



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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WSDA seeks innovative proposals to boost state's specialty crops

Concept proposals due Feb. 26

OLYMPIA – The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) is accepting proposals for innovative projects to support the state's fruit, vegetable and nursery industry through the federal Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Proposals are due to WSDA by 5 p.m. Feb. 26.

WSDA manages the grants, which are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). More than \$4 million in grant funding is available to support Washington's specialty crop industry.

Private and non-profit organizations, commodity commissions and other public entities may request funds for projects ranging between \$25,000 to \$250,000 that benefit the competitiveness of fruit, vegetable, tree nut and nursery crop producers.

The first step in applying for grant funding is to submit a brief concept proposal using an application provided by WSDA. Email proposals to specialtycrop@agr.wa.gov. The proposals will be reviewed by WSDA, and successful applicants will be asked to submit full proposals for further review. Application information, forms and the milestone schedules are posted on WSDA's [website](#). For additional information, go to the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp or contact WSDA's Leisa Schumaker at lschumaker@agr.wa.gov or (360) 902-2091.

Based on feedback from Washington's specialty crop industries, WSDA is seeking projects that help control pests and diseases, develop and enhance international and local or regional markets, preserve or increase water availability, improve production practices through innovative technologies, increase the nutritional knowledge and consumption of specialty crops, reduce regulatory barriers, assist in the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act, or develop organic and sustainable production practices.

Projects that benefit Washington's specialty crop producers and food processors in other ways, benefit Washington and other states, or that benefit new farmers or socially disadvantaged farmers are also encouraged.

Washington ranks second in the nation in production of specialty crops and last year funded [24 projects](#) under USDA's specialty crop program. USDA will announce their awards this fall. WSDA grant agreements will be issued in October or November.

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