

North Dakota Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Grant Manual/Request for Proposals (RFP)

Packet includes general program information, application instructions, evaluation sheet and application template.

Fiscal Year 2010-FarmBill Funding Cycle

Application Due Date: May 17, 2010, 5:00 P.M.
The forms in this manual may be reproduced.

**State of North Dakota - Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
FY 2010-Farm Bill Grant Manual**

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Acronyms used in this document

AMS – Agriculture Marketing Service

CFR – Code of Federal Regulation

FB – Farm Bill

FTE – Full time equivalent employee

NDDA – North Dakota Department of Agriculture

RFP – Request for Proposals

SCBGP – Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

U.S.C. – United States Code

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

I. General Information

A. Background

On December 21, 2004, the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) authorized the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide grants to State departments of agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) amended the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 and authorized the USDA to provide grants to States for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012 to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

All North Dakota specialty crop industry applications will be received and reviewed by the North Dakota Department of Agriculture. Selected applications will be included into one North Dakota state plan and submitted to the USDA for final approval.

B. Funding Source and Available Funds

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is charged with distributing approximately \$55 million in block grant funds to state departments of agriculture, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in fiscal year 2010. AMS has announced that North Dakota will be receiving \$611,274.92 for this round of grants.

North Dakota Department of Agriculture SCBG – FB program funds will be distributed to the specialty crop industry through a competitive review process. Competitive grant awards are capped at \$100,000 for a specific project.

SCBGP-FB grant funds will be awarded for projects in October-November of 2010 and must be completed by March 31, 2012. Under extra-ordinary circumstances, NDDA may extend that deadline up to 90 days. Applications that build on a previously funded SCBGP project may be submitted. In such cases, the application should clearly indicate how the project complements previous work.

More than one project application per applicant may be submitted. Projects may be submitted by a single organization or for combined specialty crop efforts. Multi-state projects are also eligible to provide a growing need for solutions to problems that cross state boundaries.

C. Application & Funding Timing

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture is requesting proposals for fiscal year 2010-FB grant cycles. Funds will be disbursed when program applications have been submitted and approved by both The North Dakota Department of Agriculture and the USDA. Selected grant projects will not be able to begin project activity and incur eligible project expenses until this approval has been received. It is anticipated this will be late fall or early winter 2010.

May 17th Deadline for receiving applications

June 15th Recommendations from the Peer Review Committee

July 1st Commissioner makes decisions on which projects to submit to USDA

July 10th All applicants notified of Commissioner's decision

July 29th Deadline to submit applications to USDA for approval NDDA. (Deadline set by USDA)

October Anticipated USDA approval

October -November Sub Contracts signed with successful applicants

D. Eligible Projects – Program Goals

To be eligible for a grant, the project(s) must enhance the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, nursery crops (including floriculture).

The USDA encourages projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry:

- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems
- Assisting all entities in the specialty crop 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
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes
- Enhancing food safety
- Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops
- Pest and disease control
- Development of organic and sustainable production practices of specialty crops
- Increasing the competitiveness of specialty crop farmers, including Native American and disadvantaged farmers. This may include developing local and regional food systems, and improving food access in underserved communities.

Grant funds must be used for projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops or that benefit a specialty crop industry as a whole.

Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Applications for grant funds should show how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

The following are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable projects:

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business.

A State requests grant funds to make grants to individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual business.

Examples of Acceptable Projects

A state requests funding to contract with a university to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which can be shared with many growers throughout the State.

A single grower requests funds to demonstrate the viability of organic small fruit production and partners with Cooperative Extension to publicize the working model of diversification to other regional growers.

A single company requests funds to provide a viable pollination alternative to specialty crop stakeholders in the region which currently does not have one.

A single specialty crop organization requests funds to conduct an advertising campaign that will benefit their specialty crop members.

A single farmer erects high tunnels on their property to extend the growing season of tomatoes and lettuce and conducts a field day and farm tour to encourage other small family farmers to adopt the production methods.

E. Eligible Applicants

Proposed projects must be supported by the impacted specialty crop growers or industry sector. This may be illustrated by support from the industry sector organization or by individual letters of support from impacted growers.

Proposals will be accepted from individuals, groups, businesses and organizations involved in North Dakota agriculture. Proposals may involve collaborations or partnerships between producers, industry, academia or agricultural organizations. Applicants may cooperate with any public or private organization.

Projects should benefit the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, individual or commercial product. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are eligible to participate as project partners.

Employees of NDDA and family members (*i.e. mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, and children*) are not eligible to submit an eligible competitive grant proposal.

F. Eligible Specialty Crops

Specialty crops are defined in law as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.” The tables below list plants commonly considered fruits and tree nuts, vegetables, culinary herbs and spices, medicinal plants, and nursery, floriculture, and horticulture crops. This list is not intended to be all inclusive. The USDA maintains a list of eligible specialty crops on its website that will be updated as USDA gets new questions. See: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp. If you have questions regarding whether your crop is eligible you can contact NDDA.

List of Plants Commonly Considered Fruits and Tree Nuts

Almond	Grape (including raisin)
Apple	Guava
Apricot	Kiwi
Avocado	Litchi
Banana	Macadamia
Blackberry	Mango
Blueberry	Nectarine
Breadfruit	Olive
Cacao	Papaya
Cashew	Passion fruit
Citrus	Peach
Cherimoya	Pear
Cherry	Pecan
Chestnut (for nuts)	Persimmon
Coconut	Pineapple
Coffee	Pistachio
Cranberry	Plum (including prune)
Currant	Pomegranate
Date	Quince
Feijou	Raspberry
Fig	Strawberry
Filbert (hazelnut)	Suriname cherry
Gooseberry	Walnut

List of Plants Commonly Considered Vegetables

Artichoke	Mustard and other greens
Asparagus	Okra
Bean	Pea
Snap or green	Garden, English or edible pod
Lima	
Dry, edible	
Beet, table	onion
Broccoli (including broccoli raab)	Opuntia
Brussels sprouts	Parsley
Cabbage (including Chinese)	Parsnip
Carrot	Pepper
Cauliflower	Potato
Celeriac	Pumpkin
Celery	Radish (all types)
Chive	Rhubarb
Collards (including kale)	Rutabaga
Cucumber	Salsify
Eggplant	Spinach
Endive	Squash (summer and winter)
Garlic	Sweet corn
Horseradish	Sweet potato
Kohlrabi	Swiss chard
Leek	Taro
Lettuce	Tomato (including tomatillo)
Melon (all types)	Turnip
Mushroom (cultivated)	Watermelon

List of Plants Commonly Considered Culinary Herbs and Spices

Ajwain	Clary	Malabathrum
Allspice	Cloves	Marjoram
Angelica	Comfrey	Mint (all types)
Anise	Common rue	Nutmeg
Annatto	Coriander	Oregano
Artemisia (all types)	Cress	Orris root
Asafetida	Cumin	Paprika
Basil (all types)	Curry	Parsley
Bay (cultivated)	Dill	Pepper
Bladder wrack	Fennel	Rocket (arugula)
Bolivian coriander	Fenugreek	Rosemary
Borage	Filé (gumbo, cultivated)	Rue
Calendula	Fingerroot	Saffron
Chamomile	French sorrel	Sage (all types)
Candle nut	Galangal	Savory (all types)
Caper	Ginger	Tarragon
Caraway	Hops	Thyme
Cardamom	Horehound	Turmeric
Cassia	Hyssop	Vanilla
Catnip	Lavender	Wasabi
Chervil	Lemon balm	Water cress
Chicory	Lemon thyme	
Cicely	Lovage	
Cilantro	Mace	
Cinnamon	Mahlab	

List of Plants Commonly Considered Medicinal Herbs

Artemissia	Liquorice
Arum	Marshmallow
Astragalus	Mullein
Boldo	Passion flower
Cananga	Patchouli
Comfrey	Pennyroyal

Coneflower	Pokeweed
Ephedra	St. John's wort
Fenugreek	Senna
Feverfew	Skullcap
Foxglove	Sonchus
Ginko biloba	Sorrel
Ginseng	Stevia
Goat's rue	Tansy
Goldenseal	Urtica
Gypsywort	Witch hazel
Horehound	Wood betony
Horsetail	Wormwood
Lavender	Yarrow
Yerba buena	

List of Commonly Considered Nursery, Floriculture, and Horticulture Crops

Note: Under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), turfgrass sod is not eligible. Under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB), horticulture was added to the definition making turfgrass sod eligible.

Christmas Trees
Cut Flowers
Honey
Hops
Maple Syrup
Tea Leaves

G. List of Ineligible Commodities

Alfalfa	Primrose
Barley	Rapeseed oil
Borage	Range grasses
Canola Oil	Rice
Cotton	Rye
Cottonseed oil	Safflower oil
Dairy products	Shellfish (marine or freshwater)
Eggs	Sorghum
Field corn	Soybean oil
Fish (marine or freshwater)	Soybeans
Flaxseed	Sugar beets
Hay	Sugarcane
Livestock products	Sunflower oil
Millet	Tobacco
Mustard seed oil	Tofu
Oats	Wheat
Peanut oil	Wild Rice
Peanuts	

H. Multi-State Partnerships

Multi-state projects are encouraged to provide a growing need for solutions to problems that cross state boundaries such as, but not limited to: addressing good agricultural practices, research on crop productivity or quality, enhancing access to federal nutrition programs, pest and disease management, or commodity-specific projects addressing common issues in multi-state regions. If interested in working with a particular state or states, please contact NDDA for further details.

I. Administration of Grants

AMS applies the following federal grant uniform administrative requirements to the management of each grant award, and the NDDA shall in turn apply these requirements to their sub-grantees based on the type of organization through their contractual or cooperative linkages. For example, if the State government sub-awards to a non-profit, the administrative requirements applicable to a non-profit will apply.

- State and Local Governments and Indian Tribal Governments - 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3016
- Colleges and Universities - 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019
- Non-Profits - 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019
- For Profits - 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019

J. Allowable Costs

All awards and sub-awards are subject to those cost principles applicable to the particular organization concerned. For example, if a State government sub-awards to a university, the cost principles applicable to a university will apply. Please refer to the applicable cost principles when developing your project activities and budget. You may reference Appendix A List of Selected Items of Cost Contained in OMB Cost Principles Regulations to locate the principles applied in establishing the allowability or unallowability of specific items of cost. All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

- State and Local Governments and Indian Tribal Governments - 2 CFR 225 (OMB Circular A-87). See Appendix B Unallowable and Allowable Costs for State Governments, for specific unallowable and allowable costs under the SCBGP-FB for State governments.
- Colleges and Universities - 2 CFR 220 (OMB Circular A-21).
- Non-Profits - 2 CFR 230 (OMB Circular A-122).
- For Profits - 48 CFR Part 31.2.

K. Eligible Expenses - Allowable Costs (See CFR Part 225 for all allowable costs).

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in these sections is not intended to imply that it is unallowable. See 2 CFR Part 225 for further guidance on cost principles.

Eligible project expenses include, but are not limited to:

- ***Compensation for Personnel Services*** – (salaries, wages and fringe benefits)
Compensation for personnel services during the period of performance under the grant project, including salaries, wages, and fringe benefits to the extent that they are reasonable for the services rendered and they are supported with adequate documentation in accordance with 2 CFR 225 App. B. Specific federal requirements may be found on the Office of Management & Budget website “Circulars” information area (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>).
- ***Consultant Services or Subcontractors*** -
 - Advertising and public relations costs that solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.
 - Costs incurred by advisory councils or committees.

- Costs of professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill.
- ***Materials and Supplies -***

Costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out the grant project. Purchased materials and supplies shall be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs.
- ***Equipment and other Capital Expenditures -*** (lease/rental or depreciation costs)
 - 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 AMS. “Special purpose equipment” means equipment which is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Examples of special purpose equipment include microscopes, spectrometers, and produce coolers.
 - Rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the cost principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR 3015. To the extent that the rates are reasonable in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased. Rental arrangements should be reviewed periodically to determine if circumstances have changed and other options are available.
- ***Other Miscellaneous Costs -*** (i.e. telephone, meetings, publications, etc.).
 - Costs incurred for telephone services, local and long distance telephone calls, telegrams, postage, messenger, electronic or computer transmittal services and the like.
 - Costs of meetings and conferences with the primary purpose of dissemination of technical information. This includes costs of rental of facilities, speakers’ fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences with the exception of entertainment costs as described under unallowable costs.
 - Publication costs include the costs of printing (including the processes of composition, plate-making, press work, binding, and the end products produced by such processes), distribution, promotion, mailing, and general handling. Page charges for professional journal publications are allowable as a necessary part of research costs where: (1) The research papers report work supported by the Federal Government; and (2) The charges are levied impartially on all research papers published by the journal, whether or not by federally-sponsored authors.
 - The cost of training provided for employee development or agricultural producers.

L. Restrictions and Limitations on Grant Funds

- Grant funds shall supplement the expenditure of State funds in support of specialty crops grown in that State, rather than replace State funds.
- Grant funds may not be used to fund political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7321-7326).
- Development or participation in lobbying activities pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1352 including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying are unallowable. 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.

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.

- 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 AMS. (Note: Prior approval from AMS means that the special purpose equipment must be included in the State Plan, and the State Plan must receive approval from AMS. If special purpose equipment was not originally included in the approved State plan, then the grantee must request approval from AMS to purchase the equipment before utilizing grant funds.)

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.

M. Ineligible Expenses - Unallowable Costs

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in this section is not intended to imply that it is allowable. Please see 2 CFR Part 225 for further guidance on cost principles.

Ineligible expenses include:

- ***Capital Expenditures for General Purpose Equipment, Buildings and Land -***
 - 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.
 - “General purpose equipment” means equipment, which is not limited to research, medical, scientific or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, 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 the lesser of the capitalization level established by the governmental unit for financial statement purposes, or \$5000.
- ***Bad debts -*** Paying off existing debt.
 - Including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs.
- ***Lobbying, political and other governmental activities -***
 - Development or participation in lobbying activities including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying are not allowed.
 - Development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326) is not allowed.
- ***Entertainment and alcohol -***
 - Alcoholic beverages except when the costs are associated with enhancing the competitiveness of wine grapes and prior approval is given from the awarding agency.
 - Amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are not allowed.
- ***Travel costs -***
 - All expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence and related items incurred by the competitive grant recipient.

- **Other expenses -**

- Contributions to a contingency reserve or any similar provision.
- Donated or volunteer services may be furnished to a governmental unit by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor. The value of these services is not reimbursable either as a direct or indirect cost.
- Contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the governmental unit, regardless of the recipient.
- Fines, penalties, damages, and other settlements resulting from violations (or alleged violations) of, or failure of the governmental unit to comply with, Federal, State, local, or Indian tribal laws and regulations.
- Organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used.
- Costs of goods or services for personal use of the governmental unit's employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.
- Costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.
- Grant funds shall supplement the expenditure of State funds in support of specialty crops grown in that State, rather than replace State funds.
- Indirect (administrative support) costs,
- Tuition.

N. General Compliance

All awarded grant projects must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and the terms of the grant award. Specific federal requirements may be found on the Office of Management & Budget website "Circulars" information area <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. Each applicant is responsible for identifying and complying with all circulars relevant to the applicant's specialty crop industry.

O. Records Requirements

The grantee will be responsible for setting up and maintaining a project file that contains all records of correspondence with NDDA, receipts, invoices and copies of all reports and documents associated with the project. The grantee shall retain all data and other records relating to the acquisition and performance of the Grant Award Agreement for a period of three years after the completion of the agreement. All records shall be subject to inspection and audit by state personnel at reasonable times. Upon request, the grantee shall produce a legible copy of any or all such records.

P. Monitoring

NDDA reserves the ability to perform site monitoring visits to any and all grantees to ensure that work is progressing within the required time frame and that fiscal procedures are followed accurately and appropriately. Monitoring includes both financial and program information as well as site visits.

Q. Liability

NDDA 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 work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

R. Open Records

Proposals submitted for funding and all related contracts and reports shall be subject to disclosure under the North Dakota open records law.

S. Other Considerations

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the property of NDDA. NDDA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, otherwise use, and to authorize others to use materials produced under this grant agreement.

NDDA also reserves the right to:

- Post funded proposals or final reports to the NDDA website;
- Reject any or all proposals received;
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant;
- Use any or all ideas submitted unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights;
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFP requirement and with appropriate notice to potential applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of North Dakota;
- Amend program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to potential applicants;
- Require a good faith effort on part of the project sponsor to work with NDDA subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results in North Dakota;
- Withhold any payments when contract conditions are not met.

II. Application Instructions & Requirements

A. Application Packet Requirements

All applicants must adhere to the following instructions, in addition to other requirements as stated in this grant manual to be considered eligible for grants. Please use the attached proposal template. Applications missing any of the subsequent information may be deemed ineligible.

1. Cover page and abstract – Please use the cover page in the attached proposal template to provide the name and contact information for the applicant (or lead agency in the case of multi-agency projects) administering the project, a title that adequately describes the project, and an abstract of 200 or fewer words describing the proposed project.

The project abstract must contain a summary of the proposed project suitable for dissemination to the public. It should be a self-contained description of the project and should contain a statement of objectives and methods to be employed.

2. Project Purpose – Clearly state the specific issue, problem, interest or need to be addressed. The following questions should be addressed in this section:

- What is the specific issue, problem or need to be addressed by the project?
- Why is the project important and timely?
- What are the objectives of the project?
- If the project builds on a previously approved project, how does this project complement work done previously? Provide a summary (3 to 5 sentences per project) of the results of the completed work on this project, the long-term quantifiable effects of these results (especially as they impact on the specialty crop industry), and how this year's funding will supplement or build on previous funding from the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB .
- Has the project been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program? If yes, indicate funding source.

Example

The recent introduction of X virus has threatened specialty crop production; the virus has already caused enormous crop losses in many States (PROBLEM). This research proposal will assess the likely spread of the virus from the initial introduction point and will identify plant reservoir hosts for the disease to form the basis for an integrated pest management strategy to prevent further crop losses (IMPORTANCE and OBJECTIVE). This project has not been submitted or funded by another Federal or State grant program.

3. Potential Impact – Discuss the number of people or operations affected, the intended beneficiaries of each project, and/or the potential economic impact, if such data is available and relevant to the project(s). This section should show how the project potentially impacts the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. The following questions should be answered:

- Who are the beneficiaries of the project?
- How many beneficiaries will be impacted?
- How will the beneficiaries be impacted by the project?
- What is the potential economic impact of the project if available?

Example

This project will impact the State's approximately 3000 farms involved in growing the specialty crops (BENEFICIARIES IMPACTED AND #'s). These crops represent approximately \$1 billion in farm income and are the largest crop in the State (ECONOMIC IMPACT). In order to continue the growth this industry has experienced in recent years, this project will develop and conduct marketing efforts to increase their market share (HOW BENEFICIARIES WILL BE IMPACTED).

4. Expected Measurable Outcomes – The following questions should be answered in this section.

- What is at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the project's purpose and is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries? The measurable outcome, when possible, should include the following:

1. GOAL
2. PERFORMANCE MEASURE
3. BENCHMARK
4. TARGET

- How will performance toward meeting the outcome(s) be monitored?
 1. Who are your data sources?
 2. How will data be collected?
 3. If using a survey, provide information on the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used, and the population to be surveyed.
 4. If a draft questionnaire is available, you may want to include a copy with your application.
 5. How will data gathered be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it is gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods?

Examples of outcome measures may include, but are not limited to: per capita consumption, consumer awareness as a percent of target market reached, market penetration based on sales by geographic region, dollar value of exports, or web site hits. For research grants they may include generation of new knowledge, research quality, attainment of leadership in the field, or the development of human resources (e.g., providing opportunities for graduate students).

Steps to Developing Outcome Measures

Whenever possible, the outcomes should include a goal, performance measure, baseline, and a target. The following four steps provide guidance on how to develop outcome measures.

1) Determine what the project will accomplish, i.e., the intended results of the project, generally expressed as a GOAL or OBJECTIVE.

Goals or objectives should be: a) based on a needs analysis and be specific, realistic results you hope to achieve through the project activities; b) specific; and c) outcome-oriented. Outcome oriented objectives identify the ultimate result, while the work plan activities identify how you intend to achieve the objectives. When developing outcome-oriented objectives, ask yourself “why” you are performing each grant activity; and specify not only what will be achieved, but also when those results will be achieved.

2) Figure out how to measure the results and select the PERFORMANCE MEASURE.

For each objective identified in step 1, select the performance measure. Performance measures are measures/indicators used to observe progress and measure actual results compared to expected results. They are usually expressed in quantifiable terms and should be objective and measurable (numeric values, percentages, scores and indices); although in certain circumstances qualitative measures are appropriate.

3) Determine the BASELINE for each measure and set TARGET goals for future performance.

For each measure identified in step 2, determine the baselines against which you will measure. Baselines are usually determined by researching past circumstances in the area

you are trying to measure. As an alternative, you may use benchmarks established by third parties accepted as the standard-setters in your industry. If data does not exist, describe the lack of data. It may be appropriate in the first year to set less specific targets, such as “improvement” where any increase represents outcome achievement, and set more concrete targets in subsequent years when baseline data is available.

Use the baseline data to set targets for the quantity of change expected. Targets may be framed in terms of:

- a) Absolute level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people);
- b) Change in level of achievement (ex: feed 150 homeless people, 35 more than last year); or
- c) Change in relation to the scale of the problem (ex: feed 150 homeless people, approximately 10% of the city’s homeless population.)

If you are starting up a new project or trying new approaches remember that little or no measurable progress will be evident in the project start-up phase. This delay in seeing measurable results should be reflected in target-setting. When setting targets, you should take into account external factors that influence your success. You may have a grand ultimate goal, but you should view annual targets as small steps toward that ultimate goal.

You may also want to set stretch goals by using benchmarks as your targets. Benchmarks tell you how the rest of the industry is doing; when you gather data for benchmarks, you look at the results of other organizations serving your type(s) of customers, doing your type of work. Another alternative is to include minimum and maximum targets in your application. For example, “We plan, at a minimum, for a 5% increase. However, we will strive for a 10% increase, which our data shows is possible if all external factors work in our favor and our new methodology yields the same results in the demonstration phase.”

4) Develop your performance monitoring plan or data collection plan.

Define who your data sources are and how the data will be collected. If the project involves a survey, provide some information about the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used and the population to be surveyed. If a draft questionnaire is available, you may want to include a copy with the application. Outline how data gathered will be used to correct deficiencies and improve performance, both as it is gathered and analyzed and in subsequent project periods. This data collection plan should be integrated into your work plan and budget.

Examples of Outcome Measures

The following are examples of outcome measures. They do not include examples of a performance monitoring plan.

Example 1

The GOAL of this project is to promote specialty crop X in Mexico in order to increase the volume.

Volume Increase:

BASELINE 2007: Actual volume (20# equiv. cases) of specialty crop exported to Mexico: 53,969

TARGET 2008: 60,000

TARGET 2009: 70,000

TARGET 2010: 80,000

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Derive from specialty crop commission assessment reports at the end of each year.

Example 2

Increase the number of specialty crop farmers following Good Agricultural Practices (GOAL) from the current 18 (BENCHMARK) to 55 in two years (TARGET) measured by the number of GAP audits passed (PERFORMANCE MEASURE).

Example 3

Increase consumer awareness of specialty crops by distributing 1000 pieces of informational materials containing locations where to purchase specialty crops (GOAL). Six months after distribution, survey 50 locations (PERFORMANCE MEASURE) to determine if sales increased by 25% (TARGET) from the level before distribution of marketing materials (BENCHMARK).

5. Work Plan –The following information should be included in this section.

- Identify the activities necessary to accomplish the project objectives. Make sure to include your performance monitoring/data collection plan activity described in the expected measurable outcome section in the work plan.
- Indicate who will do the work of each activity and how they are qualified to do this work. If collaborative arrangements or subcontracts are used, make sure you specify their role and responsibilities in performing project activities.
- Include timelines for accomplishing each activity. Make sure to include the month and year the project is scheduled to begin.

The work plan section may be in any format you choose as long as it contains the appropriate information. The following is an example of a work plan:

Work Plan Example:

Project Activity	Who	Timeline
Assemble the specialty crop steering committee to provide direction throughout project	Agricultural Marketing Council, specialty crop industry representatives from the mushroom, apple, and peach councils	December 2010
Develop statement of work for literature review	Ag Marketing Council	January 2011
Procure literature reviewer	Ag Marketing Council	January – February

Conduct literature review on the post-harvest nutritional content of specialty crops and report gaps to steering committee	ABC Consultant	February – March
Prioritize research gaps; develop/issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for original research	ABC Consultant	March – April
Receive proposals; distribute to steering committee	ABC Consultant	April – May
Review and select proposals	Specialty crop steering committee	April – May
As appropriate, refer proposals to individual commodity research and promotion programs	Specialty crop steering committee and individual research and promotion programs	April – May
Develop and execute research grant agreements for selected projects	Ag Marketing Council	May – June
Obtain progress reports from researchers; synthesize for steering committee	Ag Marketing Council	September, 2010 December, 2011 March, 2011
Disseminate research results to steering committee and SCBGP-FB showing progress toward project outcomes	Ag Marketing Council	June 2011

6. Budget Summary & Budget Narrative. The budget should contain a table summary and a narrative in paragraph format for each project in order for AMS to determine the costs are reasonable and allowable.

Budget Summary Table

Category	Description	Total Federal Project Expenses Requested
PERSONNEL		
FRINGE BENEFITS		
EQUIPMENT		
SUPPLIES		
CONTRACTUAL		
OTHER		
PROJECT INCOME		
TOTAL		

1) PERSONNEL – Persons employed by the grantee or subgrantee organization should be listed in this category. Those employed elsewhere would be listed as subcontractors or consultants category.

In order for secretarial and clerical salaries to be allowable as direct charges to the awards, a justification of how that person 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 be directly related to the project application.

For each project participant, indicate their title, percent of full time equivalents (FTE), and corresponding salary for the FTE.

For example, if a project participant's salary is \$50,000 and they are participating 50% of their time on the project, the total budgeted salary cost would be \$25,000.

2) FRINGE BENEFITS – Provide the rate of fringe benefits for each project participant's salary described in the personnel section.

3) EQUIPMENT – This category includes items of property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more. 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.

Please see Sections H and I for further guidance on equipment.

- Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct and indirect charges.
- 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 AMS.
- Rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the cost principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR Part 3015.

4) 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.

5) **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.

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 machine is used 50% of the time for the project, the project should only be charged 50% of the service contract paid from grant funds.)

6) **OTHER** – Provide a detailed description of all other direct costs such as:

- a) **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.
- b) **Communications** – Mailings, postage, express mail, faxes, and telephone long distance charges. Provide the estimated cost for this category.
- c) **Speaker/Trainer Fees**- Provide the amount of the speaker’s fees and a description of the services they are providing.
- d) **Publication Costs** –Provide the estimated cost of printing of brochures and other program materials or scientific or technical journals.
- e) **Data collection** - Provide the estimated cost of collecting performance data to measure the project outcome measures.

7) **PROJECT 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.

7. Project Oversight –The following questions and information should be addressed in this section:

- Who will oversee the project activities?
- How will oversight be performed? Include timelines.

Example

The Director of Marketing and Development, John Doe, will work directly with the individuals identified as representing each partnering entity. Mr. Doe will coordinate the execution of cooperative agreements with each participating entity and monitor progress throughout the year long grant period. He will contact the principals of each project by phone at least once during each quarter to determine if the projects are on-track.

8. Project Commitment – Letters of support and commitment are encouraged from impacted industry partners. Letters of support and commitment can be added to the end of the project application. Provide the following information in this section:

- Who supports this project?
- How is the North Dakota Specialty Crop Industry support demonstrated?
- How will grant partners work toward the goals and outcomes of the project?

B. Exclusions

- Grant funds may not be used to fund political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326).

C. Application Details and Format

- Proposals must be submitted in entirety.
- Proposals must be organized and have the requested information in the sequence presented in the Application Packets Requirements of this manual. Incomplete applications will not be given further consideration.
- Proposals should be typed, single spaced with 12 pt. Times New Roman font.
- Each page should be numbered.
- Proposals may not exceed 6 pages in length. (Does not include application cover sheet or letters of support.)
- The person authorized to receive funds must sign the original copy of the application and all subsequent documents in the grant process.
- One hard copy as well as the electronic version of the application and supporting documents is required.
- Proposals must provide detailed financials reflecting expenditures during the fiscal year.
- An entity may submit more than one application packet.
- University entities that are applying for grant funds must now have a letter(s) of support from the specialty crop industry representatives.

D. Application Due Date

NDDA must receive completed applications no later than **5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2010.**

E. Contact Information

Applications must be emailed and delivered to:

North Dakota Department of Agriculture
Attention: Chuck Fleming
600 E Boulevard Ave Dept. 602
Bismarck ND 58505-0020
cfleming@nd.gov
Phone: 701-328-4759

III. Grant Awards and Reporting

A. Application Packet Evaluation

All applications will be reviewed by a team of NDDA and external reviewers after the grant application submittal deadline. Applicants will be notified during the review process if monetary adjustments to grant requests, project proposal scope of work and/or project budgets are necessary. All applicants will be notified by NDDA during the application process whether or not the proposal was selected for submission to USDA. Proposals that are approved by NDDA will be included in the North Dakota State Plan which will be submitted to USDA- AMS no later than July 29, 2010 for approval.

B. Notification of Award

Upon approval of the North Dakota State Plan by USDA AMS, applicants will be notified in writing as to whether or not they received a grant award. Successful applicants will also be sent a Grant Award Agreement to sign. NDDA anticipates that grant awards and notification will be made in late 2010.

C. Grant Award Agreement and Payment

Prior to beginning work on the proposed project or receiving funding, successful applicants will be required to sign a Grant Award Agreement with the NDDA indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks and authorizing NDDA to monitor the progress of the proposed project.

Grant Award Agreements must be signed and returned to NDDA within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the Grant Award Agreement within 30 days of receipt will result in the loss of awarded grant funds, unless the delay was caused by circumstances outside the control of the grantee.

Requests for reimbursements will be accepted on a quarterly basis. Each reimbursement request must include an itemized invoice, a brief interim progress report and documentation of the work or expenses for which payment is requested. Itemization shall include the purpose, amount and date incurred.

To receive reimbursement, grantees must provide assurance that the work has been completed (i.e. include receipts, invoices) and clearly outline expenditures on the Request for Reimbursement Form. Twenty five percent of the total grant funds will be retained until receipt of the complete final report including receipts for all expenditures.

D. Reporting Requirements

NDDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Information submitted in any report to the Department will be a public record.

Interim Progress Reports – Grantees are required to submit a brief project activity overview with each request for reimbursement or as required by a contract with NDDA. These reports shall summarize project activities and progress made since the last report submitted, timeliness

of project (ahead or behind proposed timeline), externalities that effected progress/delays, expectations for the next quarter and a summary of costs and reimbursement requested.

Annual Reports - Annual performance reports are required 90 days after the end of the first year of the date of the signed grant agreement and each year until the expiration date of the grant period. Reports must detail the project status and how grant monies were used to achieve project outcomes outlined in the project proposal submitted with the grant application packet. Reports must also include a detailed financial report that tracks all expenditures against the project budget submitted with the grant proposal.

The annual performance report should be organized under, but not limited to, the following headings for each project:

Activities Performed

Briefly summarize activities performed, targets, and/or performance goals achieved during the reporting period for each project. Include favorable or unusual developments. It is encouraged to clearly convey progress toward achieving outcomes by graphing baseline data and showing the progress toward achieving set targets. If targets have already been achieved, amend the outcome measure to a “stretch goal” where the organization is challenged to go beyond what it is already doing. Identify the amended measurable outcome in the performance report.

Problems and Delays

Note unexpected delays or impediments for each project. Make sure to review measurable outcomes to determine if targets are realistic and attainable. An objective that is too stringent should be scaled back and identified in the performance report. Keep in mind that targets may slip due to all kinds of factors, such as employee turn-over and bad weather. Include revised work plan timelines.

Future Project Plans

Outline work to be performed during the next reporting period for each project.

Funding Expended To Date

Comment on the level of grant funds expended to date for each project.

Final Reports -

A **final performance report** will be required within 90 days following the end date of the grant agreement. The final report will be posted on the SCBGP-FB web site and represents an important vehicle for sharing project findings with Federal and State agencies and the public.

The final report should be organized under, but not limited to, the following headings for each project:

Project Summary

An outline of the issue, problem, interest, or need for each project.

Project Approach

How the issue or problem was approached via the project.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

How the performance goals and measurable outcomes were achieved for each project(s). If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement. It is encouraged to clearly convey progress toward achieving outcome measures by graphing baseline data and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.

Beneficiaries

Provide a description and quantitative data for the number of people or operations that have benefited from the project's accomplishments, and/or the potential economic impact of each project.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned, results, conclusions, for each project. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

Contact Person

Contact person for each project with telephone number and email address.

Additional Information

Additional information available (e.g. publications, web sites, photographs).

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

Reporting Compliance – Applicants who do not submit the semi-annual reports or who submit reports that do not meet all of the above reporting requirements will be required to return all previously disbursed funds to NDDA.

Budget Adjustments - If a material change (10% or greater) in the budget is needed during the project period, a written request may be made to NDDA to reallocate budget funds between budget categories. However, the total budget amount as dictated by the approved grant award cannot be adjusted.

E. Evaluation Sheet scoring criteria – See next page

Criteria scorecard for 2010

North Dakota

FY2010 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Points Received
1. Project Purpose	15	
How well does the applicant define the need for and purpose of the project? Are the project objectives clear and appropriate? Is the project important and timely? Is the project feasible?		
2. Potential Impact	20	
Does the project have a positive impact on the targeted specialty crop industry? How effective will the project be at enhancing the competitiveness of that industry? How great is the potential impact on North Dakota? Will the impact of the project be realized within the next five years?		
3. Expected Measurable Outcomes	15	
Does the project include one or two measurable outcomes that directly support the project's purpose? Are they of direct importance to beneficiaries? Does each measurable outcome include a specific goal, target, benchmark and performance measure? How clear, appropriate, and realistic are the goals and objectives?		
4. Work Plan	15	
Is the work plan complete? Is the work plan feasible? Is the timeline reasonable? Do the tasks relate to the project objectives and expected measurable outcomes?		
5. Project Oversight	5	
Does the project have adequate oversight to ensure proper administration?		
6. Project Commitment	10	
Is industry support for the project demonstrated? Are stakeholders actively involved in the project? Do stakeholders have an active role in any activities outlined in the project work plan? Are industry stakeholders providing matching or in-kind contributions?		
7. Budget and Narrative	10	
Is the amount requested reasonable? Are line items reasonable and appropriate? Does the Budget narrative adequately explain the line items?		
8. Overall quality of the proposal	10	
Is the proposal complete, well thought out and written, and has demonstrated an appropriate amount of preliminary work to justify further research and development work on the project.		
TOTAL	100	

COMMENTS:

F. Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Checklist

- An original copy of application packet printed on white paper and fastened once in the upper left-hand corner with either a staple or clip.

Copy to include:

- Signed Cover Page and Abstract
- Project Purpose
- Potential Impact
- Expected Measurable Outcomes
- Work Plan
- Budget Summary and Narrative
- Project Oversight
- Project Commitment
- Letters of Support

**North Dakota Specialty Crop Block Grant Program 2010
APPLICATION COVER SHEET**

Check all applicable statements			
Contact Name & Title:			
Address:			
City:		State:	Zip:
County of Project:			
Contact:		Title:	
Phone:		Fax:	Email:
Industry Sector and Specific Commodity/Food for Promotion: (e.g. Tree Fruit: Apples)			
Project Title(s):			
<p>Attach items to application cover sheet in order listed below. See Grant Manual for detail.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Abstract 2. Project Purpose 3. Potential Impact 4. Expected Measurable Outcomes 5. Work Plan 6. Budget Summary and Budget Narrative 7. Project Oversight 8. Project Commitment 9. Letters of Support 			
Grant Request: \$			
<p><i>Certification: I certify to the best of my knowledge that the information in this application is true and correct and that I am legally authorized to sign and submit this application on behalf of this organization, which is legally eligible to enter into a grant contract.</i></p>			
<p>Authorized Signature</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; width: 480px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p>Title</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; width: 480px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p align="right">Date</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; width: 480px; margin: 5px 0;"></div>			

The following proposals will benefit the following groups:

Beginning Farmer or Rancher. An individual or entity who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher. A farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A "Socially Disadvantaged Group" is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program

Project Abstract

Project Purpose

Project Potential Impact

Expected Measurable Outcomes

Budget Summary and Narrative

Budget Summary

Category	Matching Dollars Contributed by Applicant	Total Federal Project Expenses Requested
PERSONNEL		
FRINGE BENEFITS		
EQUIPMENT		
SUPPLIES		
CONTRACTUAL		
OTHER		
PROJECT INCOME		
TOTAL		

Budget Narrative

1) PERSONNEL –List persons employed by the grantee or subgrantee organization in this category. Indicate their title, percent of full time equivalents (FTE), and corresponding salary for the FTE. General administrative or accounting duties are not considered acceptable. The duties must be directly related to the project application.

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2) FRINGE BENEFITS – Provide the rate of fringe benefits for each project participant’s salary described in the personnel section.

--

3) EQUIPMENT –Provide an itemized list of equipment rentals, along with a brief narrative on the intended use of each equipment item.

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4) SUPPLIES –Provide an itemized list and estimate the dollar amount for each item.

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5) CONTRACTUAL – Provide a short description of the contracted services required for completion of project work.

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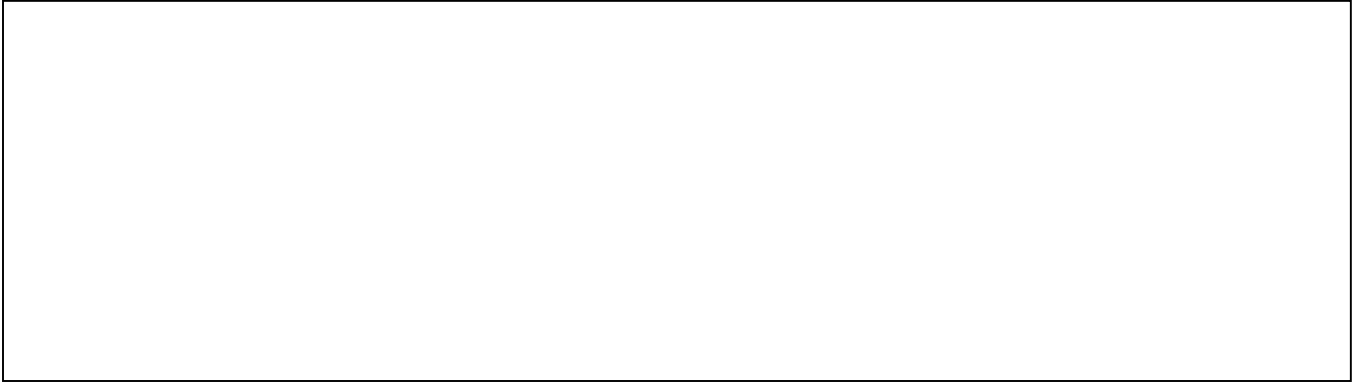
6) OTHER – Provide a detailed description of all other direct costs.

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7) PROJECT INCOME – Indicate the nature or source of program income (for ex: registration fees).

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Project Oversight

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for text or content related to Project Oversight.

Project Commitment

A very large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for text or content related to Project Commitment.