INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Governor Mike Braun

Lt. Governor Micah Beckwith, Secretary of Agriculture & Rural Development

Executive Director Don Lamb

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture ("ISDA") is seeking applications for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program ("SCBGP") to carry out projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in the state of Indiana. **The ISDA Division of Economic Development** is responsible for administration of the SCBGP and **is accepting applications for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 ("FFY25").**

$534,076.75 in funding from the United States Department of Treasury ("USDA") is available to the State of Indiana. Final availability of funds is contingent upon a continuing resolution, consolidated appropriations act, "Farm Bill", or another Congressional appropriation.

The ISDA will retain $75,000.00 (14% of the State's total allocation) for a statewide Indiana Grown specialty crop initiative. The ISDA will also retain $42,726.75 (8% of the State's total allocation) for indirect costs ("grant administration"). **The ISDA is making $416,350.00 available for award in the competitive solicitation process.** Interested parties are encouraged to read this Notice of Funding Opportunity ("NOFO") and all supplemental documents before applying. **Applications are due** to the ISDA no later than **Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 11:59pm Eastern Time.**

FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION		STATE SOLICITATION INFORMATION	
Funding Opportunity #:	USDA-AMS-TM-SCBGP-G-25-0004	Available for Competitive Grants:	$416,350.00
Assistance Listing #:	10.170	Minimum Award Amount:	$50,000.00
Indiana's Expected Allocation:	$534,076.75	Application Due Date:	June 4, 2025
Federal Award Term	Sept. 30, 2025 – Sept. 29, 2028	Performance Period:	Sept. 30, 2025 – Sept. 29, 2027

SEC. 1   LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY – WHERE DOES THE FUNDING COME FROM?

Legislative authority for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is provided under Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. §1621), as amended. The ISDA is charged with "administer[ing] economic development efforts for agriculture" in the state of Indiana and is authorized to carry out this solicitation for the SCBGP pursuant to IC §15-11-2-3(b)(5).

SEC. 2   PURPOSE – WHAT IS THE SCBGP?

The SCBGP helps State Departments of Agriculture 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 of 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 U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with specialty crop stakeholders and relevant State Departments of Agriculture.

The ISDA is seeking project proposals from growers, processors, and distributors in the specialty crop industry.

Proposals must enhance specialty crops throughout the state of Indiana. Applicants interested in regional or multi-state projects should contact the USDA to learn about the Specialty Crop Multistate Program ("SCMP"). **Specialty crops are defined as "Fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture)"**. (*See 7 U.S.C. §1621, as amended).* **For a detailed list of eligible specialty crops and ineligible commodities, please visit** here.

The USDA has identified several issues impacting the Indiana specialty crop industry and the specialty crop industry at large. The USDA strongly encourages applicants to develop projects which:

1. Enhance food safety;
2. Improve the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (21 U.S.C. Chapter 27) (i.e., GAP, GHP, GMP); including cost-share arrangements for funding audits of GAP, GHP, GMP (including USDA Group GAP);
3. Invest in specialty crop research, including that which focuses on conservation and environmental outcomes;
4. Develop new/improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
5. Improve pest and disease control methods;
6. Increase child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
7. Improve efficiency and reduce costs of distribution systems; and/or,
8. Create sustainable long-term environmental outcomes.

SEC. 3   ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS – WHO CAN APPLY?

Any for-profit or non-profit entity, local unit of government (e.g., incorporated cities/towns or counties), **or public/private institutions of higher education (IHEs) may apply for the SCBGP**. **Sole proprietors may apply if** they are properly **registered with the Indiana Department of Revenue** and meet all other eligibility requirements.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS	STATE REQUIREMENTS	ISDA REQUIREMENTS
❑ Must have a SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier ("UEI"). ❑ Must have an active SAM.gov registration (this is an additional step on top of obtaining or checking your UEI). ❑ Must NOT be on the SAM.gov Exclusions list, USDA suspension/debarment list, or any other federal or state suspension, debarment, or do-not-contract list.	❑ Must be registered as a "bidder" with the Indiana Department of Administration ("IDOA") Supplier Division. ❑ Must be registered with the Indiana Secretary of State ("SOS") and be in good standing. *Excludes sole proprietors.* ❑ Must be registered with the Indiana Department of Revenue ("IDOR") and be in good standing.	❑ Must not have more than two (2) open grants with the ISDA at the time of application. For IHEs, this policy is applied at the Division/Department level. ❑ Must not have any delinquent reports, claims, or outstanding corrective actions for any award with the ISDA.
❑ *Nonprofits (including IHEs) must present Form NP-1 (State Form 51065) and the IRS Letter of Determination.*		

For more detailed information about applicant eligibility and documentation requirements, see APPENDIX A.

SEC. 4A   ELIGIBLE PROJECTS – WHAT CAN I DO WITH SCBGP FUNDS?

Projects which enhance the competitiveness of **specialty crops in the state of Indiana are eligible for the SCBGP.** Applicants demonstrate the proposed project will benefit the specialty crop industry and the public at large. **Examples of eligible projects may include but are not limited to:** (1) Researching new cultivars; (2) Providing outreach opportunities for specialty crops; and (3) Marketing specific specialty crops through a targeted promotional campaign.

Activities or tasks that are eligible and could be a part of such projects may **include, but are not limited to:**

1. Hiring personnel (to work specifically on grant funded activities);
2. Purchasing special equipment, defined in Section 8.2 of the AMS General Terms & Conditions as equipment used for specific research, scientific, or technical activities;
3. Holding an educational workshop;
4. Planting specialty crops; and/or,
5. Distributing product promotional materials.

SEC. 4B   INELIGIBLE PROJECTS – WHAT CAN'T I DO WITH SCBGP FUNDS?

Projects that provide no benefit to the Indiana specialty crop industry are ineligible. Grant funds may not be used to benefit a single individual or entity; to unfairly compete with other entities providing equivalent goods/services; or to supplant (replace) existing funding streams that have already been obligated to an eligible activity. Examples of **ineligible projects include, but are not limited to:**

1. Using grant funds to purchase starter plants and equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop to make a profit or expand production of a single business or entity;
2. Using grant funds to market one's own entity so it can increase its sales or membership (i.e., entity-specific branding and advertising); and/or,
3. Using grant funds to fund an existing research project which already received funds from another federal, state, local, private, or self-funded source.

For more information about eligible and ineligible projects and activities, please visit here.

SEC. 5   PERFORMANCE MEASURES – WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM KPIs?

Eligible projects must identity one (1) specialty crop the project will address. Applicants must also identify **one (1) SCBPG Outcome and a corresponding Indicator.** Choosing more than one crop, Outcome or corresponding Indicator is permitted but not recommended. **Quality of project outcomes and reporting is preferred over quantity of potential outcomes and metrics** to be tracked. **The SCBG Performance Measures worksheet with the Outcomes and corresponding Indicators is located at APPENDIX B.**

SEC. 6   SCORING PROCESS – HOW ARE AWARDS SELECTED?

The ISDA will partner with the Lt. Governor's Division of **Grant Services ("Grant Services") to review applications for completeness, eligibility** with the FFY25 AMS General Terms & Conditions, the FFY25 SCBGP Request for Applications, 2 CFR 200 and related federal and state regulatory requirements (i.e., conduct a "threshold" review).

Applications which pass the threshold review will be provided to the ISDA's Competitive Application Review Board ("CARB") for scoring, discussion, and tentative selection. **The CARB will independently review and score each application** using the ISDA's 2025 scoring rubric, then meet to rank the applications based on the total weighted average score. The ranking and feedback will be provided to the **executive staff to make a final award selection.** **To learn more about the CARB's selection process and role in the scoring process, please see APPENDIX C.**

Selection of a project by the ISDA is NOT a guarantee a project will be awarded. **Projects are not considered awarded until the USDA approves the ISDA's State Plan.** Selected **applicants may be required to modify scope/budget components** of their proposed projects **in order to comply with the USDA**'s award requirements. The ISDA will notify all applicants of their application status, regardless of selection or rejection.

SEC. 7   SCORING CRITERIA – HOW IS MY APPLICATION EVALUTED?

The ISDA has revised its scoring criteria to conform to the FFY25 SCBGP Request for Applications. The ISDA has readopted its 2024 Funding Priorities for FFY25 SCBGP. **A General Application Checklist is found at APPENDIX D.**

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW		Max Possible Points: 25
SUBSECTION	*CRITERIA*	*POSS. POINTS*
Project Summary	Is the project description and need for the project clearly described? Are expected impacts understood and is there a reasonable implementation strategy to address those impacts. Is the relationship between the applicant and partners clearly explained and documented (if applicable)?	**25**

SECTION 2: PURPOSE		Max Possible Points: 100
SUBSECTION	*CRITERIA*	*POSS. POINTS*
Project Issues	Is there a clear and compelling description of the problem(s) the project intends to address?	**30**
	Is frequency (# of occurrences) and prevalence (commonness and severity) clearly described and documented?	**20**
Objectives	Do the objectives align with the purpose and goal of the project?	**20**
Timeline	Is a timeline of project activities (broken out at least by quarter and year) provided? Does the timeline demonstrate the applicant can complete the proposed projects within the two (2)-year Performance Period?	**15**
Sustainability	Is a detailed sustainability plan provided? Can this project be sustained long-term without indefinite dependence on publicly generated grant funds?	**15**

SECTION 3: PERFORMANCE MEASURES & REPORTING		Max Possible Points: 25
SUBSECTION	*CRITERIA*	*POSS. POINTS*
Outcomes/Indicators; Data Collection	Do the outcomes/ indicators correlate to the proposed project activities?	**15**
	Are data collection, monitoring, and reporting methods adequately explained?	**10**

SECTION 4: BUDGET		Max Possible Points: 30
SUBSECTION	*CRITERIA*	*POSS. POINTS*
Budget Justification; Allowability of Costs	Does the budget justification clearly explain how line items are related to the proposed project and necessary for carrying out activities? Is supporting documentation for special equipment (if applicable) provided?	**30**

ISDA FUNDING PRIORITIES (SCORED INTERNALLY, NOT BY CARB)		*Max Possible Points: 20**
State Funding Priorities	Is a funding priority ("FP") clearly identified? Does the project align with an FP? (FP1 – Market Enhancement; FP2 – Access, Ed., Training; FP3 – Research). ***When multiple priorities addressed, points awarded to most prevalent FP focus.**	FP1 – **20** FP2 – **10** FP3 – **5**
	TOTAL APPLICATION POINTS AVAILABLE ➔	**200**

SEC. 8   APPLICATION SUBMISSION & TECH. ASSISTANCE – WHERE DO I SUBMIT?

Applications must be complete and submitted in the electronic Grants Management System ("GMS") **no later than Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 11:59pm Eastern Time.** Incomplete, late, or unsubmitted applications will be immediately rejected without review. **To request access or login to GMS, please visit here. Submitting early is never a bad thing!** Consider submitting **at least 24 hours in advance** of the deadline. **Technical assistance is unavailable after Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 5:00pm Eastern Time. Resources & Directory are at APPENDIX E.**

INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Governor Mike Braun

Lt. Governor Micah Beckwith, Secretary of Agriculture & Rural Development

Executive Director Don Lamb

APPENDICES

This document supplements the Indiana SCBGP NOFO with document name 'FFY2025 ISDA SCBG NOFO_05132025'. This document contains appendices with applicant checklists, directories, and other useful information for applicants. Applicants should read through this document carefully to learn more about specific applicant eligibility criteria, required documentation for an SCBGP app, the SCBGP Outcomes and Indicators, the ISDA funding priorities, important contact information, and other resources which may help with application management.

FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION		STATE SOLICITATION INFORMATION	
Funding Opportunity #:	USDA-AMS-TM-SCBGP-G-25-0004	Available for Competitive Grants:	$416,350.00
Assistance Listing #:	10.170	Minimum Award Amount:	$50,000.00
Indiana's Expected Allocation:	$534,076.75	Application Due Date:	June 4, 2025
Federal Award Term	Sept. 30, 2025 – Sept. 29, 2028	Performance Period:	Sept. 30, 2025 – Sept. 29, 2027

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDIX A: Applicant Eligibility Checklist

SEC. 1   CHECKLIST FOR ALL APPLICANT ENTITY TYPES

All applicants – for-profit farmers, ranchers, producers, nonprofit organizations, local units of government (e.g., incorporated cities/towns and counties), and public and private institutions of higher education ("IHEs") – are required to meet the following federal and state applicant requirements to be eligible for award under the SCBGP or by the State of Indiana. A checklist of documents required for application is provided below.

Document/Record Name	Purpose & Description	Suggested Naming Convention
SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier	A standard entity ID assigned by SAM.gov to identify entities who contract with, or receive grants from, the federal government, or receive federal funds through a passthrough entity (i.e., the State Department of Agriculture.	Consider naming this document **"AE_SAM UEI Report_[Applicant Name]"** to help reviewers find your information quickly.
SAM.gov Entity Registration Report	An electronic report generated by SAM.gov which shows an entity's status and demonstrates their ability to receive federal funds.	Consider naming this document **"AE_SAM Entity Registration_[Applicant Name]"** to help reviewers find your information quickly.
Indiana Dept. of Administration Bidder Registration	An electronic printout from the Supplier Division bidder registration/update portal which shows the applicant has taken steps to register as a bidder or verified their active status.	Consider naming this document **"AE_IDOA Bid Reg_[Applicant Name]"** to help reviewers find your information quickly.
Indiana Secretary of State Business Division Entity Report	An electronic report available from https://www.inbiz.in.gov which demonstrates the applicant is a business entity registered to do business in the state of Indiana and is in good standing. *This excludes sole proprietors who are registered and in good standing with the IDOR.*	Consider naming this document **"AE_SOS INBIZ Report_[Applicant Name]"** to help reviewers find your information quickly.

SEC. 2   ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR NONPROFITS AND IHEs

Document/Record Name	Purpose & Description	Suggested Naming Convention
Indiana Dept. of Revenue Form NP1 (State Form 51065)	Indiana General Sales Tax Exemption Certificate which demonstrates the applicant is legally recognized as a nonprofit entity in the state of Indiana.	Consider naming this document **"AE_IDOR Form NP1_[Applicant Name]"** to help reviewers find your information quickly.
Internal Revenue Services "Letter of Determination" of nonprofit/501(c) tax-exempt status.	A letter provided by the federal IRS which demonstrates the applicant is legally recognized as a nonprofit entity under 501(c)3 or another related section of the federal Internal Revenue Code.	Consider naming this document **"AE_IRS LOD_[Applicant Name]"** to help reviewers find your information quickly.

APPENDIX B: SCBGP FFY25 Performance Measures

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
Outcomes and Indicators

The grant program outcomes and performance measures outlined below reflect direct stakeholder feedback and provide a framework that allows grant recipients to evaluate project activities more accurately in relation to each program's statutory purpose.

For recipients, the measures are:

- More feasible to accomplish and measure within a grant's period of performance;
- Better aligned with grant program purpose and recipient activities; and
- More reflective of work performed during the project.

Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Specialty Crops

1.1 Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about specialty crops ___.

> **1.1.a**   Adults ___.

> **1.1.b**   Children ___.

1.2 Total number of consumers who consumed more specialty crops ___.

> **1.2.a**   Adults ___.

> **1.2.b**   Children ___.

1.3 Number of additional specialty crop customers counted ___.

1.4 Number of additional business transactions executed ___.

1.5 Increased sales measured in:

> **1.5.a**   Dollars ___.

> **1.5.b**   Percent change ___.

> **1.5.c**   Combination of volume and average price as a result of enhanced marketing activities ___.

Outcome 2: Increasing Access to Specialty Crops and Expanding Specialty Crop Production and Distribution

2.1 Number of stakeholders who gained technical knowledge about producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing specialty crops ___.

2.2 Number of stakeholders who reported producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing more specialty crops___.

2.3 Total number of market access points for specialty crops developed or expanded ___. Of those:

> **2.3.a**   Number of new online portals created to sell specialty crops ___.

> **2.3.b**   Number with expanded seasonal availability ___.

> **2.3.c**   Number of existing market access points that expanded specialty crop offerings ___.

2.3.d   Number of new market access points that established specialty crop offerings ___.

2.4 Number of stakeholders who gained knowledge about more efficient and effective distribution systems ___.

2.5 Number of stakeholders who adopted best practices or new technologies to improve distribution systems ___.

2.6 Total number of partnerships established between producers, distributors, and/or other relevant intermediaries related to distribution systems ___. Of those established:

    2.6.a Number formalized with written agreements (i.e. MOU's, signed contracts, etc.) ___.

2.7 Total number of new/improved distribution systems developed ___. Of those, the number that:

    2.7.a Stemmed from new partnerships ___.

    2.7.b Increased efficiency ___.

    2.7.c reduced costs ___.

    2.7.d Increased specialty crop grower participation ___.

    2.7.e Expanded customer reach ___.

    2.7.f Increased online presence ___.

2.8 Number of specialty crop-related jobs:

    2.8.a Created ___.

    2.8.b Maintained ___.

2.9 Total number of new individuals who entered specialty crop production as a result of marketing ___. Of those, the number who are:

    2.9.a Beginning farmers or ranchers ___.

    2.9.b First time specialty crop producers.

2.10 Number of market access points that reported increased:

    2.10.a Revenue ___.

    2.10.b Sales ___.

    2.10.c Cost-savings ___.

Outcome 3: Increase Food Safety Knowledge and Processes

3.1 Number of stakeholders who gained knowledge about prevention, detection, control, and/or intervention food safety practices, including relevant regulations (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP) ___.

3.2 Number of stakeholders who:

    3.2.a Established a food safety plan ___.

    3.2.b Revised or updated their food safety plan ___.

3.3 Number of specialty crop stakeholders who implemented new/improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention practices, tools, or technologies to mitigate food safety risks (to improve their ability to comply with the

Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP) ___.

3.4 Number of prevention, detection, control, or intervention practices developed or enhanced to mitigate food safety risks ___.

3.5 Number of stakeholders who used grant funds to:

    3.5.a Purchase ___.

    3.5.b Upgrade food safety equipment ___.

Outcome 4: Improve Pest and Disease Control Processes

4.1 Number of stakeholders who gained knowledge about science-based tools to combat pests and diseases ___.

4.2 Number of stakeholders who adopted pest and disease control best practices, technologies, or innovations ___.

4.3 Number of stakeholders trained in early detection and rapid response practices to combat pests and diseases___. Of those:

    4.3.a The number of additional acres managed using integrated pest management ___.

4.4 Number of stakeholders who implemented new diagnostic systems, methods, or technologies for analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases ___.

4.5 Total number of producers/processors that enhanced or maintained pest and disease control practices ___. Of those, the number that reported:

    4.5.a Reduction in product lost to pest and diseases ___.

    4.5.b Improved crop quality ___.

    4.5.c Reduction in labor costs ___.

    4.5.d Reduction in pesticide use ___.

4.6 Number of producers/processors that improved the efficiency of pest and disease control diagnostics and response testing, as reported by:

    4.6.a Improving speed ___.

    4.6.b Improving reliability ___.

    4.6.c Expanding capability ___.

    4.6.d Increasing testing (i.e. survey work for pests) ___.

Outcome 5: Develop New Seed Varieties and Specialty Crops

5.1 Number of cultivar and/or variety trials conducted ___. Of those:

    5.1.a The number that advanced to further stages of development ___.

5.2 Number of cultivars and/or seed varieties developed ___.

5.3 Number of cultivars and/or seed varieties released ___.

5.4 Number of growers adopting new cultivars and/or varieties ___.

5.5 Number of acres planted with new cultivars and/or varieties ___.

Outcome 6: Expand Specialty Crop Research and Development

6.1 Number of research goals accomplished ___.

6.2 For research conclusions, the number that:

    6.2.a Yielded findings that supported continued research ___.

    6.2.b Yielded findings that led to completion of study ___.

    6.2.c Yielded findings that allow for implementation of new practice, process or technology ___.

6.3 Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders who engaged with research results ___.

6.4 Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals ___. For each published research output, the:

    6.4.a Number of views/reads of published research/data ___.

    6.4.b Number of citations counted ___.

Outcome 7: Improve Environmental Sustainability of Specialty Crops

7.1 Number of stakeholders who gained knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies ___.

7.2 Number of stakeholders who reported an intent to adopt environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies ___.

7.3 Number of producers who adopted environmental best practices or tools ___.

7.4 Number of new tools/technologies developed or enhanced to improve sustainability/conservation or other environmental outcomes ___.

7.5 Number of additional acres managed with sustainable practices, tools, or technologies that focused on:

    7.5.a Water quality/conservation ___.

    7.5.b Soil health ___.

    7.5.c Biodiversity ___.

    7.5.d Reduction in energy use ___.

    7.5.e Other positive environmental outcomes (optional) ___.

7.6 Number of additional acres established and maintained for the mutual benefit of pollinators and specialty crops

APPENDIX C: CARB Selection, Roles & Responsibilities

SEC. 1   SELECTION, SCREENING, & APPOINTMENT TO THE CARB

The Competitive Application Review Board ("CARB") consists of three (3) principal members and two (2) alternate members selected in accordance with 2 CFR § 400.2 to ensure all panel members are free from any real and/or perceived conflicts of interest, and to ensure applications undergo fair and impartial reviews.

Two (2) principal members will be industry experts from outside the ISDA or Grant Services. One (1) member will be an internal staff member from either the ISDA or Grant Services. Alternates will be one(1) industry expert from outside the ISDA or Grant Services. The other alternate will be an internal staff member from either the ISDA or Grant Services.

All prospective CARB members must submit a Conflict of Interested Disclosure ("COI Form") to the ISDA and Grant Services for screening. Prospective members with conflicts of interest that cannot be appropriately mitigated or resolved may be excused. Members with minimal conflicts of interest, or those which can be mitigated with special conditions governing their involvement, may be appointed to the CARB with specific prohibitions on which applications they may score. Members with a verified conflict of interest will recuse themselves from reviewing any impacted application(s). An alternate scorer with no conflict of interest will participate in their place.

SEC. 2   CARB MEMBER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The CARB serves as an advisory panel to the ISDA. CARB members will be provided access to any applications which were completed, timely submitted, and determined to meet basic eligibility requirements during the threshold review process. Members will score each application individual, using the evaluation criteria established in SEC. 7 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity ("NOFO"). The CARB will then be convened to discuss the applications. Applications will be ranked based on the weighted total average score.

The CARB will discuss the rankings and consider other subjective criteria such as competitiveness or the likelihood that a project will positively impact or benefit the specialty crop industry, whether or not a project is relevant and addresses critical needs facing the industry currently, and whether or not the applicant has demonstrated it has the capacity and ability to implement a project. ISDA and Grant Services staff will record and transcribe the CARB convening and prepare summary reports of the CARB's findings, feedback, and recommendations. This information will be provided to the ISDA Executive Director.

The Executive Director of the ISDA, or his designee, shall have final decision making authority and reserves the right to select any eligible project(s) which s/he believes best serves the Indiana specialty crop industry and is most compatible with the IDSA's funding priorities and the primary goal of the SCBGP. The Executive Director, or his designee, also reserves the right to reject any project(s) which contain ineligible activities, do not meet the primary goal of the SCBGP, or are incompatible with the ISDA's funding priorities.

APPENDIX D: General Application Checklist

SEC. 1   APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTS & INFORMATION

*Consider using **prefix "AE_" and suffix "_[Applicant Entity Name]"** when naming any applicant eligibility documents to help reviewers find your info quickly! **This is OPTIONAL but ENCOURAGED**. Choosing to use **alternative naming conventions will not impact the application's score**.*

- ❑ SAM.gov Entity Registration Report or other proof of SAM UEI, registration, and good standing
- ❑ IN Secretary of State Business Entity Report (IN Biz Report)
  - ➔ Not required for sole proprietors
- ❑ IN Dept. of Administration Supplier Division Bidder Registration printout or proof of new registration

- ❑ IN Direct Deposit Authorization Form (SF 47551)
- ❑ IRS Form W-9
- ❑ IRS "Letter of Determination" of tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code
  - ➔ For nonprofits and IHEs
- ❑ IN Dept. of Revenue Form NP-1 (State Form 51065) Sales Tax Exemption Certificate
  - ➔ For nonprofits and IHEs

SEC. 2   PROJECT PARTNERS & EXTERNAL SUPPORT

*Consider using **prefix "PP_" and suffix "_[Applicant Entity Name]"** when naming any project partner documents to help reviewers find your info quickly! **This is OPTIONAL but ENCOURAGED**. Choosing to use **alternative naming conventions will not impact the application's score**.*

A **Project Partner** is another entity that wishes to partner formally with the lead applicant and **pledges to assist the lead applicant with carrying out grant activities**. **Project Partners are NOT beneficiaries or contractors**, but active participants in the grant administration and implementation of project activities. (i.e., Ag University applies for grant and partners with ABC Farm to carry out farming activities related to an approved research project).

External Supporters are individuals, organizations, or other entities that wish to **express support for the proposed project but will not take an active role like a Project Partner**. Beneficiaries may also be considered External Supporters and are encouraged to submit support letters explaining the reason they support the project.

- ❑ IN Secretary of State Business Entity Report (IN Biz Report) for Project Partner
  - ➔ Not required for sole proprietors
- ❑ IRS "Letter of Determination" of tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code for Project Partner
  - ➔ For nonprofits and IHEs
- ❑ IN Dept. of Revenue Form NP-1 (State Form 51065) Sales Tax Exemption Certificate for Project Partner
  - ➔ For nonprofits and IHEs

- ❑ Explanation of project partner's relationship with the applicant
- ❑ Summary of project activities project partner is expected to assist with or carry out for the applicant
- ❑ Letter of Commitment from the Project Partner(s) stating they intend to partner with the lead applicant to carry out grant activities
- ❑ Letter of Support from any External Supports stating they support the proposed project and explaining why they support it

SEC. 3   PROJECT PURPOSE, SCOPE, & BUDGET

*Consider using **prefix "PS_" and suffix "_[Applicant Entity Name]"** when naming any project purpose documents to help reviewers find your info quickly! **This is OPTIONAL but ENCOURAGED**. Choosing to use **alternative naming conventions will not impact the application's score**.*

- ❑ Project Area Map showing the primary project location (where the majority of the work will take place) and any areas/regions which may benefit from the project
- ❑ Written justification to explain the purpose of/need for the project

- ❑ Documented evidence of issues, frequency/prevalence that supports the need for the grant
- ❑ Timeline broken out by quarter and year (should be detailed enough to know when general activities are taking place)

*Consider using **prefix "BU_" and suffix "_[Applicant Entity Name]"** when naming any budget documents to help reviewers find your info quickly! **This is OPTIONAL but ENCOURAGED**. Choosing to use **alternative naming conventions will not impact the application's score**.*

- ❑ Written justification to explain the necessity for the line item in each budget category and how it relates to the scope of work/proposed project activities
- ❑ For Special Equipment Requests

  - ➔ Written explanation of the special equipment's purpose and necessity
  - ➔ Pictures, artist renderings, or concept drawings showing the special equipment and its proposed location

  - ➔ Explanation as to whether the item can be procured from multiple vendors or it must be procured from a particular vendor and why
  - ➔ Quotes (at least one (1) but preferably three (3) if available from multiple vendors)

SEC. 4   TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

1. **Use simple language everyone can understand!** Grant application narratives should use common terminology, easy-to-understand language, and non-technical writing wherever possible. Avoid using overly complicated language and terms to ensure your application can be easily read and understood by a wide range of audiences.

2. **Application fields have a character limit so remember K.I.S.S. – Keep it Simple and Straightforward.** Uploads and supporting documents are meant to **supplement** your application narrative. Uploads should not be copy/paste duplicates of the project narrative. Instead, consider using the uploads section to add additional context which might be too complex or lengthy to explain in the narrative

3. **This checklist is not exhaustive, nor is it restrictive!** Applicants may provide any additional documentation it finds necessary to assist the reviewers. Documentation must be relevant to the proposed project, scoring criteria, and questions posted in the application. Exercise good judgment when preparing an application and consider whether the narrative alone is sufficient, or if additional documentation is necessary.

4. **Upload documents BEFORE you submit your application!** All documentation must be uploaded to the Uploads page of the application prior to submitting the application. Documentation cannot be added once the application has been submitted. Staff cannot return an incomplete application or add attachments to the application once it has been submitted.

5. **We accept many different file types!** Applicants are able to upload .pdf; .doc; .docx; .csv; .xls; .xlsx; .jpg; .png; and .tif files. Budget tables/justifications may be prepared in spreadsheet software and uploaded as .csv; .xls; or .xlsx. Photos may be uploaded in original format; they don't have to be uploaded as .pdf or .doc/docx.

APPENDIX E: Resources, Program & Technical Staff Directory

SEC. 1   RESOURCE LINKS

SAM.GOV®	**How to check entity registration in SAM.gov, renew registration, or start new registration.**	**https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration**
IDOA INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION	**How to check your bidder registration or start new registration with IDOA Supplier Division**	**https://in.accessgov.com/idoa/Forms/Page/idoa-idoa-bidder-registration/0**
INDIANA Secretary of State	**How to search for your entity's registration with the Indiana SOS, check filings status, and standing.**	**https://inbiz.in.gov/BOS/PublicSearch/Search**
DOR INDIANA	**How to obtain a copy of your IDOR tax-exempt certificate (NP-1)**	**https://www.in.gov/dor/business-tax/nonprofit-tax-forms/#How_should_nonprofit_customers_request_their_Form_NP_1**
IRS	**How to obtain a copy of your IRS tax-exempt status letter ("Determination Letter")**	**https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/eo-operational-requirements-obtaining-copies-of-exemption-determination-letter-from-irs**

SEC. 2   STAFF DIRECTORY

Emily Conwell (CONTACT FOR PROGRAM HELP) *Director of Economic Development Grants* **Indiana State Department of Agriculture** Email: EmConwell@isda.IN.gov Phone: (317) 502-5673	**Leah Harmon (CONTACT FOR TECH. ASSISTANCE)** *Director of Technology Development & Strategy* **Indiana State Department of Agriculture** Email: LHarmon2@isda.IN.gov Phone: (317) 607-4127
Alissa Ferguson (CONTACT FOR COMPLIANCE) *Grants Manager, Ag Grants Specialist* **Office of the Lt. Governor** Email: AlFerguson@lg.IN.gov Phone: (317) 450-2986	**Tim Parthun (CONTACT FOR GRANT POLICY)** *Policy Advisor* **Office of the Lt. Governor** Email: LGPolicy@lg.IN.gov Phone: (317) 639-9527