



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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MS Department of Agriculture Accepting Applications for Specialty Crop Block Grant & Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program

JACKSON, Miss. - Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) is now accepting proposals for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP).

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and authorized by the Agriculture Act of 2014 (Farm Bill). The purpose of the program is to solely enhance the competitiveness of Mississippi's specialty crop industry. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.

Projects funded through this program must address at least one of the following priority areas: research and development, promotion/marketing, education/extension or economics. Funding will not be awarded to projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution or individual. Applications must be submitted to MDAC by April 4, 2019. To obtain an application, visit the Alerts and Announcements section at www.mdac.ms.gov, call Susan Lawrence at (601) 359-1196, or email susan@mdac.ms.gov.

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is accepting applications from potential partners and collaborators for the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program. Partners and collaborators may be private or public, for-profit or nonprofit entities. FSMIP is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and provides matching funds on a competitive basis to state departments of agriculture, state colleges and universities, and other appropriate state agencies. The purpose of the program is to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system. Proposals must fit into one of the four project types: agricultural product distribution, cooperative development, economic research to clarify marketing barriers and opportunities, and agricultural product development.

Federal funds awarded through FSMIP projects must be matched dollar-for-dollar by non-federal funds and/or in-kind resources. Funding will not be awarded to projects that solely benefit one individual or one agribusiness. Applications must be received by MDAC by 5:00 p.m. on March 25, 2019. For additional information about this program or to obtain application guidelines, contact Michael Lasseter at (601) 359-1120 or michael@mdac.ms.gov or visit the Alerts and Announcements section at www.mdac.ms.gov.

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