

# Ohio Specialty Crop Promotion Program

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## 2009 Request for Proposals

Proposal Application Deadline:  
4:00, June 5, 2009

*Ohio Department of Agriculture  
Division of Markets  
Bromfield Administration Building, Room 323  
8995 East Main Street  
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068  
1-614-466-6198*

## **Introduction**

The Ohio Department of Agriculture is soliciting projects that will enhance the competitiveness of Ohio specialty crops through market promotion, improved efficiency and/or reduced costs of distribution systems. It is the intent that all funding will be used to advance the long-term economic viability and sustainability of Ohio's specialty crop industry while increasing the marketability of specialty crops.

Specialty crops are identified as fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts and nursery crops (including floriculture).

## **Funding Source**

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will make funding available to Ohio to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Future funding of grants will be subject to future appropriation. The Ohio Department of Agriculture will award multiple grants from these funds. Grant awards will be considered from a minimum of \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$60,000.

## **Participant Eligibility**

The Ohio Department of Agriculture will only accept proposals for consideration for specialty crop block grant funds from Ohio agricultural non-profit organizations, cooperatives, associations or commodity groups (hereinafter referred to as "eligible applicants") that represent specific specialty crop sectors. However, individuals, partnerships, universities, or research institutions (hereinafter referred to as "partnering entities") may participate in this grant program by developing and submitting proposals, through an eligible applicant. If the partnering entity is a college or university they must establish that they have the statutory authority to participate in the projects they propose. If an eligible applicant is partnering with a partnering entity the eligible applicant will be the grantee with the Ohio Department of Agriculture for the block grant funds, and be the party responsible for the completion of the grant and associated requirements. Eligible parties are encouraged to seek applications or proposals from their membership to be considered for submission for a specialty crop block grant.

Private individuals and companies are not eligible to apply. Employees of the Ohio Department of Agriculture, members of his or her immediate family, or business partners of the aforementioned are not eligible to receive a grant and will be immediately rejected by the department.

## **Proposal and Performance Specifications**

- A. Proposals shall be designed to address obstacles or opportunities that impact Ohio's specialty crop industry; develop a plan to address these obstacles or opportunities; identify measures that can quantify the results or outcome of the proposals; and demonstrate how the proposal will improve the viability, sustainability and economic potential of Ohio's specialty crop industry. Grant projects may focus on, but are not restricted to these areas:

1. *Develop markets for Ohio specialty crops*

- Identify sales opportunities for Ohio specialty crops
- Connect specialty crop producers with existing markets
- Provide for reduced cost distribution systems
- Develop systems for specialty crop marketing to institutional and food service buyers
- Develop value-added products using Ohio specialty crops (All projects seeking assistance to develop a value-added venture must submit complete financial statements and a completed feasibility study.)

2. *Technical Assistance/Production-oriented proposals that enhance Ohio specialty crop production* (All research projects must seek to develop solutions to production obstacles facing Ohio-grown specialty crops, be specific to existing specialty crops grown in Ohio and contain an outreach component.)

- Diversification and expansion of production and processing
- Implement new technologies or more efficient production practices
- Develop and implement resource sustaining practices
- Improve handling, processing or packaging systems/practices
- Research for pest and disease control, prevention or eradication
- Lower production costs or risks associated with specialty crop production

3. *Outreach and Education*

- Implement programs or projects that provide outreach and education on the importance of the industry with regards to Ohio's economy, food safety or the nutrition and health benefits of specialty crops.
- Projects may also focus on educating producers on new production methods/practices or retaining and training employees
- Assist specialty crop producers in cooperative marketing efforts
- Promote and expand capacity for the Ohio Proud Marketing program for specialty crops

B. All applicants must provide a minimum of 25% match of total project costs. Organizations that provide significant cash matches thus enabling these funds to be leveraged to a greater economic benefit will be given additional weight in the review process. *Please note that grant funds cannot be used for administrative costs.*

C. All projects must be received by June 5<sup>th</sup> 2009 at 4:00 pm.

## **Application Instructions and Proposal Format**

Proposals must be typed. The minimum font size is 12 point, double-spaced. Please include page numbers and the project title as it appears on the cover sheet in the footer at the bottom of each page. Proposals must include the following elements, each limited to a maximum length as noted.

### **1. Application Cover Sheet**

Complete the attached cover sheet

### **2. Project Narrative**

#### **Abstract**

This section should describe the lead agency or organization, goals and objectives of the project in a maximum of 300 words.

#### **Purpose**

State the issue, problem or opportunity that will be addressed in the project. Explain why it is important and timely. Clearly describe the goals and objectives of the project. Indicate if the project will be or has been submitted to or funded by another Federal or State grant program.

#### **Potential Impact**

Discuss the number of people or operations that will be impacted by the project, the beneficiaries and the potential economic impact if possible.

#### **Financial Feasibility**

Include a detailed budget proposal showing the use of funds. Include a budget narrative describing cost allocations. Budget categories include: personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction and other. Administrative costs will not be eligible for reimbursement under this grant.

#### **Expected Measurable Outcomes**

Describe distinct quantifiable outcomes that directly and meaningfully support the project purpose. The outcome-oriented objective must define an event or condition that is external to the project and that is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries and/or the public.

Provide a timeframe for when the outcome measures will be achieved and describe how the project outcome will be measured. Describe the plan that will be used to show performance improvements and include a performance-monitoring plan to describe the process of collecting and analyzing data to meet the outcome oriented objectives.

#### **Plan of Work**

The plan of work must provide a detailed description of how the proposed project is to be carried out. It should describe the tasks or objectives to be performed, provide a timetable

illustrating projected task completion dates, a list of project participants or subcontractors responsible for tasks and location of activities.

### **Key Personnel**

Describe the partnerships, alliances, networks, or other collaborative efforts that will be created to implement this project as well as the specific commitments from each (i.e. in-kind, monetary, labor, etc.). List all parties involved and describe what each contributes to the successful completion of this proposal. Current résumés for each individual working on the proposed project are required and should be provided as an appendix. Maximum of two (2) pages, not including résumés.

### **Support Letters**

All proposals must include three (3) letters of support for the project from industry members that confirm a need for this project to be implemented.

### **Appendices**

This section should include attachments from the aforementioned areas including:

Current résumés for each individual working on the project,

- Project budget,
- Three (3) industry support letters, and
- Any other evidence of project necessity

### **Project Revisions**

No modifications or changes can be made without prior written agreement by the parties.

However, the Grantee is permitted to shift up to 10 percent of his or her total funds within his or her original budget without requesting a modification of the grant agreement.

### **General Compliance**

Grantee agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the conduct of the work under the grant agreement.

All documents submitted to ODA by grantee are considered public records, unless exempt from release pursuant to Ohio's Public Records Act, R.C. 149.43.

### **Payment**

Grant payments will be made upon the receipt of an invoice documenting actual expenditures.

Payment will be made within approximately thirty days of receipt of the invoice and supporting documentation. Working capital advances will be allowed in limited circumstances and only upon prior written approval.

### **Eligible/ Ineligible Expenses**

Refer to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5075989> for the cost principles, allowable and ineligible expenses under the program.

## Reporting and Accounting

Awardees shall submit quarterly progress reports detailing the progress of each project. Progress reports must be submitted to the ODA Division of Markets and shall include the following:

- Narrative of progress to date
- Completed performance measurement data including a comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period. If objectives were not met, the grantee must provide reasons for the lack of progress.
- Progressive budget, explaining incurred and encumbered expenses in compliance with the approved project budget
- Copies of all paid invoices with copies of cancelled checks attached
- Copies of all materials produced, when feasible

Awardees shall also submit a final report no more than 90 days after the expiration date of the grant. The final report shall include a program summary and a fiscal summary, including a budget closeout report for the project. The program summary shall include the following:

- Brief description of the original intent of the project
- Summary of the tangible accomplishments created or achieved by the project
- Description of information or educational materials developed through the project
- An evaluation of the project benefits to the specialty crop industry
- Other relevant information related to the project

The United States Department of Agriculture may require additional reporting requirements related to the specialty crop block grant program and use of the funds for which the grantee shall be required to cooperate and produce.

In addition to the final project report, ODA reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects.

## Submittal Process and Deadlines

One (1) original and twenty (20) copies of completed proposals must be received by the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Markets no later than **4:00 p.m. Friday, June 5th at 4:00 pm.** *This is not a postmark deadline; proposals must be received by the Division of Markets by this deadline.* E-mailed or faxed proposals will **not** be accepted. Grant proposals will be opened and stamped received on this date.

Proposals may be mailed or hand-delivered to:

Ohio Department of Agriculture  
Division of Markets  
8995 East Main Street  
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068  
Attention: Amalie Lipstreu

Any entity that qualifies under the participant eligibility statement may submit more than one proposal, but only if they are for completely different projects.

Prior to beginning work on the projects or receiving funding, successful applicants will be required to sign a contract with the Ohio Department of Agriculture indicating their intentions to complete the proposed tasks and authorizing the Department to view and certify the project as complete. No work under this grant may begin before the contract is fully executed. Awardees must submit a report once the initial 50% of funds have been allocated/expended and a final report following completion of the project. Disbursement of grant funds will be in accordance with the payment provisions as indicated in the attached application and in the grant agreement.

Applications will be reviewed by an advisory committee established by ODA. Using the recommendations of that committee, applications will be submitted to the Director of ODA, who will make the final determination. **All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision to fund, modify or reject the proposal by July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009.**

Prior to beginning work on the projects or receiving funding, successful applicants will be required to sign a contract with the Ohio Department of Agriculture indicating their intentions to complete the proposed tasks and authorizing the Department to view and certify the project as complete. Payment of the grant will be made in accordance with the payment provisions as indicated in the attached application and in the grant agreement. Successful submissions must also certify that they have not supported groups dedicated to the use of terrorism and agree that they will comply with Governor Strickland's Executive Order 2007-01S.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to recommend modifications to any project proposal. All application materials submitted become property of the Ohio Department of Agriculture and will not be returned.

For more information contact Amalie Lipstreu at (614) 466.6198 or [alipstreu@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:alipstreu@agri.ohio.gov).

**APPLICATION COVER SHEET**  
**ODA Specialty Crop Promotion Program**

<b>Name of Organization:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>City:</b>	<b>County:</b>	<b>State:</b>	<b>ZIP:</b>
<b>Federal Tax ID #</b>			
<b>Contact Name:</b>		<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>		<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Project Partners:</b>			
<b>Specialty Crop Commodity/Food for Promotion:</b> (e.g. Tree Fruit: Cherries)			
<b>Brief Project Description:</b>			
<b>Total Project Cost: \$</b>			
<b>Grant Request: \$</b>			
<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>			
<b>Name of Authorized Signatory:</b>			

### ***Proposal Evaluation Procedures***

1. Proposals will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture.
2. The following criteria will be used to review and rank proposals:

Weight	Criteria	Rating 1 to 10
40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project have potential for long-term economic, market access or resource sustaining benefits in the specialty crop industry?</li> <li>• Does the project benefit the specific specialty crop industry by expanding markets, improving distribution, production practices or lowering production costs/risks?</li> </ul>	1 = lowest, 10 = highest
15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriateness of the performance measures to determine the success of the project</li> <li>• Are the expected benefits of the proposal commensurate with total investment?</li> </ul>	1 = lowest, 10 = highest
15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project proposal show that it offers a quality work plan, budget, staffing, measurable outcomes and a realistic timeframe needed to successfully complete the project?</li> </ul>	1 = lowest, 10 = highest
10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project include a match greater than 25% of the request grant funding?</li> </ul>	1 = lowest, 10 = highest
10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project build brand identity for OHIO PROUD and local specialty crop marketing?</li> <li>• Does the proposal increase consumer awareness and increase sales of Ohio specialty crops?</li> </ul> <p>OR FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project seek to initiate innovative and unique research in the field of specialty crop production, distribution or processing?</li> <li>• Does the research project have an outreach component?</li> </ul>	1 = lowest, 10 = highest
5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project have industry-wide support and demonstrate appropriate partnerships?</li> </ul>	1 = lowest, 10 = highest
5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of current or potential contribution that the applicant commodity provides in cash receipts to the state's economy</li> </ul>	1 = lowest, 10 = highest