

Florida Citrus Recovery Block Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Producer Eligibility

Q – I have submitted an application to the block grant but I do not know if I am eligible. What are my next steps?

A – Producers who have applied to the block grant but have not confirmed their eligibility should call the Citrus Hotline at 863-800-0342 to speak with a block grant representative or email at citrus@em.myflorida.com. Eligibility is determined based on the data from the FSA-890 form. If a producer is unsure whether or not their FSA-890 form is on file with the block grant program, they are encouraged to contact the hotline and verify receipt of that information. ***Please note: Producers must send all required FSA forms to the block grant program directly.***

Q – If a producer was in operation during Hurricane Irma but ceased production due to storm damages, are they still eligible for the block grant?

A – Growers whose groves were damaged by Hurricane Irma, but who pushed them out, left them fallow, or sold their grove, and therefore cannot demonstrate ongoing production at the time of the grant application, are not eligible for grant payments. A producer may still be eligible if they pushed a grove, stayed in business, and replanted in the same county.

Q – If a producer sold their grove after Hurricane Irma, but before the time of application, is that producer still eligible for the program?

A – No. Eligible producers are defined as applicants who demonstrate ongoing production and harvest activities at the time of application. Applicants must demonstrate ongoing production and harvest activities for each year that payments are dispersed throughout the period of the grant. Subsequent owners are not eligible.

Q – Can producers who purchased a grove damaged by Hurricane Irma apply for the program if they did not own grove at the time of the hurricane?

A – No, producers must have owned the grove when the hurricane struck (September 10, 2017) in order to qualify for the block grant per USDA requirements.

Q – If a producer pushed an entire block, or portion thereof, of older trees in a hurricane damaged grove, and replanted prior to applying for WHIP, is this acreage still eligible for Part 2 of the grant program?

A – Yes, as long as the producer meets eligibility requirements for the block grant.

Q – How will a partial sale of subject property after payments are made under the program be handled as it relates to program compliance (insurance maintenance, etc.)?

A – Under C.5 of the Grant Agreement, if an eligible producer received payment under the Grant Agreement but then ceased to operate or maintain a farming operation, the:

- Producer is not required to refund payments to FSA provided that the State administered payments in accordance with the Agreement
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Producer will need to meet crop insurance requirements on the groves they still own.

Q – Can producers with groves in several counties apply to the block grant through one FSA office?

A – Yes, applicants may apply to the block grant at one FSA Office location or online at one time. One application will need to be completed for each County. Applicants must complete the WHIP process in each County, with an FSA-890 Form signed by an FSA County Committee, prior to receiving payment under the block grant.

Q – Are there any issues with producers that participated in the Emergency Conservation Program as it relates to participation in the Block Grant?

A – FSA-ECP pays for orchard/grove debris clean-up and removal, fence replacement, and main line irrigation pipe repair/replacement. ECP does not pay for tree replacement/rehabilitation as Part 1 of the Block Grant does, or for production losses as Part 2 does. Producers cannot receive both ECP and Grant benefits for the same type of irrigation work.

Q – How does the Block Grant interact with the Abandoned Groves Initiative?

A – Participation in the Abandoned Groves Initiative does not impact participation in the block grant. Producers must still meet the eligibility requirements to receive funds from the block grant.

Q – Can a producer not seeking benefits under WHIP still apply in order to be eligible for the Block Grant?

A – Yes. The process will follow the same guidelines as applying for 2017 WHIP, but the records do not need to be established or loaded into FSA’s automated systems. The WHIP application, Form FSA-890 must be fully completed as outlined and signed by the producer and the FSA County Committee (COC).

Q – Are non-citizens eligible to apply to the Block Grant?

A – Foreign persons and foreign-owned entities are not eligible for the Block Grant because they are excluded via Federal Regulation from being participants under WHIP. The WHIP regulation governs who is an eligible participant, who can apply for WHIP; and the Block Grant requires a WHIP application from the Block Grant applicant. If the FCBG applicant is a U.S. Corporation, that corporation may apply, but to the extent that the corporation is foreign owned, that foreign ownership percentage would be excluded from WHIP and the Block Grant payment eligibility. However, an eligible corporation’s U.S. owned percentage would be eligible for both WHIP and the Block Grant.

Tree Age and Young Trees

Q – Does the age of the trees matter for block grant eligibility?

A – Trees in existence at the time of the hurricane of any age, are eligible for Part 1, if the 20% fruit loss requirement is met among mature tree acreage. Trees that were 3-5 years old *may* be eligible for Part 2, if the 40% fruit loss requirement is met. A final determination from USDA is needed before the State may include young tree acreage under Part 2.

Q – If a producer pushed an entire block of a grove and replanted and all trees in this block are now 3 years or younger, is this block still eligible for loss calculation and funding?

A – Yes, if the producer meets all other eligibility requirements as outlined in Section B.4 of the agreement.

Part 1 Eligible Activities

Q – Are citrus grove screens (for greening management) repairs eligible for reimbursement under the block grant?

A – Yes, the State has discretion in eligible activities under Part 1. If a producer can show proof of damage and required reimbursement documentation for an activity that depicts the connection between that activity and damages from Hurricane Irma, the activity may be eligible.

Q – Can a producer receive reimbursement for activities where labor was conducted by the owner? If so, how should this be documented for reimbursement?

A – Producers can invoice themselves for labor conducted and utilize that invoice as ‘proof of purchase’ for the labor. An In-Kind Labor form can document the labor as well, this form is being developed by DEM. In-kind labor costs should follow standard market rates for caretaking activities in citrus groves.

Q – What documentation is needed for Part 1?

A – Proof of payment is required in the form of paid invoices or receipts AND cancelled checks or bank statements. An applicant must show that a cost was incurred, and a payment was executed for each expense submitted under Part 1.

Q – Do invoices need to show that the activity is related to Hurricane Irma?

A – No, however a producer will certify that the activities were related to recovery by signing the application.

Q – What if I received TAP funding for eligible activities under Part 1?

A – You are not eligible for activities that are already covered by TAP. However, if TAP funds were for greening and not Hurricane Irma recovery, you are still eligible for Part 1 activities.

On Completing Section II of the Application

Q – Is production loss calculated by county-by variety, or just by county?

A – It is calculated by county-by variety, or multiple varieties, as outlined in the Florida Fruit Policy. For uninsured (using the NAP program), it is by county-by NAP pay grouping.

Q – How is production loss calculated?

A – Production loss is calculated directly off an FSA-890, WHIP Application Form. The following boxes from an FSA-890 are used to complete the formula:

- Box 32 = Acres
- Box 36 = Production to Count
- Box 37 = Yield
- Box 38 = Assigned or Adjusted Production

On Insurance Purchase Requirements Under Part III

Q – If I have not received my block grant payment, do I still need to purchase insurance?

A – Yes. April 15, 2019 is the deadline to purchase 2020 crop insurance and any producer applying to the block grant should ensure they have completed the necessary registration for 2020 crop insurance coverage in order to remain compliant with the terms of the grant. To verify your eligibility to the block grant, please call the hotline at 863-800-0342.

Q – Does the block grant require purchase of tree insurance?

A – Participation in the block grant will require the applicant to purchase tree and/or fruit insurance. Insurance needs to be at the 60% coverage level, per the block grant agreement, unless otherwise unavailable. Participation in the different parts of the program requires the following insurance –

- Part 1 - Tree insurance is required for any eligible crop (e.g., oranges, grapefruit, etc).
- Part 2 – Crop (fruit) insurance is required for any eligible variety (e.g., hamlins, valencias, etc.).

Q – Is crop insurance (tree and fruit) required for the whole farm or just subject parcels?

A – Following crop insurance rules, if a producer purchases crop insurance, the producer is required to obtain coverage on all the insurance acres in the County for the variety. Whole Farm Revenue Policy can be interchanged with the fruit policy, as long as it is covered at 60% or greater.

Q – How do insurance claims and associated losses relate to the WHIP determined loss?

A – Where WHIP calculates losses based on yield, crop insurance claims are calculated based on a dollar-per-acre basis, so they will likely not match. The insurance amount received by a producer has no impact on the funds received by the grant program.

Q – When purchasing the 4-year insurance option (Part 3, Option 2), who reimburses producers for the premiums and admin fees for the 2020 and 2021 crop years?

A – The producer will be paid using the same process as the disbursements for Parts 1 & 2 of the block grant program. These disbursements will be made via direct deposit or check after registering on [My Florida Marketplace](#), and will be paid by the State.

Q – How are insurance administrative fees going to be assessed for the 4-year insurance option (Option 2), and are there any limitations?

A – Producers will be reimbursed for 100% of their crop insurance premiums and administrative fees for the 2020 and 2021 crop years only, should they elect for Option 2 and purchase four years of crop insurance. USDA is still working to determine how administrative fees will be assessed.

Application Submission

Q – Where do I submit an application?

A – Applications are accepted either in-person with Florida Citrus Recovery Block Grant Program staff or via email at citrus@em.florida.com.

Q – I've been told the deadline was November 16. Have I missed the opportunity to apply?

A – No. November 16 was the last day to apply to WHIP, not the block grant. All producers who applied to WHIP by that date will be eligible to apply to the block grant. No application deadline has been established for the block grant at this time. However, as stated previously, all block grant applicants will need to have 2020 crop insurance in order to remain in compliance with the grant. The deadline to purchase 2020 crop insurance is April 15, 2019.

Q – There are no more in-person appointments available at my local FSA office. What are my options for scheduling an appointment?

A – While in-person appointments will be limited moving forward, appointments may be held by-phone. Please contact the hotline at (863) 800-0342 or email us at citrus@em.myflorida.com to set up an appointment to complete your block grant application.

Q – I don't have a COC signature on my FSA-890 form. Can I still submit my block grant application?

A – Yes. While the COC signature on the FSA-890 form is required before payment can be processed, you are still able to complete a block grant application. We recommend producers move forward with applying and sending us the signed FSA-890 once they receive a copy from their FSA office.

The FSA-890 informs the production loss calculation and what a producer's estimated maximum reimbursement amount will be. Therefore, it is recommended a producer have an unsigned copy during their application appointment if possible.

Q – I've submitted my application; what now?

A – Following receipt of the application, copies of required WHIP forms, invoices, cancelled checks, and other needed supporting documents, the application will be added to the queue for review. Once all grant application components are accounted for and a quality assurance check is completed, staff will contact the producer for final certification of all materials and the application will be submitted for payment processing.

On Receiving Payments

Q – Are payments provided in full to the producer, on a first-come first-serve basis, or otherwise?

A – Payments will be distributed in the following manner:

- Reimbursements under Part 1 will be processed upon submittal of a complete application and an approved, signed WHIP Application. The program goal is for these payments to be disbursed as soon as possible following the execution of a signed WHIP application.
- Payments for Part 2 will be disbursed after completion of an application and site inspection of each claimed parcel by State staff. The total payment of \$745.50 is broken in three parts. Upon a complete site inspection and application submittal, up to \$372.75/acre will be disbursed. The remainder of the money will be disbursed upon submittal of proof of crop insurance for 2020 and 2021.
- Part 3 payments would not occur until proof of insurance purchase for the required years is provided to the State.

Q – How do I get my check?

A – You need to register through the MyFloridaMarketPlace and MyFloridaCFO systems. There is a fact sheet available on the floridadisaster.org/citrus website which provides directions for how to sign up. If you want a direct deposit you can set it up in MyFloridaCFO. If you want a hard copy check, do not complete your direct deposit information.

On Multiple Stakeholders/Shareholders

Q – How will payments be disbursed to multiple shareholders?

A – The entity that is registered on MyFloridaMarketplace will receive all funds and is responsible for distributing the funds amongst shareholders.

Q – Is it possible for a producer to lose money by applying to the grant?

A – The only cost associated with the award is the required insurance purchase for 2020 and 2021 crop years. It is recommended to speak with an insurance agent for additional a quote and more information on coverage. Producers will need to inform themselves and decide if seeking awards is in their best interest.

Contact Us

For questions not addressed in this FAQ, please call (863) 800-0342 or email us at citrus@em.myflorida.com.