

Alaska’s 2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program



Fiscal year 2026 Request for Proposals

Alaska’s Division of Agriculture announces the availability of grant funds to enhance the competitiveness of Alaska’s specialty crops including fruits, vegetables, floriculture, and nursery crops. These funds are awarded through a competitive review process guided by industry, nonprofit, and government stakeholders.

TIMELINE.....	2
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	3
HIGHLIGHTS AND PROGRAM CHANGES	4
PROJECT DEFINITION	5
PROJECT ORGANIZATION.....	5
ELIGIBILITY.....	6
ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES.....	6
STAKEHOLDER PRIORITY SURVEY.....	7
PROJECTS MORE RELEVANT FOR OTHER FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS	8
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS.....	8
APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA	9
GRANT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING	10
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION	11
ALLOWABLE COSTS	12

TIMELINE

The Alaska Division of Agriculture announces the availability of grant funds for the sole purpose of enhancing Alaska Grown specialty crops.

The timeline for this application cycle is:

April 20, 2026: Release RFP
April 27, 2026: Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Overview Webinar 12pm- 1pm Register at: Webinar Registration The webinar will be recorded for those who cannot attend.
May 20, 2026: Applications due by 5:00pm emailed to dag.scbg@alaska.gov . Applications received after 5:00pm or not on the required template will not be considered.
May 21- May 28, 2026: Full applications reviewed by Review Committee
May 29, 2026: Final decisions made. Applicants notified of results.
June 8, 2026: State plan submitted to USDA (some adjustments to projects may be required by USDA at this point)
Fall, 2026: Funds disbursed from USDA (exact date TBA)
September 30, 2026: Project Period of Performance begins

Due to the 30-day application period, a Letter of Intent will not be a requirement of this year's application cycle as it has been in previous years. Please carefully review the information in this Request for Applications to ensure that your project scope and proposed budget are allowable under this grant program.

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Full Applications and Letters of Support are to be submitted to
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has announced its request for applications for the 2026 fiscal year Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). The purpose of this program is to award grants to eligible State departments of agriculture to carry out projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by:

- 1) Leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops;
- 2) Assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops;
- 3) Expanding availability and access to specialty crops;
- 4) Addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers; and
- 5) For such other purposes determined to be appropriate by the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with specialty crop stakeholders and relevant State departments of agriculture.

Through a competitive application process, the Division will award sub-grantee projects that meet the requirements and objectives of this grant program.

Specialty crops are fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Additional information on specialty crops, including a table of examples of the most common commodities, is available at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop>.

Projects must enhance the competitiveness of Alaska specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Applications for grant funds should describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/ or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. Projects that demonstrate innovative partnerships are encouraged. 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.

AMS will not award grant funds for projects whose products or services promote or provide profit that solely benefits a single organization, institution, or individual. In addition, recipients and subrecipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

HIGHLIGHTS AND PROGRAM CHANGES FOR 2026

There have been major changes to the program since last year. Please make sure to review this section carefully.

1. New General Terms and Conditions that apply to all sub- grantees:

The [AMS General Terms and Conditions \(AMS GT&C\)](#) have been updated to reflect changes to the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) and the [USDA General Terms and Conditions \(USDA GT&C\)](#) for Federal Awards that were published on December 31, 2025. Both sets of General Terms and Conditions are applicable to and establish requirements for recipients.

2. FOR NEXT YEAR: Starting in FY2027, the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program will require a cost share for all subawards. Each subaward will be required to provide a cost share from non- Federal sources in the form of cash and/or in- kind contributions equal to 25% of the amount of Federal funds being requested. This is not a requirement for this current application cycle but will start next year.

These changes are meant to increase the overall investments available to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops across the country at the Federal, State, and local levels.

PROJECT DEFINITION

A project is a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period of time and within specific limitations (cost, performance/ quality, etc.). Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people.

Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because, unlike operations, projects have a definitive beginning and end. A project has an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks.

Examples of projects include:

- Researching new cultivars;
- Providing outreach opportunities on specialty crops to youth, families, seniors, and the overall community; and/or

Activities or tasks that could be part of such projects might include:

- Hiring personnel specific to the project;
- Purchasing special purpose equipment: defined in section 8.2 of the [AMS General Terms and Conditions \(AMS GT&C\)](#) as equipment used only for research, scientific, or technical activities;
- Holding an educational workshop;

- Planting specialty crops

PROJECT ORGANIZATION

For 2026, project proposals will be funded with an award up to \$60,000 with the following parameters: smaller awards are designed for small exploration projects and may be shorter than a three-year project period. More substantial awards are designed for industry wide long- term impact using evidence-based research or building on previous projects with strong industry support.

Investigative projects are expected to be entry level in concept, such as feasibility studies or small variety trial plots. Such projects that are completed successfully and considered to be in good standing with the granting agency will be considered competitive applications for future projects that expand upon the initial concept. We recommend that they be one to two years in duration. The annual performance period is from September 30, through September 29, of the following year. You must list individual specialty crop producers as well as all organizations that formally support your project and include a letter of support from at least one entity.

Projects requesting more funds are expected to be professional level in concept, drawing from evidence-based research and expertise. Research-based projects will likely build upon a previously tested concept and will show strong industry support. They can be for up to three years in duration. If the project requires the full three years, the end of the grant performance period would be September 29, 2029.

The annual performance reporting period is from September 30, through September 29, of the following year. Large projects are expected to provide multiple Letters of Support with their application. The Letters of Support need to be from specialty crop stakeholders, other than the sub- applicant, individuals, and organizations involved in the project.

Funding maximum:	\$60,000
Minimum number of producers impacted	5
Maximum duration of project	3 years
Industry Professional Partner	Required, with a letter of support
Industry Support	At least one letter of support (in addition to industry professional partner)

ELIGIBILITY

Any entity may apply, but projects must benefit more than one individual, business or organization.

- Proposed project benefits must benefit the specialty crop industry and align with program requirements, including funding restrictions.
- Projects must enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory-grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Visit <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop> for a list of eligible specialty crops and ineligible commodities.
- Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome and outcome indicator that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops. Guidance on outcomes and indicators can be found at [SCBG Performance Measures](#) and [SCBG Performance Measures Quick Guide](#).
- Applications should describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single business, organization, or individual. AMS will not fund projects that benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single business, organization, or individual. Single businesses, organizations, or individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.
- Applicants with previous participation that have incomplete or unsatisfactory performance may be ruled ineligible for participation at the sole discretion of the Division of Agriculture.
- Multi-state projects that address challenges and opportunities that cross state boundaries are eligible.
- Previously funded projects will be evaluated to determine if they are likely to become self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent upon publicly and privately granted funds.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

The Alaska Division of Agriculture, in partnership with statewide specialty crop stakeholders, will identify funding priorities for 2026 from the following eligible project types:

- Enhancing food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act ([21 U.S.C. Chapter 27](#)) for example, developing "Good Agricultural Practices," "Good Handling Practices," "Good Manufacturing Practices," and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;

- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability

Specialty Crop Stakeholders can provide input on this year’s top funding priorities by completing the following survey by 5:00pm on May 8th, 2026: [Stakeholder Priority Survey](#)

Results of the survey will be posted to the Division’s [Grant Page](#) by May 11th, 2026.

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

As mentioned previously, AMS will not award grant funds for projects whose products or services promote or provide profit that solely benefits a single organization, institution, or individual. In addition, recipients and subrecipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Examples of Acceptable Projects:

- A non- profit organization 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 farmer implements food safety practices or models on his/ her property to meet food safety requirements and conducts a field day and training services to encourage other small family farmers to adopt the methods.

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 single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase its membership.

PROJECTS MORE RELEVANT FOR OTHER FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

Entities that engage in projects that support the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase and/ or include technologies for benefit redemption systems should consider submitting those projects to the [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program](#).

Entities that engage in projects that support domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities, and local and regional food business enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products should consider submitting those projects to the [Farmers Market Promotion Program \(FMPP\)](#), [Local Food Promotion Program \(LFPP\)](#), and [Regional Food System Partnerships \(RFSP\) Program](#).

Entities that engage in projects that support biobased products and bioenergy and energy programs, including biofuels and other alternative uses for agricultural and forestry commodities (development of biobased products), should see the [USDA energy website](#) for information on how to submit those projects for consideration to the energy programs supported by USDA.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants should submit their full application, along with the required Letters of Support, to the Division of Agriculture using the provided Project Profile Template by **5pm Wednesday, May 20th, 2026**. Files should be submitted to the Division of Agriculture at dag.scbg@alaska.gov. The application is an interactive Adobe PDF file which will need to be downloaded and saved to a file before it can be opened. For assistance with how to open the interactive template, please visit the Application Resources section of the [Division of Agriculture SCBG Grants Page](#).

The acceptable font size for the narrative is 11 or 12, with all margins at 1 inch. This is a dynamic PDF form which will be submitted to USDA for review and final approval. The submitted project must include target numbers for at least one of the seven outcomes listed in the [SCBG Performance Measures](#) and at least one of the indicators listed in the selected outcome(s). **Do not convert the Project Profile Template to Word, print to PDF, or convert to any other format. Applications must be submitted using the USDA interactive**

template or they will not be accepted.

Applicants who have previously participated in the SCBGP and have an incomplete or unsatisfactory performance record may be ruled ineligible for participation at the sole discretion of the Division of Agriculture.

APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

Total Points Available: 100

Application: 5 points

The application is complete and thorough, addressing all format criteria.

Project Purpose: 20 points

The proposed project responds to a specialty crop industry need and demonstrates the ability to impact that need.

External Project Support: 20 points

The proposed project demonstrates that there is broad industry support for the project. Letters of support and/or formal commitments from all project partners are included. Applicant has sufficient organizational support to forward the project.

Impact and Outcomes/Evaluation: 25 points

The proposed project demonstrates that it will increase the competitiveness of specialty crop producers and will impact a significant number of beneficiaries. The project includes a strong outreach/information dissemination component to ensure a broad impact. Outcome measures are thoughtfully developed and realistic. The project includes a strong monitoring and evaluation plan and explains clearly how outcomes will be measured.

Budget: 20 points

Budget aligns well with project, with no abnormal or outlying costs.

Work Plan: 2 points

Work plan clearly identifies activities, the personnel that will work on them, and when each activity will be completed.

Past Project Performance: 8 points

If applicant has never been funded, they will automatically receive 5 points. Return applicants will be scored based on previous project management and reporting performance.

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 (Agreement) with the Division indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks and authorizing the Division to monitor the progress of the proposed project. In addition to obtaining a UEI number (required prior to application submission), successful applicants will be required to register with the federally run System for Award Management, <https://sam.gov/>. As a potential sub recipient of federal money, you must have an active and clear profile that matches your UEI number and provide this information with your application. Registration is free.

Agreements must be signed and returned to the Division within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the 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.

Reporting Requirements

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

Annual Reports: Annual Reports must be submitted on the USDA Annual reporting templates. The Division will provide the applicable annual and final reporting templates to the subgrantees as these are frequently updated by USDA.

You 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.

You'll be expected to report on the following:

- Progress on the grant objectives, outcomes, and indicators that were approved in the accepted project plan.
- Outcome remarks explaining any quantifiable results, along with an update on their progress and data collection efforts for each of the outcomes and indicators selected in the accepted project plan.
- Accomplishments over the reporting period and how they relate to the grant's objectives and outcome measures.
- Any challenges and developments that occur during the reporting period.
- Upcoming activities and dates that are planned for completion during the next reporting period (for

annual reports only).

- Federal Project Expenditures and a discussion of expenditures explaining how grant funds will be expended and project activities completed as planned by the end date on the grant agreement.
- Any reportable Program Income (must be approved in the accepted project plan).
- Lessons learned during the grant project performance period (for final reports only).

For updated progress report templates, please visit the Grant Performance Documents section of the [Division of Agriculture SCBG Grants Page](#).

Amendment Requests: Any changes to the original USDA approved project including personnel changes, budget amendments, extensions, etc. must be submitted to the Division prior to the changes occurring. Some types of changes requested may be required to be officially approved by USDA.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

AMS is required to report on the outcomes of the SCBGP at a national scale to demonstrate the performance of this program. By collecting, aggregating, and reporting performance data across all states and territories, AMS can share the impact of the SCBGP with all stakeholders, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, the agricultural community, and the general public.

- Each project submitted in the State Plan must include at least one of the provided outcomes, and at least one of the provided indicators.
- If the indicator(s) below the selected outcome(s) are not relevant to a project, a project-specific indicator(s) may be developed which will be subject to approval by AMS.
- The progress of each indicator must be reported in the Annual Performance Report and the result in the Final Performance Report.
- AMS will aggregate the data collected to assess the overall impact of the program and report to OMB and Congress on these national outcome measures.
- AMS will review the quality of the information we receive in subsequent performance reports and modify the outcomes and indicators as needed over time to lead to better results in showing the impact of the SCBGP.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Advisory Councils	ALL with exceptions	<p>Allowable for an entity, whether named an advisory council, steering committee, or similar, when they are specific to providing program or project guidance to carry about activities, make operational decisions, or directly implement grant-funded work, and if authorized by the Program in advance. Example A: A committee formed or utilized whose time spent is to specifically guide or execute a grant-funded project.</p> <p>Per 2 CFR 200.422, an advisory council or committee is a body that provides advice to management of such entities as corporations, organizations, or foundations. Costs for such entities are unallowable unless authorized by a specific statute or by the Federal agency, or as an indirect cost where allocable to the Federal awards. Example: When an advisory council to an organization is an entity that provides ongoing advice regarding the operation of that organization and not specific to the grant-funded project, those costs are not allowable.</p>
Alcoholic Beverages	ALL	Unallowable for purchase of alcoholic beverages.

Buildings and Land – Construction	ALL with exceptions	<p>Unallowable for the acquisition of buildings, facilities, or land or to make new constructions, additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architecture fees), unless the cost is associated with fulfilling the purpose of the grant program or with prior written approval. This also includes construction-related materials, which may include, but are not limited to, the purchase of building materials such as wood, nails, concrete, asphalt, roofing, gravel, sand, paint, insulation, drywall, or plumbing.</p> <p>Allowable for rental costs of land and building space. However, lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own) are not allowable. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.</p> <p>A building is any permanent structure designed or intended for support, enclosure, shelter, or protection of people, animals, or property, and having a permanent roof supported by columns or walls.</p>
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Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Conferences	ALL with exceptions	<p>Allowable if the conference fulfills the grant program’s purpose. Allowable conference costs paid by the non-Federal recipient as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers’ fees, costs of meals (see Meals for restrictions), and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences with the exception of entertainment costs that are unallowable. If registration fees are collected, the recipient must report fees as program income (see Program Income).</p> <p>Allowable to rent a building or room for training; however, where appropriate, AMS encourages the use of technologies such as webinars, teleconferencing, or videoconferencing as an alternative to renting a building or a room. The recipient should use the most cost-effective facilities, such as State government conference rooms if renting a building or a room is necessary.</p>

Contingency Provisions	ALL	Unallowable for miscellaneous and similar rainy-day funds for events the occurrence of which cannot be foretold with certainty as to the time or intensity, or with an assurance of their happening. Unallowable for working capital for activities/items not already in place.
Contractual/ Consultant Costs (Professional Services)	ALL	Allowable subject to limitations. Contractual/consultant costs are expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the recipient in the form of a procurement relationship. Allowable for contractor/consultant employee rates that do not exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in the area (for more information, visit the OPM website) and travel that is reasonable and necessary. This does not include fringe benefits, indirect costs, or other expenses. If rates exceed this amount, the recipient is required to justify the allowability of the cost aligning with 2 CFR §§ 200.317-327 .
Contributions or Donations	ALL	Unallowable for contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the recipient to other recipients. A recipient using grant funds to purchase food or services to donate to other recipients or subrecipients and/or individuals is unallowable.
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Equipment	ALL	Unallowable for the purchase, lease, or upgrade of systems or equipment, including EBT equipment, that is used to process or implement Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, or other Federal nutrition incentive programs.

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Entertainment Costs and Prizes	ALL with exceptions	Unallowable for entertainment costs including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as bands, orchestras, dance groups, tickets to shows, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities and gifts). Entertainment and prizes costs are defined in 2 CFR § 200.438 . Allowable when the specific cost is considered to meet the requirements of the sponsored program, have a specific and direct programmatic purpose, and are authorized in the approved budget or with prior written approval.

Equipment – General Purpose	ALL	<p>Unallowable for acquisition costs of general purpose equipment or lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own). Allowable for rental costs of general purpose equipment when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval. 'General Purpose' vehicles may not be purchased and may only be leased with prior written approval (and only if specific to fulfilling the purpose of the grant). The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.</p> <p>For vehicle and equipment leases or rentals with an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$10,000, rates should be in light of factors such as: rental costs of comparable vehicles and equipment, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the vehicle or equipment leased.</p> <p>Allowable if special purpose equipment (and NOT general purpose equipment). Special purpose equipment is defined below in this chart under "Equipment – Special Purpose."</p>
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Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Equipment – Information Technology Systems and Telecommunications	ALL	<p>Unallowable for information technology systems having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established in accordance with GAAP by the recipient for financial statement purposes or \$10,000. Acquisition costs for software include those development costs capitalized in accordance with GAAP. Information technology systems include computing devices, ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources.</p> <p>Computing devices means machines used to acquire, store, analyze, process, and publish data and other information electronically, including accessories (or “peripherals”) for printing, transmitting and receiving, or storing electronic information. Examples of unallowable information technology systems include service contracts, operating systems, printers, and computers that have an acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more. See also special prohibition on the purchase of certain telecommunications and video surveillance described in 2 CFR § 200.216.</p> <p>Allowable for special purpose systems specific to the food and agricultural sectors and specific to the activities in the grant. Examples include food sales and traceability applications, systems and software that support specialized equipment by design and website development, mobile apps, etc.</p>

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Equipment – Special Purpose	ALL	<p>Allowable when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval for acquisition costs and rental costs of special purpose equipment provided the following criteria are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant agreement; 2. Not otherwise reasonably available and accessible; 3. The type of equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization; 4. Acquired in accordance with organizational practices; 5. Must be used solely to meet the legislative purpose of the grant program and objectives of the grant agreement; 6. More than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment; 7. Must not use special purpose equipment acquired with grant funds to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services; and 8. Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR § 200.313 as applicable. <p>Examples of special purpose equipment in the agricultural sector include, but are not limited to sorting equipment, packing and labeling equipment, food processing equipment essential to the grant-funded project, purpose specific vehicles or trailers, such as refrigerated vans that will not be used as personal vehicles.</p>
Farm, Gardening, and Production Activities and Supplies	ALL with exceptions	<p>Unallowable for farm, gardening, and production activities, materials, supplies, and other related costs including but not limited to soil, seeds, shovels, gardening tools, greenhouses, and hoop houses.</p> <p>Allowable where the specific cost is considered to meet the requirements of grant and is authorized in the approved budget or with prior written approval.</p>

Fines, Penalties, Damages and Other Settlements	ALL	Unallowable for costs resulting from violations of, alleged violations of, or failure to comply with, Federal, State, tribal, local, or foreign laws and regulations.
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Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Fixed Amount Subawards	ALL with exceptions	Unallowable for cost related to fixed amount subawards. Allowable to meet the requirements of the grant award (noncompetitive) or with prior written approval. A recipient may provide subawards based on fixed amounts up to the simplified acquisition threshold, provided that the subawards meet the requirements for fixed amount awards in 2 CFR § 200.201 .
Fundraising and Investment Management Costs	ALL	Unallowable for organized fundraising, 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. This includes salaries of personnel involved in activities to raise capital.
General Costs of Government	ALL	Unallowable for: Salaries and expenses of the Office of the Governor of a State or the chief executive of a local government or the chief executive of an Indian tribe; Salaries and other expenses of a State legislature, tribal council, or similar local governmental body, such as a county supervisor, city council, school board, etc., whether incurred for purposes of legislation or executive direction; Costs of the judicial branch of a government; Costs of prosecutorial activities unless treated as a direct cost to a specific program if authorized by statute or regulation (however, this does not preclude the allowability of other legal activities of the Attorney General as described in 2 CFR § 200.435 Defense and prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, claims, appeals and patent infringements); and Costs of other general types of government services normally provided to the general public, such as fire and police, unless provided for as a direct cost under a program statute or regulation.

Goods or Services for Personal Use	ALL	Unallowable for costs of goods or services for personal use of the recipient's employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.
Indirect Costs – Unrecovered	ALL with exceptions	Unallowable for unrecovered indirect costs. Allowable for projects with cost share requirements to use unrecovered indirect costs as part of cost sharing.
Insurance and Indemnification	ALL	Allowable when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval as indirect costs for insurance and indemnification.

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Lobbying	ALL	Unallowable as defined in 2 CFR § 200.450 . See Section 12.5 of the USDA General Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards .
Meals	ALL	Unallowable for business meals when individuals go to lunch or dine together although no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered an entertainment cost. Unallowable for conference attendee breakfasts. It is expected attendees will have adequate time to obtain this meal on their own before a conference begins. Unallowable for meal costs that duplicate a meeting participant's per diem or subsistence allowances. 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.
Memberships, Subscriptions, and Professional Activity Costs	ALL	Unallowable for costs of membership in any civic or community organization, country club or social or dining club. Allowable for costs of membership in business, technical, and professional organizations when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval.

Organization Costs	ALL	Unallowable for costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments. Allowable with prior approval for organization costs per 2 CFR § 200.455 .
Participant Support Costs	ALL	Allowable when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval for such items as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, temporary dependent care, per diem, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with approved conferences, training projects, surveys, and focus groups.
Political Activities	ALL	Unallowable for development or participation in political activities, in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 1501-1508 and §§ 7324-7326).

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Pre-Award Costs (see also section 9.5 below)	ALL	Allowable when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval of such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the project's scope of work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award. If charged to the award, these costs must be charged to the initial budget period of the award, unless otherwise specified by AMS. A recipient may incur pre-award costs 90 calendar days before the award. Expenses more than 90 calendar days pre-award require prior approval. These costs and associated activities must be included in the recipient's project narrative and budget justification. All costs incurred before the award are at the potential recipient's risk. The incurrence of pre-award costs in anticipation of an award imposes no obligation on AMS to award funds for such costs.
Printing and Publications	ALL	Allowable to pay the cost of preparing informational leaflets, reports, manuals, and publications relating to the project; however, the printing of hard copies is discouraged given the prevalence of electronic/virtual publication means. If charged to the award, these costs must be charged to the final budget period of the award, unless otherwise specified by AMS.

Salaries and Wages	ALL	<p>Allowable as part of employee compensation for personnel services in proportion to the amount of time or effort an employee devotes to the grant-supported project or program during the period of performance under the Federal award, including salaries, wages, and fringe benefits. Such costs must be incurred under formally established policies of the organization, be consistently applied, be reasonable for the services rendered, and be supported with adequate documentation.</p> <p>Salary and wage amounts charged to grant-supported projects or programs for personal services must be based on an adequate payroll distribution system that documents such distribution in accordance with generally accepted practices of like organizations. Standards for payroll distribution systems are contained in the applicable cost principles (other than those for for-profit organizations).</p> <p>Unallowable for salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for project staff who devote time and effort to activities that do not meet the purpose of the grant program.</p>
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Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotion of an Organization’s Image, Logo, or Brand Name	ALL	<p>Unallowable for costs designed solely to promote the image, logo, or brand for a specific organization or business, unless specifically to fulfill the purpose of the program or grant project.</p> <p>Allowable for more general branding that aligns with the purpose of the grant. For example, in Specialty Crop Block Grant, promotional items could say “Buy STATE/COUNTY Grown Apples” but not “XYZ Grown”, which promotes XYZ generically, to ensure funds are supporting specialty crop stakeholders. Similarly, a promotional campaign to increase producer sales of “STATE/COUNTY Grown fruits and vegetables” is acceptable while increasing membership in “STATE/COUNTY Grown” generally is not.</p>
Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotion of Venues that do not Align with Grant Program Purpose	ALL	<p>Unallowable for costs for promotion of specific venues, tradeshows, events, meetings, programs, conventions, symposia, seminars, etc. that do not align with the purpose of the grant program as stated in the RFA.</p>

Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotional Items, Gifts, Prizes, etc.	ALL with exceptions	<p>Unallowable for promotional items, swag, gifts, prizes, memorabilia, and souvenirs.</p> <p>Allowable with conditions to meet the requirements of the grant, in the approved application or with prior approval for marketing activities directly related to the funded project. Promotional items include point-of-sale materials, promotional kits, signs or streamers, automobile stickers, table tents, and placemats, or promotional items of a personal nature (e.g., t-shirt, hats, etc.).</p>
Selling and Marketing Costs – Coupons, Incentives or Other Price Discounts	ALL	<p>Unallowable for costs of the value of coupon/incentive redemptions or price discounts (e.g., the \$5.00 value for a \$5.00 clip-out coupon).</p> <p>Allowable for costs associated with printing, distribution, or promotion of coupons/tokens or price discounts (e.g., a print advertisement that contains a clip-out coupon) as long as they benefit more than a single program or organization.</p>
Selling and Marketing Costs – Food for Displays, Tastings, Cooking Demonstrations	ALL with exceptions	<p>Unallowable for purchasing food for displays, tastings, and cooking demonstrations.</p> <p>Allowable where the specific cost is considered to meet the programmatic purpose of the grant and is authorized in the approved budget or with prior written approval.</p>

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Selling and Marketing Costs – General Marketing Costs	ALL with exceptions	<p>Unallowable for costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, general logo, or general brand.</p> <p>Allowable for costs designed to promote products that align with the purpose of the grant program.</p>
Selling and Marketing Costs – Sponsorships	ALL	<p>Unallowable for costs associated with sponsorships. A sponsorship is a form of advertising in which an organization uses grant funds to have its name and/or logo associated with certain events and where the organization does not necessarily know how the funds associated with sponsorship costs will be used.</p> <p>These costs also benefit only the organization offering funding, limiting the beneficiaries to the sponsor organization.</p>

Selling and Marketing Costs – Use of Meeting Rooms, Space, exhibits that do not Align with Grant Program Purpose	ALL	Unallowable for costs associated with trade show attendance/displays, meeting room reservations, and/or any other displays, demonstrations, exhibits, or rental of space where activities do not specifically align with the purpose of the grant program.
Supplies and Materials, Including Costs of Computing Devices	ALL	<p>Allowable for costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out a Federal award. Purchased materials and supplies must 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. Only materials and supplies used for the performance of a Federal award may be charged as direct costs.</p> <p>A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient for financial statement purposes or \$10,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. In the specific case of computing devices, charging as a direct cost is allowable for devices that are essential and allocable, but not solely dedicated, to the performance of a Federal award. Where Federally donated or furnished materials are used in performing the Federal award, such materials will be used without charge.</p>
Training	ALL	Allowable when the training is required to meet the objectives of the project or program, including training that is related to Federal grants management.

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Travel – Domestic and Foreign	ALL	<p>Allowable for travel, when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval when costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy and the purpose aligns with the purpose of the program.</p> <p>The allowable travel cost of recipients that do not have formal travel policies and for-profit recipients may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by General Services Administration (GSA), including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. If a recipient does not have a formal travel policy, those regulations will be used to determine the amount that may be charged for travel costs. See section 12.3 of the USDA General Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards for more information about international travel requirements</p>