Specialty Crop Multi-State Program

Fiscal Year 2017 Instructions for Participating States

Deadline to inform AMS if the State will participate in the 2017 SCMP: July 11, 2017
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1.0 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

Legislative authority for the Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP) is provided under section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note), as amended under section 10010 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79.

The purpose of the SCMP is to competitively award funds to State departments of agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by funding collaborative, multi-State projects that address the following regional or national level specialty crop issues:

- Food safety
- Plant pests and disease
- Research
- Crop-specific projects addressing common issues
- Marketing and promotion

2.0 DEFINITION OF A PARTICIPATING STATE

State departments of agriculture are the only entities that may submit SCMP proposals to the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). AMS recognizes that not all States have the resources to administer SCMP projects. AMS also recognizes that some States have restrictions or requirements relating to indirect costs, equipment purchases, travel allowances, additional reporting requirements, etc. due to State regulations, legislation or policy that would preclude them from becoming a Participating State.

Core responsibilities of the Participating State include:

- Accepting proposals from multi-State partners, even if the multi-State partners are not located in the same State as the Participating State;
- Screening proposals to ensure they are complete and meet the basic requirements outlined in the 2017 SCMP Request for Applications (RFA);
- Submitting screened proposals to AMS via Grants.gov by the deadline announced in the RFA.
- Assuming administrative responsibility for any application they submit that is selected for funding.

There can be no deviations from the RFA in terms of SCMP administrative requirements. States should carefully review the RFA to ensure that they can adhere to all of the allowances and limitations described therein before committing to participate. Only those States that have agreed to “participate” in the 2017 SCMP may submit 2017 applications to AMS.

3.0 COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE

The commitment to “participate” is made on a year-by-year basis. States that participated in a previous year may participate again or they may elect not to participate. Participating States that received 2015 SCMP awards will continue to function as Participating States for the purpose and duration of those projects even if they decide not to participate in the 2017 program.
States inform AMS of their intent be a Participating State for a particular funding announcement by sending an email to the agency contact. AMS expects that once a State commits to participate, they will not drop out except with good reason or under unusual circumstances.

### 4.0 PRE-AWARD REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING STATES

1. Provide AMS a point of contact (POC) who will handle inquiries from the public about the SCMP.
   a. The POC will be added to the AMS SCMP website. Until the list of Participating States and POCs is posted to the [AMS SCMP Participating States webpage](#), inquiries from potential applicants may be forwarded to AMS SCMP.
   b. Once the list of Participating States is posted to the AMS SCMP website, AMS will direct applicants with inquiries about the SCMP to the applicable Participating State’s POC.
   c. Non-Participating State departments of agriculture should refer interested parties to the SCMP website to find a Participating State.

2. Refer all stakeholders interested in applying for a SCMP grant to the 2017 RFA.
   a. Inform all interested stakeholders that the RFA provides the complete information needed to prepare an application.
   b. It is not the responsibility of Participating States to assist interested multi-State partners in developing proposals or to give feedback to improve their proposals, although a Participating State may elect to assist, advise, and provide feedback on proposals to applicants. If it does so, the Participating State must assist all potential applicants who request such assistance and feedback, including potential partners from other states.

3. Participating States that have questions about whether or not a proposal fits within the scope of the SCMP should contact the AMS contact listed under 9.0 Agency Contact. AMS will share any new information resulting from such inquiries with the Participating States.

4. Participate in teleconference and/or webinar training sessions held by AMS.

5. Follow AMS protocols for accepting and screening SCMP applications from any source to ensure the applications meet both the definition of a multi-State project and the requirements outlined in the RFA. AMS will provide guidance regarding how to ensure proposals are appropriate for the SCMP.

6. Submit screened applications to AMS via [Grants.gov](#) by the deadline established by AMS.

7. Upon request by AMS before the application deadline, submit an SF-424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Program Form.

8. If awarded, complete an in depth review of the overall project budget to ensure all cost items are allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Negotiate with the multi-State partners if there are any budget items that do not meet those requirements. Negotiate the division of the 8% administrative (indirect) costs allowed for SCMP projects between the Participating State and the multi-State partners. Provide AMS with a final project budget upon completion of the negotiations.
(9) If awarded, perform a risk assessment of the multi-State partners who will receive federal funds when carrying out the project prior to executing the grant agreement award to determine monitoring strategies for the project. If the SCMP contact does not have direct access to the System for Award Management (SAM) database (SAM; www.SAM.gov), consult with the State’s E-Biz point of contact.

4.1 FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR PRE-AWARD ACTIVITIES

Participating States may use their Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) administrative funds to offset costs related to SCMP pre-award activities. These activities include accepting applications from interested parties, screening the applications received against the RFA requirements, and submitting the applications that meet the RFA to AMS via Grants.gov by the established deadline. States can charge these costs for any years where they have an open SCBGP grant agreement.

4.2 DEVELOPING PROPOSALS

It is not the responsibility of Participating States to assist interested partners in developing proposals or to give feedback to improve their proposals. However, Participating States, as well as non-Participating States, have the option to assist and advise multi-state partners about their proposals. States that select this option must assist and advise all interested parties from any State who come to them for such assistance and advice.

Participating and non-Participating States may develop their own proposals if they intend to have a substantive role in the project. In such cases, the State must recruit at least one partner that is located in another State and will have a substantive role in the project. Participating States are not responsible for finding partners for proposals they do not develop themselves.

A Participating State that develops its own proposal will submit the proposal directly to AMS along with other proposals it has received that meet the RFA requirements. Non-Participating States must submit their proposals to a Participating State, which will be responsible for submitting the proposal to AMS if it meets the RFA requirements.

Participating States that have questions about whether or not a proposal fits within the scope of the SCMP should contact the AMS contact listed in 9.0 Agency Contact.

Potential partners that have questions about the SCMP should contact the individual or office designated by one of the Participating States to handle SCMP applications.

4.3 SCREENING PROPOSALS

AMS will not issue a checklist for Participating States to use when screening proposals. Participating States will use judgement in screening proposals against the RFA. As long as the submission is materially compliant with the RFA, a Participating State may submit it. If there is a missing application component, the State may request the multi-State partners to provide it before submitting the application to AMS.
Applications that are submitted to AMS late or do not materially comply with the requirements of the RFA will not be considered in the AMS competitive review. Reference the AMS Policy Regarding Late and non-Responsive Applications for more information.

AMS will accept applications screened by Participating States unless:

- The application is received after the deadline.
- The application is submitted via any method other than through Grants.gov.
- The topic and/or approach of the application are significantly outside the SCMP program scope.

### 4.4 DUNS NUMBER AND SAM REGISTRATION

Participating States must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in SAM before submitting SCMP applications. AMS will check the debar/suspend status of Participating States before any awards are made. If the Participating State named on the proposal is on the debar/suspend list, the application will not be funded.

### 4.5 OUTREACH

As the only entities eligible to apply directly for SCMP, Participating States have a unique role in disseminating information about the opportunity to potential partners in their States and regions. However, all States are encouraged to publicize the SCMP opportunity to stakeholders and potential partners via their department website, the State’s SCBGP website, a press release, newsletters, and other mechanisms routinely used for disseminating information about grant opportunities.

### 5.0 POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING STATES

1. Use subagreements or subcontracts as necessary to carry out the project, which comply with 2 CFR 200. The awarded Participating State must maintain control of the project objectives, set policies, and ensure that the project is carried out in accordance with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations as well as with the AMS agreement’s award terms and conditions.

2. Adhere to the same Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements as for SCBGP.

3. Adhere to the terms and conditions of Award including reporting requirements, ensuring financial accountability, and all other administrative functions including close out.

### 6.0 INDIRECT COST

In accordance with legislation, indirect cost for SCMP projects is restricted to 8% of total direct cost. If awarded, the Participating State and the multi-State partners will negotiate how to divide the indirect cost between the State and partners.

### 7.0 FUNDS AVAILABLE

The 2017 RFA will make available $7.2 million, including approximately $200,000 of unspent funds from fiscal year (FY) 2015, plus $3 million from FY 2016, and $4 million from FY 2017.
8.0 DEADLINES

State departments of agriculture must notify the AMS contact listed in 9.0 Agency Contact via email no later than July 11, 2017, if they would like to be designated a Participating State for 2017.

The deadline for multi-State partner applicants to apply to Participating States will be announced in the 2017 SCMP RFA. All Participating States will have the same deadline for accepting applications.

The deadline for Participating States to apply to AMS via Grants.gov will be announced in the RFA.

9.0 AGENCY CONTACT

9.1 TEAM LEAD

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9.2 GRANTS MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

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9.3 ADDRESS

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