Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development

2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant Webinar

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Food & Agriculture Business Development Division – Grant Programs

SCBG Agenda

- Program Purpose
- Guidelines/Program Overview
- Application Demo
- Application Review Process
- Questions & Answers via Chat

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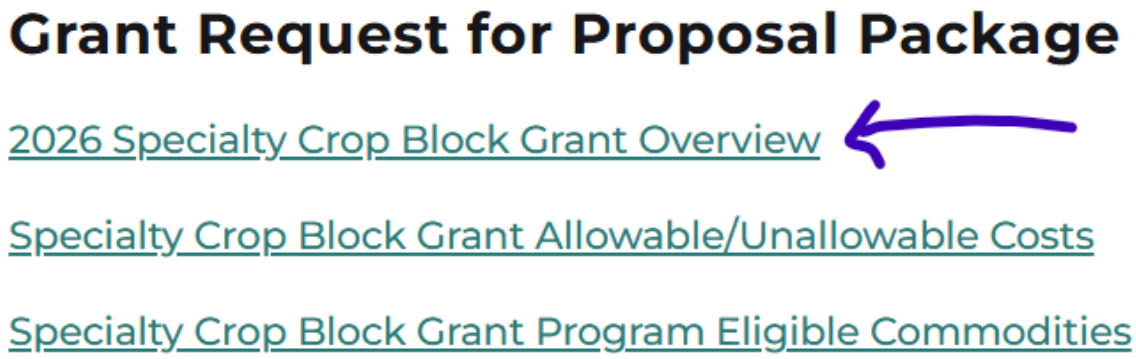
SCBG Guidelines Overview

SCBG Purpose
To provide an overview of requirements for the 2026 RFA as well as instructions for applying.

The FY26 RFA is available at:

- Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Overview 2026



- The due date/deadline for applications is by 5:00 p.m. EST February 5, 2026

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SCBG Guidelines Overview

Specialty Crops

- For the purpose of this program, Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) as amended section 10010 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79 (the Farm Bill) defines specialty crops are defined as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture)”.

Eligible Entities

  - non-profit organizations,
  - for-profit organizations,
  - local, state, and federal government entities, and
  - tribal governments.

- Register in SAM.gov – Keep it active!
- Obtain a UEI number. Subrecipients need UEIs (2 CFR 25.300).
- Renew annually in SAM.gov with plenty of lead time!
- Register in Corporations Division - Search for a business entity

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SCBG Guidelines Overview

Funding Priorities

- Market enhancement to promote specialty crops
  - Market expansion, availability, and access to specialty crops
  - Farm to institutions, reviewing opportunities for aggregation, distribution, and light/minimal processing at farms to institutions, include but not be limited to food hubs, schools, local governments, health care systems and providers, higher education and technical institutions, early childhood education centers, non-profits, state government, and other.
  - Nutritional Education
- Research and development relevant to specialty crops
  - Plant health & pest management
  - Regenerative Agriculture
- Training & education addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers
  - Enhancing food safety
  - Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge, education, and consumption of specialty crops
  - Environmental sustainability
  - Conservation
  - Workforce/labor
  - Nutritional education

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SCBG Program Overview

Eligible Commodity - MDARD_Eligible_Commodities_716256_7.pdf

Ineligible Commodities

- Alfalfa
- Amylomaize
- Barley (including malting barley)
- Buckwheat
- Camelina
- Canola
- Canola Oil
- Clover
- Cotton
- Cottonseed oil
- Dairy products
- Dent corn
- Eggs
- Field corn
- Fish (marine or freshwater)
- Flax
- Flaxseed
- Flint corn
- Flower corn
- Hay
- Hemp
- Livestock products
- Millet
- Mustard seed oil
- Oats
- Peanut oil
- Peanuts
- Pod corn
- Primrose
- Quinoa
- Rapeseed oil
- Range grasses
- Rice
- Rye
- Safflower meal
- Safflower oil
- Shellfish (marine or freshwater)
- Sorghum
- Soybean oil
- Soybeans
- Striped Maize
- Sugar beets
- Sugarcane
- Sunflower oil
- Tobacco
- Tofu
- Triticale
- Waxy corn
- Wheat
- White corn
- Wild rice

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Benefit More Than One Product or Organization

- Proposals 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.

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

SCBG Program Overview

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop to make a profit, or to expand production of a single business or organization.
- A sole proprietor requests grant funds to redesign her/his logo to make her/his specialty crop value-added product stand out at the local farmers' market. A single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase membership in the organization.

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Examples of Acceptable Projects

- A commodity group 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 will be shared with many growers throughout the State during the project.
- A cooperative 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 non-profit organization requests funds to conduct an advertising campaign that will benefit their specialty crop members.

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- Allowable & Unallowable Costs - USDA Allowable & Unallowable Costs and Activities (michigan.gov)

Meals	*Allowable* for lunch or dinner meals if the costs are reasonable and a justification is provided that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants. *Allowable* for meals consumed while in official travel status. They are considered per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization's established written travel policies. *Unallowable* for business meals when individuals decide to go to lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered an entertainment cost. *Unallowable* for breakfasts for conference attendees because it is expected these individuals will have sufficient time to obtain this meal on their own before the conference begins in the morning. *Unallowable* for meal costs that are duplicated in meeting participants' per diem or subsistence allowances.

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SCBG Grant Timeline

Proposal

- Release Request for Proposals - December 17, 2025
- Informational Webinar - January 7, 2026
- Proposals Due - February 5, 2026 @ 5:00 p.m. EST

JEC

- JEC Meeting - March 2026
- *MDARD Submits State Plan to USDA - May 2026**
- *USDA Reviews State Plan - June/July 2026**

Award

- *USDA State Plan Approval and Sign Agreement with USDA - September 2026**
- *Grant Agreements Signed with Sub-Awardees - October/November 2026**

** These dates are estimated on historical timelines and are subject to change based on USDA announcing a request for proposals.*

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SCBG Program Overview

- Follow the instructions in the RFA / Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/apply
- Performance Measures:
  - Every project must select at least 1 outcome and 1 indicator; keep it to 2-3 of the most relevant.
  - If there is a sub-indicator (a, b, c…), the project must select at least one sub-indicator.
  - Marketing or promotional projects must have at least one Outcome 1 measure.
  - Use the exact language from the SCBGP Performance Measures.
  - Provide an estimated quantifiable result for each indicator.
  - Describe clear data collection methods that are achievable and can be measured directly.

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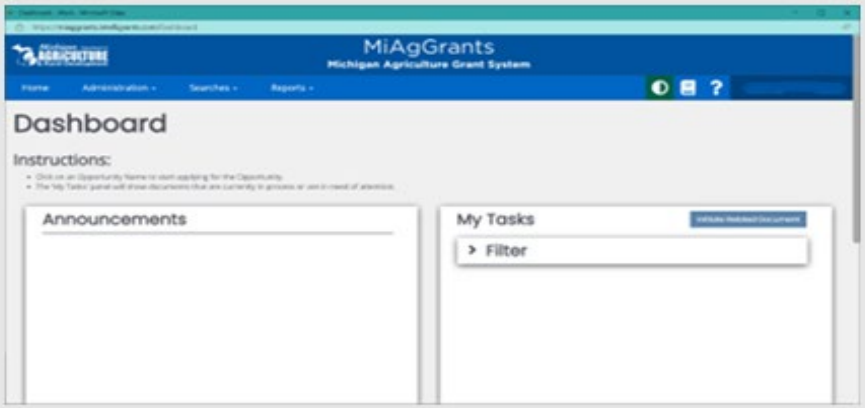
MiAgGrants System

Create an Account on the MiAgGrants System

Looking for funding opportunities in 2025? MDARD launched a new grants management system, MiAgGrants. This is a streamlined system aimed at reducing user barriers and allowing more access to MDARD's grant funding opportunities.



MiAgGrants has allowed MDARD to send applicants reminders and communicate more efficiently with grantees. On the dashboard, applicants were able to submit electronic grant applications, a competitive review process took place, and the awarded grant projects were managed. In just the first year, four grant cycles were completed using the management system, and in 2025 MDARD will continue to increase this number to bring efficient grant management to Michiganders.

Sign up on the MiAgGrants dashboard for a citizen account or a business account to view currently open grant opportunities.

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Application – Budget Definitions

- **FRINGE BENEFITS** *Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's salaried employees described in the Personnel section that will be paid with SCBGP funds. Each column must be completed.*

- **TRAVEL** *Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA. Information is available at http://www.gsa.gov. Each column must be completed.*

- **EQUIPMENT** *MDARD encourages rental of equipment and does not approve equipment to exceed $5,000.*

- **SUPPLIES** *List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than $5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal and enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Complete each column.*

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Application – Budget Definitions

- **CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT** *Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship. If there is more than one contractor or consultant, each must be described separately.*

- **OTHER** *Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Break down costs into cost/unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection.*

- **PROGRAM**

INCOME *Any program income generated during the grant period must be used to further the objectives of the project. All program income must be recorded on the Federal Financial Report (SF-425) for the period in which it was earned.*

Application/ Grant Award Overview

Submit the application
and any support letters to MiAgGrants

Cost Reimbursement

- Projects recommended and approved by USDA will be required to report on their approved proposal in MiAgGrants and submit the following information:
  - * Completed report
  - * Invoice to MDARD
  - * Completed Expense Info
  - * All supporting financials
    - - Financials can be scanned to a pdf in one document (proof of payments = zero balance receipts/invoices, canceled checks)
    - - Salaries can be from payroll software center or timesheets with supervisor signatures

Application Review Process

- Competitive Review
- JEC – scoring and review meeting
- Scoring Based off a 100- point scale

Proposal	
Release Request for Proposals	December 17, 2025
Informational Webinar Click here to join the meeting	January 7, 2026
Proposals Due in MiAgGrants	February 5, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. (EST)
Evaluation Committee Review	March 2026
MDARD Submits State Plan to USDA	May 2026 (tentative)
USDA Reviews State Plan	June/July 2026 (tentative)
Award	
USDA State Plan Approval and Sign Agreement with USDA	September 2026 (tentative)
Grant Agreements signed with Sub-Awardees – Work may begin on projects	October/November 2026 (tentative)

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Questions and Answers

SCAN ME

Michigan.gov/VOTE

Get personalized voter information on early voting and other topics at Michigan.gov/Vote.

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Enter Questions into the Chat