

2020 SBCG Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are there a minimum or maximum numbers of pages allowed?

*The Application is limited to fifteen (15) pages. This does NOT include the Application Information Sheet (Exhibit A), the line item budget (Exhibit B), letters of support, or other **allowable** attachments such as researcher CVs.*

2. When will funds be available?

We do not have a specific date from USDA, but reimbursements are made quarterly beginning with the quarter ending December 31, 2019. Contracts ideally should be in place sometime in October of 2019, so project expenditures can begin. No expenditures can be incurred prior to the effective date of the contract.

3. Is there a minimum or maximum allowable dollar amount per proposal?

No, grants can be for as much or as little as is required to complete the activity. We estimate \$1.6 million up to \$1.9 million in total funding will be available in 2020. An average award is around \$50,000, but awards have been made for projects ranging from approximately \$17,000 - \$250,000.

4. Can the outcome of the research project be beyond the timeline of the grant?

Yes. These grants will fund projects for up to two years. ISDA understands that for many of Idaho's specialty crops, it may take longer than two years to reach measurable outcomes. When proposing such a project, communicate what the anticipated outcomes will be by the end of the grant and a timeline for the expected end results of the project beyond the end of the grant. Some portion of the project goals must be attainable within the grant period, and it is important to communicate HOW the project will be able to continue without the SCBGP funds at the end of the granting period.

5. Does the content of the application need to follow exactly the outline specified in the application itself and in the Application Guidelines, or are those categories just suggestions?

Yes. Proposals must be entered directly into the Application.

6. Are mushrooms or huckleberries a specialty crop?

*Yes, **if they are cultivated**. Wild harvest mushrooms and berries are NOT specialty crops.*

7. Are seeds eligible specialty crops?

Seeds of specialty crops are eligible, seeds for non-specialty crops are not eligible.

8. Can SCBGP funds be used to purchase a green house?

No, SCBGP funds cannot be used to purchase buildings. It could be used to purchase equipment and technology needed to run the green house.

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9. Can SCBGP funds be used to purchase equipment?

They can be used to purchase “specific use” equipment, but not general use equipment. See the grant guidelines for more information about the difference between specific and general use equipment. Equipment over \$5,000 must have prior approval. The proposal must specify who will take ownership of the equipment at the end of the grant period.

*If a piece of equipment will **ever** be used to benefit **anything** other than specialty crops, it is not eligible.*

10. What documents need to be submitted with the application packet?

Every Application must include the (1) Application, (2) Application Information Sheet (Exhibit A), (3) the Line Item Budget (Exhibit B), and (4) Letters of Support (optional but highly encouraged). Additional documents providing background or supporting information are not recommended and will not be included in the review process.

12. The project calls for the purchasing of many parts that will be used to make one piece of equipment, should this be listed as supplies or equipment?

The total amount of the parts and inputs should be totaled and listed as one item under equipment.

13. Equipment of \$5,000 requires prior ISDA/USDA-AMS approval – is that process difficult?

No. The equipment must be listed in the budget. ISDA will include it in the state plans to USDA-AMS. If the plan is approved by USDA, then the equipment purchase is approved.

14. What if the project entails a multi-state project that will be submitted to another state for partial funding as well, how does this effect my application to Idaho?

There is a separate Specialty Crop Multi State Program, but Idaho is not a participating state. You will need to fill out a separate application through a participating state. Participating States and other Information about this program can be found at

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scmp>

15. What regulations are to be used when calculating travel expenses for the grant?

Travel expenses must comply with the State of Idaho travel regulations listed on www.sco.idaho.gov.

16. If a project benefits more than just specialty crops, is it still eligible?

It may still be eligible. The applicant can use other monies to fund the portion of the project not relating to specialty crops. This works for project expenses that can be directly traced to specialty crops, but does not work for something like an equipment purchase which may be used to benefit both specialty and non-specialty crops.