

New Hampshire

Department of Agriculture,
Markets, and Food

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Shawn N. Jasper, Commissioner

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July 7, 2025

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Authorize the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food, Division of Agricultural Development (DAMF) to enter into a Cooperative Project Agreement with the University System of New Hampshire (Vendor Code #315187) in the amount of \$54,441 for the purpose of providing Technical Assistance for Promotion of New Hampshire Specialty Crops, effective upon Governor and Council approval through September 29, 2025. **100% Federal Funds.**

02-18-18-185010-70380000 – Specialty Crop State Grant III

	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
072-500574 Grants Federal	\$54,441	\$54,441

The New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food (DAMF) received Specialty Crop Block Grant money from the United States Department of Agriculture to fund projects that increase the competitiveness of specialty crops in New Hampshire. The projects were solicited through the RFP process and submitted for review by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service as part of our state application. One of the selected projects was not completed and with USDA approval, the funds were repurposed for this short-term contract to expand the New Hampshire specialty crop branding and logo project is underway.

The New Hampshire Food Alliance will create the framework and outreach materials for DAMF to launch the new branding and logo materials for use by producers, distributed and develop use guidelines to ensure that promotion of NH produced products is maximized while protecting the brand integrity. These funds will otherwise expire on September 29, 2025, when the grant ends.

In the event that Federal Funds become no longer available, General Funds will not be requested to support this program.

Sincerely,



Shawn N. Jasper
Commissioner

COOPERATIVE PROJECT AGREEMENT

between the

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, **New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets, & Food**
and the

University of New Hampshire of the UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

- A. This Cooperative Project Agreement (hereinafter "Project Agreement") is entered into by the State of New Hampshire, **New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food**, (hereinafter "State"), and the University System of New Hampshire, acting through **University of New Hampshire**, (hereinafter "Campus"), for the purpose of undertaking a project of mutual interest. This Cooperative Project shall be carried out under the terms and conditions of the Master Agreement for Cooperative Projects between the State of New Hampshire and the University System of New Hampshire dated November 13, 2002, except as may be modified herein.
- B. This Project Agreement and all obligations of the parties hereunder shall become effective on the date the Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire approve this Project Agreement ("Effective date") and shall end on **9/29/25**. If the provision of services by Campus precedes the Effective date, all services performed by Campus shall be performed at the sole risk of Campus and in the event that this Project Agreement does not become effective, State shall be under no obligation to pay Campus for costs incurred or services performed; however, if this Project Agreement becomes effective, all costs incurred prior to the Effective date that would otherwise be allowable shall be paid under the terms of this Project Agreement.
- C. The work to be performed under the terms of this Project Agreement is described in the proposal identified below and attached to this document as Exhibit A, the content of which is incorporated herein as a part of this Project Agreement.

Project Title: **Technical Assistance for Promotion of New Hampshire Specialty Crops**

- D. The Following Individuals are designated as Project Administrators. These Project Administrators shall be responsible for the business aspects of this Project Agreement and all invoices, payments, project amendments and related correspondence shall be directed to the individuals so designated.

State Project Administrator

Name: Rebecca Woodard Ross, Esq.
Address: NH Department of Agriculture,
Markets, and Food
1 Granite Place, Suite 211
Concord, NH 0330
Phone: 603.271.8071

Campus Project Administrator

Name: Gretchen Swain
Address: Sponsored Programs Administration
51 College Rd
Durham, NH 03824
Phone: 603-862-4865

- E. The Following Individuals are designated as Project Directors. These Project Directors shall be responsible for the technical leadership and conduct of the project. All progress reports, completion reports and related correspondence shall be directed to the individuals so designated.

State Project Director

Name: Rebecca Woodard Ross, Esq.
Address: NH Department of Agriculture,
Markets, and Food
1 Granite Place, Suite 211
Concord, NH 03301
Phone: 603.271.8071

Campus Project Director

Name: Nicole Cardwell
Address: University of New Hampshire
NH Food Alliance
Nesmith Hall 108
Durham, NH 03824
Phone: _____

F. Total State funds in the amount of \$54,441 have been allotted and are available for payment of allowable costs incurred under this Project Agreement. State will not reimburse Campus for costs exceeding the amount specified in this paragraph.

Check if applicable

Campus will cost-share _____ % of total costs during the term of this Project Agreement.

Federal funds paid to Campus under this Project Agreement are from Grant/Contract/Cooperative Agreement No. **AM22SCBPNH1136** from **USDA** under CFDA# **10.170**. Federal regulations required to be passed through to Campus as part of this Project Agreement, and in accordance with the Master Agreement for Cooperative Projects between the State of New Hampshire and the University System of New Hampshire dated November 13, 2002, are attached to this document as Exhibit B, the content of which is incorporated herein as a part of this Project Agreement.

G. Check if applicable

Article(s) _____ of the Master Agreement for Cooperative Projects between the State of New Hampshire and the University System of New Hampshire dated November 13, 2002 is/are hereby amended to read:

H. State has chosen **not to take** possession of equipment purchased under this Project Agreement.

State has chosen **to take** possession of equipment purchased under this Project Agreement and will issue instructions for the disposition of such equipment within 90 days of the Project Agreement's end-date. Any expenses incurred by Campus in carrying out State's requested disposition will be fully reimbursed by State.

This Project Agreement and the Master Agreement constitute the entire agreement between State and Campus regarding this Cooperative Project, and supersede and replace any previously existing arrangements, oral or written; all changes herein must be made by written amendment and executed for the parties by their authorized officials.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the University System of New Hampshire, acting through the **University of New Hampshire** and the State of New Hampshire, **Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food** have executed this Project Agreement.

**By An Authorized Official of:
University of New Hampshire**

Name: Dianne Hall
Title: Manager, Pre-Award Compliance
Signature and Date: Dianne Hall Digitally signed by Dianne Hall
Date: 2025.06.27 11:36:36
-04'00'

**By An Authorized Official of: the New
Hampshire Office of the Attorney General**
Name: Louise Williams
Title: Assistant Attorney General

Signature and Date: Louise D. Williams Date: 7/24/25

**By An Authorized Official of:
NH Department of Agriculture, Markets,
and Food**

Name: Shawn A. Jasper
Title: Commissioner
Signature and Date: Shawn A. Jasper 7/11/25

**By An Authorized Official of: the New
Hampshire Governor & Executive Council**
Name:

Title:
Signature and Date:

EXHIBIT A

- A. Project Title:** Technical Assistance for Promotion of New Hampshire Specialty Crops
- B. Project Period:** 7/15/2025-9/29/2025
- C. Objectives:** The NH Food Alliance will partner with the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food to develop comprehensive brand guidelines for the forthcoming New Hampshire Specialty Crop Promotional Campaign. This collaborative effort will help ensure the new brand is clearly defined, widely adopted, and strategically positioned to promote the vitality of New Hampshire's specialty crop sector.

D. Scope of Work:

The project will be carried out in three phases, each building toward the creation of a strong and sustainable brand identity. Funding for this work comes from DAMF through the Specialty Crop Block Program (SCBP). As this work is funded through the SCBP, this project will focus specifically on specialty crops, but the work will be applicable to all food grown in New Hampshire.

In summary, the project will accomplish the following:

- Review past research from NH Department of Agriculture and its contractors and combine with independent assessment of local, regional, and state-level food branding across the country;
- Develop recommendations for a NH program that complements (rather than competes with) other aligned partners and ally brands;
- Define what qualifies products/producers and establish standards and requirements for program participation;
- Determine how to most effectively roll out this branding program with an effective marketing and communications strategy;
- Develop the framework to track brand promotion and recognition across the state and across a diverse network of advocates and actors.

E. Deliverables Schedule:

Phase 1: Develop recommendations for a NH grown focused brand [2 weeks]

The Project Launch will focus on synthesis of research and understanding to date, and development of recommendations for a NH grown program for specialty crops through the following:

- Understand project background and learnings to date. Review past research from NH Department of Agriculture and combine with independent assessment of local, regional, and state-level food branding across the country.
- Engage with key stakeholders in the state food and agriculture spaces, especially those within the specialty crop marketplace, to hear input on crucial elements of a branding campaign for NH specialty crops.
- Develop an understanding of how relevant campaigns are structured, including the level of resources needed to support the campaigns from the administrative side.

Deliverable and Decision Point: Memo or presentation detailing best practices across the country and proposing a small menu of options for NH DAMF team to provide input on. This decision will need to be made quickly (within 7 days) in order for the project to continue and be completed by the end date.

Phase 2: Guidelines for Program Management (Implementation and Tracking) [2-3 weeks]
Creation and/or design of a system to track who is using the branding. This could include tracking via an online form, accessed via URL or QR code, where the user provides business information (e.g., restaurant, farm) and commits to proper usage and representation of the brand and intention of the program in order to obtain collateral (decals, stickers, signage).

This phase will include:

- Development of guidelines for implementation and oversight by NH Department of Agriculture;
- A crafted annual survey for NH DAMF to disseminate to determine effectiveness and potential updates for the program.

Deliverables: Guidelines for implementation; a program tracking system; and a survey to deploy annually; walk-thru of implementation plan with DAMF and NHFA staff.

Phase 3: Communications and User Engagement Plans [2-3 weeks]

Based on Phase I research and decision making by NH DAMF, NH Food Alliance will develop a suite of marketing and communications materials for the program. We will provide resources to guide communications efforts as well as supporting program participants in effectively promoting the program.

Development of a Communications and Marketing Plan, which includes the following:

- Program overview, goals, and objectives
- Key Audiences, Key Messaging
- Tactics and timeline, including partner engagement recommendations, advertising and sponsorship, and community engagement recommendations.

Development of a Partner/User Engagement Toolkit

- Program introduction
- Benefits of participation
- Brand Utilization Requirements, such as:
 - o how to use in on-premise vs. virtual marketplaces, and how to leverage or compound brand assets and messages within one organization or retailer
 - o standards for what qualifies utilization of local products, and is a minimum amount required
 - o Exclusive use for NH specialty crops,
 - o Requirements NH specialty crop product ingredient inputs
 - o Partner marketing/communications recommendations:
 - Physical/on-premises marketing ideas
 - Signage
 - Menus
 - Website ideas
 - Social media ideas

Deliverables: Communications and Marketing Plan; Partner/User Engagement Toolkit

F. Budget and Invoicing Instructions: Campus will submit invoices to State on regular Campus invoice forms no more frequently than monthly and no less frequently than quarterly. Invoices will be based on actual project expenses incurred during the invoicing period, and shall show current and cumulative expenses by major cost categories as shown below. State will pay Campus within 30 days of receipt of each invoice. Campus will submit its final invoice not later than 75 days after the Project Period end date.

Budget Items	State Funding
1. Salaries & Wages	\$8,258.00
2. Fringe Benefits	\$3,328.00
3. Travel	\$0.00
4. Supplies and Services	\$38,500.00
5. Equipment	\$0.00
6. Indirect Costs	\$4,355.00
Total	\$54,441.00

EXHIBIT B

This Project Agreement is funded under a Grant/Contract/Cooperative Agreement to State from the Federal sponsor specified in Project Agreement article F. All applicable requirements, regulations, provisions, terms and conditions of this Federal Grant/Contract/Cooperative Agreement are hereby adopted in full force and effect to the relationship between State and Campus, except that wherever such requirements, regulations, provisions and terms and conditions differ for INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, the appropriate requirements should be substituted (e.g., OMB Circulars A-21 and A-110, rather than OMB Circulars A-87 and A-102). References to Contractor or Recipient in the Federal language will be taken to mean Campus; references to the Government or Federal Awarding Agency will be taken to mean Government/Federal Awarding Agency or State or both, as appropriate.

Special Federal provisions are listed here: None or **Uniform Guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in lieu of Circulars listed in paragraph above.** .