

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Request for Proposals for the California Underserved Small Producers Program (CUSP). Over the past year, we provided direct assistance and direct grant relief to small and socially disadvantaged farmers navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We sincerely appreciate and affirm the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) intention to reach small and historically underserved farmers with both appropriate and flexible technical assistance and direct grant relief.

On behalf of Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), we offer the following feedback:

Part 1: Technical Assistance for Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

- We encourage CDFA to ensure that the total pool of funded technical assistance providers have the capacity to reach the least served farmers and ranchers across as many regions as possible in the state.

Part 2: Direct Grant Assistance for Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

- We encourage CDFA to provide flexibility to administering organizations to provide grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000 for grantees, given the wide range of challenges and needs of producers.
- We encourage CDFA to promote collaborative applications to ensure the greatest coverage, impact and coordination and to avoid redundancy with potential grantees. We encourage CDFA to provide and allow applicants to name and indicate efforts being coordinated across multiple applications with other applicants.
- We support CDFA's stated preference for applicants that have previously administered and have a successful track record of supporting direct farmer relief funds. In our experience, these efforts require substantial resources and benefit from previous experience.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and are available to discuss any of our feedback in further detail.

Paul Towers
Executive Director
Community Alliance with Family Farmers

- Thank you for your comments regarding the CUSP program. We have included additional clarifying language in the RFP and application materials to incorporate your comments.
- The range of grants has been changed to (\$1,000-\$20,000) to reflect input from both farmer advisory committee, small farm ad-hoc advisory committee and webinar comments.
- Applicants may list "cooperating entities" in application and budget narrative and are encouraged, although not required, to apply with cooperating entities.

Public Comments Received and Responses for California Underserved and Small-Scale Producer Grant Program April 2021

Please include the definition of socially disadvantaged producer in the RFP. – UCANR Cooperative Extension	This information has been highlighted in the RFP as a footnote, with reference to AB 1348.
Include urban producers in eligible producers for part 2. BIPOC Farmer Advisory Committee	This language has been included. Urban producers are eligible to apply for grant funds through a regional administrator entity.