awarded. Evidence of such compliance may be required.

The Department will develop a grant agreement, defining all project terms, conditions and responsibilities of the applicant. The grant agreement will, in addition, clarify all legal patents and proprietary rights that will result from the proposed activity. The grant agreement will incorporate this RFP and the successful applicant's final proposal among its provisions.

The Montana Department of Agriculture will notify each applicant whose proposal is not chosen for funding in writing within 30 days. The notification will include an explanation of the Committee's reasons for not funding the proposal.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Montana Department of Agriculture staff will be responsible for monitoring each funded project. Specific terms and conditions of each funded project will be contained in the formal grant agreement. The Committee/Department reserves the right to determine the extent of reporting requirements, subject to modification in the course of the project. Interim reporting requirements will be based on the cost, duration and nature of the project.

The grant recipient may be required to make an oral report to the Committee at the conclusion of the project. The oral report will be made at a regularly scheduled Committee meeting.

A comprehensive final report will be required upon completion of the project. The final report should include:

- a comparison of actual findings and accomplishments of the project with goals and objectives described in proposal;
- reasons for deviation from established goals of proposal;
- a clear description of the commercial application and economic benefits, which accrued during the project;
- a description of its immediate impacts;
- an estimate of its long-term commercial and economic benefits.

In addition to the final project report, the Committee reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts.

OWNERSHIP AND PUBLICATION OF MATERIALS

All information and materials generated by the proposed activity become the sole property of the State of Montana. The grant recipient will retain the right to utilize, reprint and distribute all said information and materials.

LIABILITY

The Montana Potato Advisory Committee or the Montana Department of Agriculture will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any works performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

RIGHT TO KNOW

Proposals selected for funding and all related contracts shall be subject to disclosure under the Montana Right to Know Law. Further, proposals not selected for funding will be subject to disclosure under the Right to Know Law.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee and Department reserve the right to:

1. -Reject any or all proposals received in respect to this RFP
2. -Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and concurrence of applicant
3. -Clarify the scope of this RFP, within the program requirements and with appropriate notice to all applicants, to best serve the interests of the state of Montana
4. -Amend the RFP specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants
5. -Require a good faith effort on the part of the project sponsors to work with the Committee and the Department of Agriculture.