

2015 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Request for Concept Proposals

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE 10.170

Released:
October 30, 2014

Concept Proposals Due:
By 5:00 pm PST on December 5, 2014
No late submissions accepted.



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About the Program

Purpose

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award 2015 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds for projects *solely* enhancing the competitiveness of California specialty crops.

Specialty crops are fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). Visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgp> for a comprehensive list of eligible and ineligible commodities.

Funding and Duration

CDFA anticipates that up to \$19 million will be awarded to projects solely enhancing the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Grant amounts range from \$50,000 to \$450,000. The maximum grant duration is two (2) years, nine (9) months and grant funds cannot be expended before October 1, 2015, or after June 30, 2018. CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

Eligibility and Exclusions

Non-profit and for-profit organizations; local, state, and federal government entities, including tribal governments; and public or private colleges and universities are eligible to apply. There is no limit on the number of Concept Proposals applicants may submit; however, each Concept Proposal should be for a wholly unique project. Applicants should not submit multiple Concept Proposals for a single project, or submit the same project over multiple funding categories.

Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

Solicitation Process and Timeline

Phase I: Concept Proposal

Applicants must submit Concept Proposals online using the Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST) to answer all Concept Proposal questions. CDFA will advise all applicants as to the outcome of the Concept Proposal review.

Phase II: Grant Proposal

Successful Concept Proposal applicants will be invited to submit Grant Proposals online using FAAST to answer all Grant Proposal questions. CDFA will provide applicants with specific Grant Proposal requirements and instructions along with the Invitation to Submit Grant Proposals. CDFA will advise all applicants as to the outcome of the Grant Proposal review.

Phase I: Concept Proposal	
Release Request for Concept Proposals	October 30, 2014
Workshops and Webinars	November 4–14, 2014
Concept Proposals Due	December 5, 2014, 5:00 pm PST
Phase II: Grant Proposal <i>(by invitation only)</i>	
Invitation to Submit Grant Proposals	February 2015
Grant Proposals Due	March 22, 2015, 11:59 pm PST
Grant Proposals to USDA for Approval	July 2015
Award	
Announce and Award Funding	October 2015

Funding Categories and Program Priorities

In practice, Concept Proposals might seem to address elements from multiple Funding Categories. However, applicants must select one of the five Funding Categories described below as the primary focus of their Concept Proposal. Included under each Funding Category is a list of Program Priorities that the Funding Category supports. The Program Priorities are meant to provide focus to the project's concept. Applicants must address at least one of the 2015 SCBGP Program Priorities in their Concept Proposal.

Concept Proposals should:

- Demonstrate a high likelihood of success.
- Describe the specialty crop grower benefit and grower connection to the project.
- Be scalable to the larger community.
- Demonstrate industry need and support.
- Illustrate a sustainable funding source beyond the life of the proposed grant.
- Include an outreach component addressing how project results, research findings and conclusions will be extended to specialty crop growers.

Market Enhancement

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that promote California specialty crops and increase or develop long-term sales and competitiveness of specialty crop products.

Program Priorities

- *Enhance the marketability and competitiveness of specialty crops through the development of markets (local, domestic, and international) for all California producers to leverage the work and commitment of a diversity of stakeholders:*
 - Expand opportunities for specialty crop producers, marketing orders, and other specialty crop stakeholder groups through innovative marketing and promotional activities;
 - Create economic opportunities for specialty crop producers through specialty crop market development activities that focus on local, regional, or international markets;
 - Studies evaluating the accessibility and marketability of California specialty crops in underserved communities.

Examples:

- Promotional campaigns that target promotion of specific specialty crops: “Buy California Grown Peaches!,” “Local Grown Apples are the Best!”.
- Increasing sales of specialty crops by expanding consumer and retailer education and awareness.
- Creating economic opportunities for specialty crop producers through social media market development activities.
- Support specialty crop marketing concepts that target the unique characteristics of local/regional areas in domestic and/or international markets.

Specialty Crop Access and Nutrition Education

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that encompass the investigation and implementation of long-term, innovative solutions to improve access to and consumption of specialty crops in underserved communities. Projects that ensure sufficient resources to obtain and incorporate specialty crops into Californian’s diets, as well as improve the public’s knowledge and understanding of specialty crop agriculture and its beneficial importance to the health and well-being of all Californians.

Program Priorities:

- *Expand access to healthy, safe California specialty crops at school, at work, and in neighborhoods:*
 - Improve nutritional awareness of children and adults, and increase consumption of California specialty crops;
 - Enhance utilization of California specialty crops by improving efficiency of processing and distribution systems from farm-to-table, including long term solutions to specialty crop distribution issues;
 - Encourage and expand availability of affordable and locally-grown specialty crops through farm-to-fork programs that make it easier for specialty crop producers to sell to local institutions;
 - Assist specialty crop growers and others in the distribution chain to develop and implement Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices.

Examples:

- Creating community specialty crop gardens.
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of specialty crop distribution systems.
- Engaging underserved communities in the planning and production of specialty crops in the local food system.

Equipping Current and Next Generation Specialty Crop Farmers

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that benefit current and future specialty crop farmers through education and training.

Program Priorities

- *Ensure the viability of California specialty crops by investing in the next generation of operators:*
 - Train and equip the next generation of young and beginning farmers in agronomic, economic, and environmental stewardship skills;
 - Create and implement workforce training programs to maintain the technical skills required to keep the California specialty crops sector competitive;
 - Introduce and recruit young people to the variety of specialty crop career opportunities;
 - Support research to spur innovation in new specialty crop product development, and solve production issues;
 - Increase capacity for small-scale specialty crop production and distribution into urban communities.

Examples:

- Strengthen agricultural job training skills for specialty crop beginning farmers.
- Assisting in developing “Good agricultural Practices,” “Good Handling Practices” and “Good Manufacturing Practices” for specialty crop farmers.
- Recruit and train new specialty crop farmers in the skills for sustainable food production.

Environmental Stewardship and Conservation

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that enhance soil health and conservation of agricultural land, water, habitat, and biodiversity, as well as proposals that address agriculture’s specialty crop contribution to adaptation and/or mitigation of climate change.

Program Priorities:

- *Expand stewardship practices, natural resource conservation, and the development of ecosystem services to improve the environmental and financial performance of California specialty crop growers:*
 - Develop strategies to enable specialty crop growers to adapt to climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and sequestering carbon.
 - Develop innovations in water use efficiency and drought resilience.
 - Improve soil health.
 - Develop and implement beneficial management practices that improve farm viability and the agricultural economy as well as the environment;
 - Expand organic and sustainable production practices;

Examples:

- Improve air and water resources in specialty crop farming.
- Assist communities in planning for specialty crop agriculture.
- Research and develop new technologies to improve water use efficiency in specialty crop production.
- Accelerate Best Management Practices implementation in specialty crop production for water conservation and efficiency.

Plant Health and Pest Management

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that address pests and diseases that affect the production of California's specialty crops.

Program Priorities:

- *Applied research related to the probability and impact of invasive pests, disease, and weed threats to specialty crops, and research to develop tools to detect, eradicate, and control pests and diseases.*
 - Develop new tools to detect, eradicate and control pests and diseases.
 - Prevent and manage pests and diseases to minimize economic and environmental harm to specialty crop growers.
 - Enhance speed and reliability of detection methods.

Examples:

- Enhance speed and reliability of detection of pests affecting specialty crops.
- Develop new tools for eradication of pests affecting specialty crops.
- Develop specialty crops resistant to pests and diseases.
- Develop secondary inspection and detection capacity of pests affecting specialty crops.
- Conduct pest surveys to ascertain threat and spread of threat to specialty crops.
- Develop pest protocol programs for a subsector of specialty crops.

Food Safety *(Separate proposal solicitation)*

CDFA has entered into a partnership agreement with the Center for Produce Safety Foundation (CPS) to utilize the technical expertise of their grant reviewers in the area of food safety. CPS will release a separate food safety proposal solicitation. Please contact CPS at (530) 757-5777, or visit the CPS website at <http://cps.ucdavis.edu> for the solicitation timeline and proposal requirements.

How to Apply

Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST)

CDFA has entered into an agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to host a web-based Concept and Grant Proposal solicitation process.

In both phases of the process, applicants will utilize the SWRCB's Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST).

Applicants must register to receive a login account for FAAST in order to submit Concept Proposals. FAAST can be accessed through the SWRCB website, <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>.

The FAAST system is organized into various tabs and utilizes a question and answer format. A list of the Concept Proposal application questions is below in the Concept Proposal section.

The SWRCB website at: <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov> contains a Frequently Asked Questions section and a User's Manual for the FAAST system. If after reading the information available on the website, you have questions about the FAAST System, please contact FAAST customer service at (866) 434-1083, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm or via email, faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov.

Review and Notification

Criteria

CDFA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to California specialty crop producers in relation to each dollar spent. Applicants' Concept Proposals will be evaluated on the criteria set forth in the Concept Proposal Questions and Review Criteria below.

Process

CDFA will conduct two levels of review during the Concept Proposal process. The first level is an Administrative Review to determine whether Concept Proposal requirements are met and, if applicable, assess an applicant's past CDFA grant performance. The second level is a Technical Review to evaluate the merits of the Concept Proposals.

The CDFA SCBGP Technical Review Committee (TRC) will perform the Technical Review. The TRC is comprised of growers and representatives from industry, universities, public agencies, and non-profits with an interest and expertise in specialty crops and agricultural systems.

Feedback

Applicants not invited to participate in Phase II – Grant Proposal will receive feedback on their Concept Proposal within 60 days after receiving notification.

Concept Proposal

Concept Proposal Questions and Review Criteria

Under the General Information and Project Budget tabs, Applicants must respond to the following:

Applicant Organization:

Submitting Organization:

Project Title:

Project Description:

Project Budget:

Under the Application Questionnaire tab, Applicants must also respond to the following Concept Proposal questions:

1. *Organization Type (not a scored question):*
Select the appropriate Organization Type for the Applicant.
2. *Funding Category (not a scored question):*
Select the most appropriate Funding Category for the project.
3. *Project Purpose (10 points):*
Scoring will be based on the specific issue, problem or need the project will address, and the timeliness and relevance to the specialty crop industry.
4. *Prior-year SCBGP Projects (not a scored question):*
If this project builds upon a prior-year project, provide the grant agreement number(s) and describe how the project complements the previous work.
5. *Sustainability (5 points):*
Scoring will be based on the extent to which the proposal demonstrates the project will become self-sustaining beyond the grant duration without relying on additional SCBGP funding.
6. *Potential Impact (10 points):*
Scoring will be based on the potential positive impact the project will have on the identified specialty crop beneficiaries.
7. *Socially Disadvantaged/Beginning Farmers (not a scored question):*
Does the project benefit Socially Disadvantaged or Beginning Farmers? If yes, provide a brief description of the expected benefit and identify who will be positively affected.

8. *Expected Measurable Outcome (10 points):*
Scoring will be based on the project outcome's likelihood of success, technical feasibility, relevance to the program priorities.
9. *Project Duration (not a scored question):*
Projects cannot start before October 1, 2015 or continue beyond June 30, 2018.
10. *Work Plan (10 points):*
Scoring will be based on the clarity of the work plan and the relevance of the specific project activities to the project purpose.
11. *Budget (5 points):*
Scoring will be based on the extent to which the budget is reasonable and consistent with the project goals. Matching funds are not a requirement of the SCBGP and are not a factor in the scoring of the budget. However, matching funds are encouraged and may serve as evidence to demonstrate industry commitment to, or support for, the project.

Total number of points in the Concept Proposal: 50 Points

Budget Template

Download the Excel Budget Template (.xls) from FAAST. The Budget Template includes limited space to provide a brief description of the costs or activities associated with each budget category.

2015 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Concept Proposal Budget

Instructions: Complete each budget category by entering the amount of grant funds budgeted for each category and corresponding grant year. Sections H and J will automatically calculate, no entry is required. Please note: The "Total Grant Funds" listed in the concept proposal budget must match the amount listed in FAAST under "Funds Requested."

PIN #

Budget Categories	Year 1 (10/2015 - 09/2016)	Year 2 (10/2016 - 09/2017)	Year 3 (10/2017 - 06/2018)	Total Grant Funds	Description Brief description of planned activities/costs per category
A. Personnel				\$0	
B. Fringe Benefits				\$0	
C. Travel ¹				\$0	
D. Special Purpose Equipment (>\$5,000)				\$0	
E. Supplies (<\$5,000)				\$0	
F. Contractual ²				\$0	
G. Other				\$0	
H. Total Direct Costs (sum of sections A-G)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
I. Indirect Costs ³				\$0	
J. Total Grant Funds (sum of sections H+I)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
K. Program Income ⁴				\$0	

¹ The maximum travel rates allowable are established by the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR). Exceptions: University of California applicants must comply with the University Policies and Federal applicants must comply with Federal Travel Policies. To access CalHR visit <http://www.calhr.ca.gov/employees/cases/travel-meals.aspx>. For states outside of California, travel be found on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website at <http://www.gsa.gov/portals/categories/104877>.

² Contractual hourly rates cannot exceed GS-15 step 10. To access the GS-15 step 10 visit the website below and click on 2014 General Schedule and Locality Pay Tables. <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay/leave/salaries-wages/2014/general-schedule>

³ Cannot Exceed 5% of Personnel + Fringe Benefits. If Indirect Costs exceed 5%, the cell will alert applicant by turning red and adjustments must be made.

⁴ If applicable, estimate the amount of program income that will be generated by the project for each year of the grant.

Requirements and Limitations

Federal Cost Principles

Federal cost principles are regulations based on organization type used to determine allowable costs and ensure consistent treatment of costs. Applicants are responsible for identifying the federal cost principles appropriate to their organization and consistent application of cost principles to the SCBGP grant funds. Applicants are responsible for ensuring contractors or consultants comply with applicable federal cost principle requirements.

Projects awarded funding in the 2015 SCBGP will begin after the implementation of the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Guidance ("Supercircular"). State, local or Indian tribal governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities will be subject to [2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). For-profit organizations will be subject to [48 CFR Subpart 31.2](#). All organization types are subject to [7 CFR 3015](#) and [7 CFR 3052](#).

Unallowable Costs

Advertising and Public Relations costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, general logo, or general brand rather than eligible specialty crops are unallowable.

- A promotional campaign to increase sales of "XYZ Grown" Watermelon is acceptable while increasing brand awareness of "XYZ Grown" generically is not.
- Promoting tomatoes while including an organization's logo in the promotion is acceptable, while generally promoting an organization's logo is not.
- Promotional items could say "Buy XYZ Grown Apples" but not "XYZ Grown", which promotes XYZ generically.
- A promotional campaign to increase producer sales of "XYZ Grown fruits and vegetables" is acceptable while increasing membership in "XYZ Grown" generically is not.

Advertising and Public Relations costs for promotion at non-specialty crop specific venues, tradeshow, events, meetings, programs, conventions, symposia, seminars, etc. are unallowable.

- Advertisements could say "Buy California Asparagus! It is the Best!" but not "Buy Local."
- Advertising educational sessions at a conference that solely benefits specialty crop growers are acceptable, while advertising a non-specialty crop specific local food conference is not.

Advertising and Public Relations costs for gifts, prizes, memorabilia and souvenirs are unallowable.

Advertising and Public Relations costs for coupon/incentive redemptions or price discounts are unallowable. Costs associated with printing, distribution or promotion of coupons/tokens or price discounts (i.e., a print advertisement that contains a clip-out coupon) are allowable only if they solely promote the specialty crop, rather than promote or benefit a program or single organization.

Advertising and Public Relations costs associated with the use of trade shows, meeting rooms, displays, demonstrations, exhibits, and the rental of space for activities that do not solely promote specialty crops are unallowable.

- Supporting the participation of raspberry and blueberry producers at a non-specialty crop specific international trade show to promote berries to an international audience is allowable, while renting a booth space for berry producers as well as wheat producers at an international trade show is not allowable.
- Supporting the participation of farmers' market managers at a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is not allowable.
- Supporting a portion of a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is not allowable, while supporting a session on specialty crops at a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is allowable.
- Funding an "XYZ State Grown" booth at a specialty crop-specific venue where all exhibitors in the booth are specialty crop producers is allowable, but funding an "XYZ Grown" booth at a non-specialty crop specific venue is not allowable.

Advertising and Public Relations costs for promoting the specialty crops in processed products are allowable. A Processed product is defined as a product that consists of greater than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water. Products prepared or created for the purposes of promoting a specialty crop but that require other ingredients are considered a processed product.

Advertising and Public Relations costs for separate complementary non-specialty crop products are unallowable. A separate complementary non-specialty crop product is defined as a product closely associated with a specialty crop product, the purchase of one encouraging consumers to buy the other, e.g. cheese and wine.

Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct and indirect charges.

- **Capital expenditures** means expenditures for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, land), or expenditures to make improvements to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to put it in place. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges such as taxes, duty, protective in transit insurance, freight, and installation may be included in, or excluded from the acquisition cost in accordance with the governmental unit's regular accounting practices.
- **General purpose equipment** means equipment not limited to research, scientific, or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.
- **Equipment** means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000.

Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs provided that items with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more have the approval of CDFA. Applications for grant funds should describe how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public.

- *Special purpose equipment* means equipment which is used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. The special purpose equipment must solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops and benefit the specialty crop industry.

Rental costs of buildings, equipment, and vehicles are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the cost principles.

Conference costs are allowable. A conference is defined as a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, workshop or event whose primary purpose is the dissemination of technical information beyond applicant and is necessary and reasonable for successful performance of the proposal. Allowable conference costs paid by the applicant as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers' fees, costs of meals and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences with the exception of entertainment costs that are unallowable. If registration fees are collected, the applicant must report those fees as program income. Applicants are encouraged to use technologies such as webinars, teleconferencing or videoconferencing as an alternative to renting a building or room.

Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship. Contractual/Consultant Costs are allowable subject to certain limitations.

The following factors are relevant in determining the allowability of contractual/consultant costs:

- The nature and scope of the service rendered in relation to the service required.
- The necessity of contracting for the service, considering the applicant's capability in the particular area.
- The past pattern of such costs, particularly in the years prior to Federal awards.
- The impact of Federal awards on the applicant's business (i.e., what new problems have arisen).
- Whether the proportion of Federal work to the applicant's total business is such as to influence the applicant's in favor of incurring the cost, particularly where the services rendered are not of a continuing nature and have little relationship to work under Federal awards.
- Whether the service can be performed more economically by direct employment rather than contracting.
- The qualifications of the individual or concern rendering the service and the customary fees charged, especially on non-federally funded activities.
- Adequacy of the contractual agreement for the service (e.g., description of the service, estimate of time required, rate of compensation, and termination provisions).

Contractor/consultant costs are allowable for employee rates that do not exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area (for more information visit <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2014/general-schedule/>). This does not include fringe benefits, travel,

indirect costs, or other expenses. Please note that limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants.

If rates exceed this amount, one of the following justifications must be provided on the [Concept Proposal Budget](#):

- A brief description of the steps taken to hire a contractor, which includes obtaining a cost/price analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to review and evaluate each element of cost to determine reasonableness, allocability, and allowability.

OR

- Due to the complexity or uniqueness of the project, the pool of available and qualified contractors is limited. Therefore, the selected contractor's specialized qualifications necessitate hiring at a rate beyond a GS-15 step 10. (Please outline the unique qualifications of the contractor.)

Contributions or donations, including cash, property and services from the applicant to other entities are unallowable.

- A non-profit entity using grant funds to purchase produce to donate to other entities and individuals is unallowable.

Political activities such as development of participation in lobbying activities including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying are unallowable.

Program Income is allowable when used for project costs that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops and comply with allowable cost principles. Program income cannot be used toward an otherwise unallowable cost.

Supplanting is unallowable. Grant funds must supplement, rather than replace (supplant) existing funds allocated or appropriated for the same activities.

Indirect Cost

The maximum Indirect Cost is five (5) percent of total personnel costs (salary and fringe benefits).

Applicants are responsible for presenting costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances consistently and must not include costs associated with an established indirect cost rate agreement as direct costs. In addition, applicants cannot allocate a cost as a direct cost if it is also incurred as an indirect cost for the same purpose and vice versa.

Direct costs are costs that can be identified specifically with a particular award, project or program, service, or other organizational activity or that can be directly assigned to such an activity relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Typically, direct costs include, but are not limited to, compensation of employees who work directly on the award to include salaries and fringe benefits, travel, equipment, and supplies directly benefiting the grant-supported project or program.

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”) are costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. Below are typical indirect costs for specific types of organizations. The salaries of administrative and clerical staff should normally be treated as indirect costs. Direct charging of these costs may be appropriate where all of the following conditions are met:

- administrative or clerical services are integral to a project or activity;
- individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity;
- such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have the prior written approval of the Federal awarding agency; and
- the costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

Travel

The maximum travel rates allowable are established by the California Department of Human Resources and are available online at: <http://www.calhr.ca.gov/employees/pages/travel-meals.aspx>. Exceptions: University of California applicants must comply with the University Travel Policies and Federal applicants must comply with Federal travel policies.

Travel rates for states outside of California can be found on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>.

Lodging

California maximum lodging rates for non-federal entities are outlined below:

- *All California counties and cities (except as noted below):*
Actual expense up to \$90 per night, plus tax.
- *Napa, Riverside and Sacramento Counties:*
Actual expense up to \$95 per night, plus tax.
- *Los Angeles, Orange, and Ventura Counties excluding the City of Santa Monica:*
Actual expense up to \$120 per night, plus tax.
- *Alameda, Monterey, San Diego, Santa Clara, and San Mateo Counties:*
Actual expense up to \$125 per night, plus tax.
- *San Francisco County and the City of Santa Monica:*
Actual expense up to \$150 per night, plus tax.

Mileage

Apply the current government mileage rate when using a privately owned vehicle for travel-related purposes.

The California mileage rate can be found on the IRS website:

<http://www.irs.gov/2014-Standard-Mileage-Rates-for-Business,-Medical-and-Moving-Announced>.

The mileage rate for Federal government employees can be found on the GSA website:
<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715>.

International Travel

The maximum international travel rates allowable are established in a per diem supplement to section 925, Department of State Standardized Regulations. These rates are available on the U.S. Department of State website at: http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp.

Note: Rates change daily to account for currency and economic changes.

Air Travel

Economy-based rates are to be used by all travelers.

International travel must comply with the [Fly America Act, 49 U.S.C. 40118](#). This Act requires consultants, contractors, grantees, and others performing United States Government financed foreign air travel (SCBGP grant funds, in this case) to travel by United States flag air carriers, with some exceptions. Additional information about the Fly America Act can be found at:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191>.

Assistance and Questions

CDFA will conduct workshops and a webinar on the 2015 SCBGP solicitation process, use of the FAAST system, and grant writing tips during the weeks of November 3-14, 2014. Please visit CDFA's SCBGP website www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants, for dates, times, and locations.

Email all questions about the solicitation process to: grants@cdfa.ca.gov. Responses to all questions received during the workshops, webinar, or by email will be posted to CDFA's SCBGP website according to the following schedule:

Questions Received by:	Responses Posted by:
November 17, 2014 at 5:00 pm PST	November 20, 2014 at 5:00 pm PST
November 24, 2014 at 5:00 pm PST	November 26, 2014 at 5:00 pm PST
December 1, 2014 at 5:00 pm PST	December 3, 2014 at 5:00 pm PST

December 1, 2014 at 5:00 pm PST is the final deadline to submit questions for the Concept Proposal Phase.

In order to maintain the integrity of the competitive grant process, CDFA is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific proposals during the solicitation process.

Helpful Tips and Reminders

Grant Writing Suggestions

Applicants should avoid uncommon acronyms and non-technical language when possible. CDFA provides links to a number of grant writing courses and suggestions on the SCBGP website:

www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants.

Alternative Grant Programs

Depending on the nature of their project, applicants may also wish to consider alternative programs such as the following:

Projects that support the increase of fruits and vegetables in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase and/or include technologies for benefit redemption systems should consider submitting those projects to the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grants Program.

Projects that support domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities, local and regional food business enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products should consider submitting those projects to the Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fmpp>.

Projects that support biobased products and bioenergy and energy programs, including biofuels and other alternative uses for agricultural and forestry commodities (development of biobased products) should see the USDA energy website at <http://www.usda.gov/energy/matrix/home> for information on how to submit those projects for consideration to the energy programs supported by USDA.