University of the District of Columbia
College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences
Agricultural Experiment Station

Request for Proposal (RFP)
Reference Number: AES-SA002
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB)
Website: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp

Fiscal Year 2013
CFDA Number 10.170
Introduction

The University of the District of Columbia, Agricultural Experiment Station (“UDC/AES”) is soliciting completed proposals for projects that specifically address the goals that the United States Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing Service (“USDA/AMS”) has for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB).

This Request for Proposal “(RFP)” was prepared in accordance with rules and regulations developed by the funding agency, the USDA/AMS.

Program Authority
On December 21, 2004, the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621) authorized the 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. This RFP is an extension of that authority. This program was developed to enhance the productivity of specialty crop in the United States and US territories only. In order to have your proposal funded, you must follow all of the rules and regulations listed and explained in the RFP. Additionally, your proposed project must address a problem that would specifically enhance specialty crop productivity in the District of Columbia.

Specialty crops are defined by the USDA as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture (including maple syrup and honey), and nursery crops (including floriculture). A complete list of eligible and ineligible specialty crops can be found on the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant website: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp.

Available Funding

The total available funding for the District of Columbia is approximately $170,000 for FY 2013 through FY 2015. UDC/AES expects to award multiple grants under this program. Solicitations for individual grant awards between $20,000 and $50,000 will be considered. UDC/AES will provide support through a reimbursement process negotiated upon acceptance of the award. Reimbursement will require timely completion and proper reporting of approved budget activities and the submission of invoices.

A selected external advisory Committee will review all grant proposal submissions and make recommendations to the UDC/AES. Recommendations
will be presented to the Dean of the College of Urban Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Science who will make the final selections.

The UDC/AES retains the right to reject applicants with previous participation whose performance was assessed as incomplete or unsatisfactory. While it is not required, applicants who offer documented matching funds through their budget and narrative may be eligible for additional evaluation consideration. All funding for grants associated with this program are subject to final approval by USDA/AMS under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

**Project Duration**

This specialty crop block grant will be awarded for projects for two years. However, the grant period may be extended upon petition to, and negotiation with UDC/AES. The start date is expected to be on or about January 15, 2014 and end on December January 14, 2016.

**Additional Notifications**

- Failure to follow instructions completely may result in non-consideration of proposal
- The funding agency does offer or assume any responsibility for costs associated with the preparation and submission of any proposal. Those expenses are solely the responsibility of the applicant
- All documents and information provided in support of the RFP application are considered to be public records
- Proposals received after the close of business on June 17, 2013 will not be considered. Additionally, errantly directed proposals which arrive at incorrect locations of the government will not be considered
- Applications should be submitted in a “word” format and use a 12 point font

**Proposal Submission Process**

Pre-proposal Conference, **Thursday, May 7, 2013**
Full and complete application due via email by 5:00 PM, **Monday, June 17, 2013**

The submission should be mailed to: [mfairweather@udc.edu](mailto:mfairweather@udc.edu).

Review of proposals, **June 18-June 26, 2013**
Award announcements **July 2, 2013**
Release of funds by USDA, **October, 2013**

In addition, you may optionally send a copy to:

Mr. Maxwell Fairweather  
Building 44, Room 213  
College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Science  
University of the District of Columbia  
4200 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
202-274-7142

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for a grant, the project must solely enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. CAUSES will consider applications from status non-profit organizations including Native-American Tribal Organizations, for-profit organizations, and public sector organizations. All eligible organizations must provide a Data Universal Numbering Systems (DUNS) number at the time of the award. The DUNS is a 9 character identification number provided, without charge, by the commercial corporation Dun and Bradstreet. In addition, we are prohibited from funding any applicants or their contractors who appear on the government debarment list. Each applicant must provide proof which certifies that it is not restricted from participating in Federal Assistance Programs due to suspension or debarment.

We will consider submitted proposals that increase the competitiveness of specialty crop farmers, including Native American and disadvantaged farmers. Increasing competitiveness may include developing local and regional food systems and improving food access in underserved communities. Additionally, projects that help to enhance marketing of fresh produce in underserved areas will be favorably considered.

A typical range of project ideas might include:

1) Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops; improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems;  
2) Assisting all entries in the specialty crop distribution chain in developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-sharing 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; and development of organic and sustainable production practices.

A recent national survey has shown project funding as:
- 12%, Education
- 14.5%, Research
- 7%, Food Safety
- 13%, Pest and Plant Health
- 43%, Marketing and Promotion
- 6% Production
- 5%, Other

2013 Priority Focus

We are particularly interested in projects which:
- Establish new community gardens in communities where homeless shelters, halfway/transitional homes, or low income housing units are located
- Establish new community gardens within food desert areas of the city
- Assess, through research, best approaches to affect attitudes and behavioral change towards the growth and consumption of specialty crops
- Promote best practices in sustainable gardening, i.e. intercropping, for productivity in residential and community gardens

All applicants must conduct their projects within the District of Columbia or directly benefit the residents of the District of Columbia in a sustainable manner.

The acceptance of the approved project budget by UDC/AES will constitute a binding spending plan. Any changes to that budget must have the prior approval of the grant administrator.

Restrictions and Limitations on Grant Funds

Awards will NOT be granted to entities whose projects benefit or assume profit for an individual organization, institution or person.

Funds which are awarded through this grant may only be used for allowable costs as stipulated and consistent with the provisions of the Federal grant. This also means that the award support received from the UDC/AES may not exceed the allowable costs incurred by the recipient for those activities. Indirect costs are NOT allowed.
Additionally:

• 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.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. Project Title

   The title shall adequately describe the project.

2. Abstract

   The project abstract section will be 200 words or less. The section 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.

3. Project Purpose

   The following questions shall be addressed in this section:

   1. What specific issue, problem, or need is being addressed by the project?
   2. Why is the project important and timely?
   3. What are the objectives of the project?
   4. Does the project build on a previously funded SCBGP-FB project?

      If yes, describe how the new project differs from the previously funded project and describe how this year’s funding will supplement or build on the previous funding from the SCBGP-FB.

   5. Has this project been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State Grant program?
If no, please indicate that it has not. If yes, identify which Federal, State, or Local government grant program and describe how the project differs from, or supplements efforts of the SCBGP-FB or the identified grant programs. This grant should not duplicate other funding efforts.

4. Potential Impact

This section shall 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?

5. Expected Measureable Outcomes

The following questions shall 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:
  - Goal
  - Performance Measure
  - Benchmark
  - Target

- How will performance toward meeting the outcome(s) be monitored?
  - What are your data sources for monitoring performance?
  - How will data be collected? For example, are you using a survey or questionnaire?

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
• Web site hits
• Generation of new knowledge
• Development of human resources

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).

For further information on expected measurable outcomes, please see the “SCBGP Logic Model” at the USDA website.

STEPS TO DEVELOPING OUTCOME MEASURES

Whenever possible, the outcomes should include a goal, performance measure, benchmark, and a target. The following 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, consider “why” you are performing each grant activity and specify what will be achieved as well as 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. When expected measurable outcomes are monitored outside the grant period, include the performance monitoring plan in the expected measurable outcomes section and indicate how monitoring will occur after the grant ends without the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funding.
6. WORK PLAN

The following questions shall be addressed in this section:

- What activities are necessary to accomplish the project objectives?
  - When will your performance monitoring/data collection plan activity be accomplished?
  - How will outcomes measures be completed or measured inside the grant period?
- Who will do the work of each activity? If collaborative arrangements or subcontracts are used, make sure you specify their role and responsibilities in performing project activities.
- When will each activity be accomplished? 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.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Activity</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Time Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete survey results for background information on general practices and attitudes.</td>
<td>The Project Director</td>
<td>May 2012 – July 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Although there is no specific format for the supplemental budget, the budget should contain a narrative in paragraph format for the project in order for CAUSES to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable. The budget narrative should clearly show the grant funds that support the project. If matching funds are budgeted, please do not commingle non-federal funds with fede rals in the budget section.

Personnel

Persons employed by the grantee or sub-grantee organization should be listed in this category. Those employed elsewhere would be listed as subcontractors or consultants in the “Contractual” 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 plan.

- For each project participant, indicate their title, percent of full time equivalents (FTE), and corresponding salary for the FTE.
- Show the total for all SCBGP-FB funded personnel.

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.

Equipment

This category includes items of property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5,000. 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.
- Show the total for all grant funded equipment.

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, and 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 CAUSES. (Note: Prior approval from CAUSES means that the special purpose equipment must be included in the plan, and the grant plan must receive approval from CAUSES. If special purpose equipment was not originally included in the approved grant plan, then the grantee must request approval from CAUSES 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.

Appropriate rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the cost principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR 3015.

Provide a detailed description of all other direct costs such as:

- 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.
  - When paying for the travel of a person to attend a conference, meals and lodging may be included in the cost without additional justification.
  - Meals may not be charged as project costs when individuals decide to go to lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered to be an entertainment cost. Meals may be charged to the project if such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants. Include a justification for meal costs. Some examples of acceptable reasons are that the conference facility is located in a remote area where public facilities are not accessible; there will be a speaker and business discussions during the meal; there is insufficient time available to allow participants to go out on their own. If one or more
of these justifications cannot be met, or if there are no other acceptable and compelling reasons, then the meals should not be charged to the award. The attendees should be responsible for providing their own meals.

- Breakfasts for conference attendees are usually considered unallowable as it is expected these individuals will have sufficient time to obtain this meal on their own before the conference begins in the morning.

Other costs allowable if justified:

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

2012 Specialty Crops Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (2010 SCBGP-FB)

Review Criteria

The information delineated within the RFP will be evaluated within the following categories:

1. Significance: The proposal should identify and explain how it meets the Specialty Crop competitiveness mandate and the possible effects of the actions or research on concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services or preventive interventions. 20 points

2. Approach: The proposal should provide a framework, design, method, and analysis which is well integrated, reasoned, and appropriate to the aims of the project. It is expected that the applicant will acknowledge potential problem areas and identify contingency approaches as necessary. 20 points
3. Research or Innovation: The project proposal should be original and innovative. The activity or research should challenge existing paradigms or research, address a critical barrier, extend or develop and employ novel concepts, methodologies, or tools. 20 Points

4. Environment: The project environment and logistics should reasonably contribute to the probability of success. The proposal should adequately describe collaborative arrangements and any unique features of the action environment. 10 Points

5. Leadership and organizational plan: The proposal should describe the governance and organizational structure as well as specify the roles and responsibilities of key personnel. In addition, it should identify the expected outputs of external contractors. You will be required to present signed agreements prior to receiving the award. 5 Points

6. Support documentation to include letters of support, financial capability, reports of previous successful experience, resumes’, and proof of good standing (non-debarment or suspension) within the Federal system. 5 points

7. Clarity and conciseness: the document should follow a logical model pathway which clearly defines the undertaking, the resources, the expected outputs, and the expected outcomes. 10 points

8. Budget format which identifies and explains how the funds will be used and segregated from other funding sources. 10 points

**Maximum Total Evaluative Points: 100**
## Proposal Application Checklist

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>City:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Tax ID Number or EIN:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost: $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Specialty Crop:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Priority: Check only one. If project does not address a funding priority, check “Other Focus Area.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialty Crop Distribution Chain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Focus Area:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the applicant received SCBGP funds before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the applicant received funds or awards from the University District of Columbia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>If yes, please describe:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the applicant applied for State or Federal funds for this project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, please describe:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Organization Representative</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
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*By signing you are verifying the attached information is approved by the applying organization*