

GDA 2022 USDA/AMS SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (SCBGP) REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT: 2/1/2022

Notice of Federal Grant Funds Availability – FY 2022
Administered By: Georgia Department of Agriculture

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) is pleased to announce the competitive solicitation process to award the 2022 USDA/AMS (Agricultural Marketing Service) Specialty Crop Block Program grant (SCBGP). Individual project award funding requests require a minimum request of \$20,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000. Awarded projects will have up to three years to complete the requirements of the grant. There are no extensions.

NOTE THAT THE AWARDING OF THIS GRANT IS CONTINGENT UPON FUNDING FROM USDA

The application process through GDA consists of TWO STEPS:

1. **Submittal** of a *Request for Concept Proposal Application* form to GDA. This will be scored against all other concept proposals submitted and *only* the TOP 25-30 highest scoring projects will go on to step #2. It is imperative that you read the directions on the Concept Proposal carefully and not skip any fields, as you will not be able to make corrections once submitted.

Please refer to the link available on the GDA grants webpage located at <https://agr.georgia.gov/financial-assistance> for the grant Concept Proposal/pre-application form.

New for 2022: The DUNS number system is obsolete and has been replaced by the UEI. You get your UEI, go [here](#).

THE CONCEPT PROPOSAL IS DUE TO GDA BY Wed., 3/2/22 at NOON to GrantsDivision@agr.georgia.gov. DO NOT SEND IT TO ANY OTHER GDA EMAIL ADDRESS(ES), INCLUDING THAT OF THE GRANTS DIRECTOR.

2. **Invitation** (by 3/7/22) from GDA to submit a full project proposal application package, which is due to GDA 3/25/22 at NOON: Template will be included in the invite e-mail. Note that there are NEW Performance Measures for 2022 and your project must align with at least ONE of seven [revised Outcome Measures](#).

ELIGIBILITY

Proposals will be accepted ONLY from GEORGIA'S: IRS-designated 501(c)(3) current non-profit organizations, commodity commissions, grower associations, state and local government entities, and colleges and universities. **Individuals and for-profit organizations (businesses) are not eligible to apply.**

Non-profit organizations that are applying for the first time must partner with a Principal Investigator (PI) from a Georgia college or university, preferably from either of Georgia's Land Grant institutions (UGA or FVSU). Because this is a very complicated grant to administer, previous experience with federal grants will factor greatly in Concept Proposal scoring, as will perceived administrative capacity.

University researchers may submit *no more than one* Concept Proposal for consideration for which they must be listed as the Principal Investigator (PI) or co-PI. Researchers should keep in mind that it is unusual for the same researcher to be funded over multiple years and should adjust expectations accordingly. Researchers should include in their proposals a plan to present the findings of their SCBG project at the annual SERFVG Conference, held each January.

If you have submitted the same project to GDA twice in the past and it has *not* been funded, it cannot be submitted again. You are welcome to submit a new project for consideration.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the SCBGP is to provide funding for projects that *enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Georgia*. The project proposal must focus on research, education, or marketing and benefit the specialty crop industry. **Projects will be chosen for funding based on potential increased impact to the specialty crop industry in Georgia.**

Specialty crops are defined as: fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, Christmas trees, turfgrass/sod, nursery and greenhouse crops, including floriculture. Note that hemp is not a specialty crop. Eligible plants must be cultivated or managed and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification (i.e. crops used for animal feed are not eligible). Processed products shall consist of greater than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water. Please see the specific listing of eligible crops on the USDA/AMS website located at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop>

FUNDING PRIORITIES/FOCUS AREAS

*The following have been identified as **funding priorities** for the SCBGP for Georgia:*

- Increasing consumption of specialty crops in Georgia's schools by expanding child knowledge of and improving access to the nutritional benefits of specialty crops;
- Enhancing specialty crop food safety, particularly in regard to helping farmers/growers/producers prepare for and comply with the provisions of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA);
- Assisting all entities in the specialty crop production/distribution chain in developing "Good Agricultural Practices," "Good Handling Practices," "Good Manufacturing Practices," and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers and processors;
- Research projects, including those which focus on helping specialty crop growers reduce the financial costs and/or environmental impact of their operations, including improved pest and disease management techniques, efficient water management, integrated pest management, and/or sustainable production;
- Developing and researching new and improved specialty crop varieties that are better adapted to Georgia's soils and climate and/or result in longer shelf-life;
- Increasing sales and marketability and driving demand for commercially grown specialty crops.

Note that the public is always welcome to suggest additional funding priorities to be considered by GDA for future SCBGP solicitations. These should be sent to Grants@agr.georgia.gov

GDA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of *measurable* benefits to Georgia's specialty crop producers, in relation to each dollar spent. Concept Proposals will be scored based on the IMPACT the projects will likely have on Georgia's Specialty Crop industry.

Additionally, PARTNERSHIPS are strongly encouraged for this grant and proposals/applications that show input/buy-in from all interested parties in Georgia will score higher than ones that don't. **Letters of Support should *not* be submitted with Concept Proposals but ARE required for full applications.** Letters from GDA or USDA staff will *not* be accepted, starting this year. Full applications must show evidence of Georgia specialty crop industry support in letters.

Note that *no* indirect/administrative/F&A costs can be charged for this grant. This is because USDA caps it at 8% for SCBG and GDA retains that amount to cover its overhead costs.

Please also note that this is a **very** competitive grant. Only a fraction of the Concept Proposals received will be invited to submit a full application. From there, only 1/3 to 1/2 are likely to receive funding, which is often reduced from the requested amount.

PROJECTED TIMELINE (*as proposed and subject to change*)

February 1, 2022

Announcement of 2022 SCBGP grant opportunity; Request for Concept Proposals (pre-screening) published.

MARCH 2, 2022 (Wednesday)

Deadline for submission of Concept Proposals: must be received by **NOON (NO EXCEPTIONS, NO EXTENSIONS)** to GrantsDivision@agr.georgia.gov. You will receive an acknowledgement of submission *within 24 hours*: If you do not, your application was NOT received.

No later than MARCH 7, 2022

GDA will send out Requests for Full Applications to organizations for the ~30 projects with the most impactful/highest scoring Concept Proposals. Those *not* invited to apply this year will also receive notice by the end of that week.

MARCH 25, 2022 (Friday)

Full Project Proposal/Application submission deadline to GDA by **NOON** (no exceptions) in **Word format only** to GrantsDivision@agr.georgia.gov (DO NOT send to any other GDA email addresses).

EARLY APRIL 2022

GDA staff review of full applications: revisions and clarifications requested from applicants and GDA/Specialty Crop Review Committee evaluation of applications.

MID TO LATE APRIL 2022

Notice to applicants of acceptance/denial of their project proposals by the Review Committee. Revisions made to projects before submission to USDA/AMS-SCBGP; Most applications will require scope/budget revisions to projects based on Review Committee recommendations.

LATE SEPTEMBER 2022

Award letters and contract agreements will go out to awardees/sub-grantees through the Principal Investigator (PI). Announcement of grant awards through press release/GDA website.

OCTOBER 2022

3-year grant period begins (once all contracts are fully executed).

NOVEMBER 2023

First Annual Report Due. Template will be emailed to Principal Investigators by ~10/1/23.

MARCH 31, 2024

Grantees should have requested reimbursement for at least 50% of their grant funds by this date. Unspent funds are subject to recapture and reallocation. New workplans are required if at least 50% of funds are not drawn down by now.

NOVEMBER 2024

Second Annual Report Due. The template will be emailed to Principal Investigators by ~10/1/24.

SEPTEMBER 29, 2025

3-year Grant period ends. NO EXTENSIONS. Projects must be completed by this date and absolutely no 2022 grant funds can be spent after this date.

NOVEMBER 2025

Final Reports Due. The template will be emailed to Principal Investigators by ~10/1/25.

For questions or additional information please e-mail: SCBGP Coordinator at Grants@agr.georgia.gov