

2017 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE II, GRANT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
FEBRUARY 23, 2017

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. When are grant proposals due?
A. Grant proposals must be submitted through the State Water Resources Control Board's [Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool \(FAAST\)](#) by 5:00 pm PST on March 6, 2017. Late submissions will not be accepted.
2. Q. Will CDFA provide answers to specific questions regarding the eligibility of grant proposals or assist applicants in identifying program priorities, project beneficiaries, and/or outcome measures and indicators?
A. To maintain the integrity of the competitive grant process, CDFA is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with feedback on specific proposals during the solicitation process. CDFA cannot assist applicants with identifying program priorities, project beneficiaries, and/or outcome measures and indicators.
3. Q. Can project activities occur before November 1, 2017 or after April 30, 2020? If so, can the costs of those activities be charged to the grant?
A. Expenses for activities occurring before November 1, 2017 or after April 30, 2020 cannot be charged to the grant. Applicants may use cost sharing to fund activities prior to the start of the grant duration; however, activities occurring before grant awards are announced would be subject to the risk that grant funding is not subsequently received.
4. Q. Can substantial changes be made to the project described in the concept proposal?
A. Applicants may revise and refine their project during the grant proposal phase. Some degree of change is anticipated in response to grant proposal requirements and feedback provided; however, substantial changes are discouraged. CDFA cannot anticipate how changes to the scope of a project will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.
5. Q. When will the 2017 SCBGP awards be announced and can CDFA inform applicants of the status of their application prior to the announcement?
A. It is anticipated that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will announce 2017 SCBGP awards in Fall 2017. USDA has final approval of all proposals awarded funding; therefore, CDFA cannot advise applicants of their project status before awards are announced.
6. Q. Can applicants be awarded funding for more than one SCBGP project?
A. Applicants may be awarded funding for more than one SCBGP project; however, duplication of costs or activities is not permitted. In addition, applicants should ensure they have adequate capacity to effectively manage multiple SCBGP awards.
7. Q. Are applicants required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting a grant proposal? How can an organization obtain a DUNS number?
A. A DUNS number and registration on the SAM is not required prior to submitting a grant proposal. However, successful 2017 applicants will be required to provide the applicant organization's DUNS number before SCBGP funds are awarded. Applicants are highly encouraged to begin the registration process now. To obtain a DUNS number, visit the D&B website (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and select "Click here to request your D-U-N-S Number via the Web."

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8. Q. Can an applicant withdraw their grant proposal from consideration and, if so, how?
A. Applicants are free to withdraw their grant proposals from consideration at any time, for any reason. To withdraw a grant proposal that has not been submitted in FFAST, leave the grant proposal application unsubmitted in the system. To withdraw a grant proposal that has been submitted in FFAST, the Project Director or Project Manager listed in the application should email grants@cdfa.ca.gov with the proposal identification number (PIN) and request that the proposal be withdrawn from consideration. Any proposals withdrawn will not be reviewed by CDFA or the Technical Review Committee.

New Questions: February 23, 2017

9. Q. Can project titles change from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal?
A. Yes, project titles can be updated from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal. Access the General Information tab in FFAST to update the Project Title.
10. Q. Can specialty crops be purchased and given to children to take home with recipes and nutrition education materials?
A. Specialty crops cannot be purchased and given to children to take home. Costs for giving away specialty crops is unallowable.
11. Q. Some grant proposal questions appear to be the same as those in the concept proposal. Is the same answer or an expanded answer desired? Can a grant proposal be identical to the concept proposal, with a few revisions based on technical and administrative feedback?
A. Applicants should provide more detailed answers for the grant proposal questions. In many cases, the grant proposal questions are slightly different and character limits are larger to accommodate additional detail; for this reason, it is likely not appropriate for the language used in the grant proposal to be identical to the concept proposal. Applicants should ensure that the responses provided address all components of the questions as explained in the Grant Proposal Instructions document.
12. Q. Will a concept proposal's score be taken into account in scoring the grant proposal?
A. Concept proposal scoring is not a factor in the grant proposal phase.
13. Q. Is there a recording or PowerPoint available of the 2017 SCBGP Grant Proposal webinar?
A. A recording of the 2017 Grant Proposal webinar and PDF copies of the PowerPoint presentations will be posted to the SCBGP website (www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants) on February 23, 2017. In addition, answers to questions received during both webinars will be incorporated into the weekly Questions & Answers (Q&A) posted to CDFA's website.
14. Q. How many concept proposals were advanced to the grant proposal phase and how many are expected to be awarded funding?
A. One hundred forty-seven concept proposals were invited to participate in the grant proposal phase. Approximately 50% are expected to ultimately be awarded funding in fall 2017.
15. Q. Can applicants make adjustments to their project start and end dates?
A. Applicants may adjust their project start and end dates as long as all activities occur within the allowable grant period (November 1, 2017 through April 30, 2020). However, please note that the project duration question from the concept proposal phase is locked for editing. Any changes to the project duration should be reflected in the Project Objectives and Work Plan attachment.

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16. Q. Can project personnel change from the concept proposal phase to the grant proposal phase? Can more individuals be added and is there a limit to the number of individuals that can be involved in a project?
- A. Project personnel including the project director, project manager, principal investigators, cooperators, contractors, and other staff may be changed or added in the grant proposal phase. There is no limit on the number of individuals that can be involved in a project. However, each project is required to identify one project manager and one project director to serve as the primary points of contact for the project. These individuals should be identified on the Project Management tab in FFAST.
17. Q. If project personnel, including applicant organization staff or contractors, have not yet been identified, how should applicants reference these individuals in the grant proposal? For example, in the Project Objectives and Work Plan attachment and the Budget Narrative attachment?
- A. Any project personnel that have not yet been identified (e.g., staff that will be hired if the grant is awarded) should be referred to in the grant proposal by the title of the position to be filled. However, please ensure that the position titles listed in the Project Objectives and Work Plan attachment are consistent with those listed in the Budget Narrative attachment.
18. Q. If an organization is listed as the applicant on a grant proposal, can they also be listed as a cooperator on another grant proposal?
- A. There is no limit on the number of projects an organization can be involved in as either an applicant or cooperator. However, before agreeing to participate, organizations should ensure they have adequate capacity to effectively participate in multiple SCBGP grants, if awarded. In addition, CDFA cannot anticipate how an organization's involvement in multiple grant proposals will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.
19. Q. Can applicants make changes to any of the required templates?
- A. Applicants are asked to complete each template per the instructions provided. Within the Budget Narrative, Project Objectives and Work Plan and Cost Sharing templates, applicants may add rows at their own discretion based on project needs. For the Outcome Measures template applicants may delete or leave blank any outcomes not applicable to their proposal and enter content into the text fields specified. Do not make any changes to the formatting of any template (e.g., changing page margins, adjusting columns, font, size, etc.) and do not delete instructions or unused sections of the Budget Narrative template.
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ELIGIBILITY

1. Q. Are projects with the potential to benefit non-specialty crops eligible to receive funding?
- A. SCBGP funds can only be used to benefit eligible specialty crops. If a project has the potential to benefit ineligible commodities, the response to the Specialty Crop Enhancement question must demonstrate the tracking mechanisms and processes that are in place or will be implemented to verify all SCBGP funds are expended on activities and costs that solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible California specialty crops.

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2. Q. Where can applicants access information regarding the eligibility of a particular crop or commodity?
A. Applicants can access a list of eligible specialty crops on the United States Department of Agriculture's specialty crop website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbqp/specialty-crop>.
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FIXED AMOUNT AWARDS

1. Q. Do fixed amount award applicants complete the same FAAST questionnaire and Budget Narrative template as other applicants to the program?
A. Fixed amount award applicants must complete the same FAAST questionnaire and Budget Narrative template as conventional applicants to allow CDFA to conduct an administrative review of the proposal and for the Technical Review Committee to complete a merit based review. However, fixed amount award applicants are also required to complete the Fixed Amount Awards Objectives Schedule Table at the bottom of the Budget Narrative template. Completion of this table is necessary to determine the allowability and reasonableness of costs fixed amount award projects will incur to complete the project objectives. Fixed amount awards are based on outcomes achieved rather than actual costs incurred; however, costs associated with these awards must comply with the federal cost principles, USDA program requirements and CDFA program requirements.
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FAAST APPLICATION

1. Q. How can applicants access the grant proposal application in FAAST?
A. To view the grant proposal application, log onto FAAST at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov> with the username and password used to submit the concept proposal. Click on Active Applications, select the project's title and click on the Questionnaire tab.
2. Q. What are the computer system requirements necessary to use FAAST?
A. The FAAST System Administrator recommends using a PC with Internet Explorer (6.0 or higher) and disabling pop-up blocking software while using FAAST. CDFA strongly encourages applicants to submit their grant proposals in advance of the deadline to ensure there is adequate time to resolve any technical issues that may arise. CDFA is not responsible for any submission issues that may arise from applicants using non-recommended operating systems or browsers and will not grant deadline extensions.
3. Q. Are there character limits for each section of the grant proposal application in FAAST?
A. FAAST text box character limits are clearly marked in red text at the bottom of each text box. The character limits range from 100 to 1,000 characters, including spaces. Please view the grant proposal questionnaire within FAAST for more detail.
4. Q. How can applicants access the Technical Review Committee and CDFA Administrative Review Feedback for their concept proposals in FAAST?
A. To view feedback for a concept proposal, log onto FAAST at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/> with the username and password used to submit the concept proposal. Click on Processed Applications, select the project's title and click on the Feedback tab. To maintain the integrity of the competitive process, CDFA is unable to provide applicants with clarification on feedback provided in FAAST.

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5. Q. Are applicants required to address Technical Review Committee feedback in the grant proposal?
A. Feedback provided by Technical Review Committee members should be taken as suggestions to consider during the preparation of a grant proposal. It is at the discretion of the applicant whether to make changes to a proposal based on Technical Review Committee feedback. CDFA cannot anticipate how unaddressed feedback will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.
6. Q. How can an applicant address concept proposal administrative and/or technical feedback for a section that was not included in the grant proposal application?
A. Administrative and technical feedback is provided for the purpose of highlighting areas that could have been improved and/or expanded upon in the concept proposal. Some questions in the concept proposal phase do not carry over to the grant proposal questionnaire; in this case, it may be possible to address feedback within the other sections of the grant proposal depending on the nature of the project. In particular, administrative feedback identifies areas where the concept proposal did not align with the instructions provided in the [2017 Request for Concept Proposals](#). Administrative feedback is specific to the requirements of the concept proposal phase and, in some cases, may not align with the requirements for the grant proposal phase. In order to address administrative concerns, applicants should ensure they closely adhere to the requirements outlined in the [2017 Grant Proposal Instructions](#).
7. Q. Can an applicant edit or make changes to the concept proposal application in FFAST?
A. Applicants should review the project description, project budget, project management, and cooperating entities sections in FFAST and make changes as needed. Other changes to the concept proposal application are discouraged and some sections of the concept proposal may be locked for editing.
8. Q. Who should be listed in the cooperating entities section in FFAST?
A. Cooperating entities are individuals/organizations an applicant will be working with to plan and/or implement the proposed project. Cooperating entities should include any individuals/organizations that will have a direct role in the project and/or will provide cost share. Individuals who are referenced in the External Project Support response should not be involved in project activities and, therefore, should not be listed as cooperating entities.
9. Q. What attachments are required to be submitted with the grant proposal application?
A. All projects are required to complete and attach three templates to the application in FFAST: [Project Objectives and Work Plan](#), [Outcome Measures](#), and [Budget Narrative](#). For projects with matching funds or in-kind contributions, a fourth template is required: [Cost Sharing](#). In addition to the required templates, all applicants must attach a current resume or curriculum vitae (CV) for the Project Director(s), Project Manager(s), Principal Investigator(s), and any collaborators who will receive a portion of the project funds. Failure to submit one or more of the required attachments will result in disqualification.
10. Q. The Project Objectives and Work Plan, Outcome Measures, Budget Narrative, and Cost Sharing templates are locked for editing when opened from the links in FFAST. How can this be resolved?
A. To properly complete the required templates, click on the links provided in FFAST and select "Save as." Save the files to your computer first, then open the saved files. You may then make edits and complete the document. If a template opens in "Read-Only" view, click on "View" in the upper left corner, then "Edit Document." Make sure you save your document after edits are made and before uploading the completed attachment within the Attachment tab in FFAST.

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11. Q. Can additional documents beyond the required attachments be submitted with an application?
A. There is no prohibition against attaching additional documents to the FAAST application. However, additional attachments should not be included if the intention is to circumvent FAAST character limits. The Technical Review Committee is not required to review any additional attachments beyond what is required. Applicants should not rely on additional attachments for project clarity or to supplement answers within the questionnaire.
12. Q. Do any of the grant proposal attachments have a page limit?
A. The only grant proposal attachment with a page limit is the Project Objectives and Work Plan, which cannot exceed four pages. The Outcome Measures, Budget Narrative, and Cost Sharing attachments do not have a maximum number of pages.
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FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

1. Q. Can a grant proposal be submitted under a different funding category than the concept proposal?
A. A grant proposal cannot be submitted under a different funding category than the concept proposal.
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PROJECT PURPOSE

1. Q. Is it required to cite the program priorities verbatim? The character limit for the response is only 1000 characters, which may not be adequate to both cite the priorities and explain how the project addresses them.
A. Although it is not required to cite the full program priorities verbatim in the grant proposal phase, applicants should ensure that the response provided clearly identifies which program priorities the project will address.
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PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

New Questions: February 23, 2017

1. Q. What information should be included under project objective and objective activities?
A. The project objective should identify the main goals the project is seeking to accomplish. The objective activities should describe the tasks necessary to accomplish each of the identified project objective(s).
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PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

1. Q. What is meant by "project beneficiaries"?
A. The number cited in the Project Beneficiaries response should be a reasonable estimate of the number of individuals that could realistically be directly impacted by the results of the project. It is up to the applicant to determine the appropriate measure of project beneficiaries based on the project's objectives and outcomes. CDFA is unable to advise applicants regarding the relevance of their project's beneficiaries but encourages applicants to consider their chosen outcome measure(s) and indicator(s) when estimating their project's beneficiaries.
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SPECIALTY CROP ENHANCEMENT

No questions at this time.

PRIOR YEAR SCBGP PROJECTS

No questions at this time.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

1. Q. What would be an appropriate response to the Project Sustainability section for projects that will be complete after the end of the grant period and will not need continued funding?
 - A. In this case, the Project Sustainability response must describe how the results of the project will continue to benefit the California specialty crop industry beyond the end of the grant without additional funding.
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OTHER SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

1. Q. Should an applicant inform CDFA if they applied to another agency to fund a project submitted to the 2017 SCBGP? What if both agencies agree to fund the project?
 - A. An applicant must inform CDFA if they apply and/or receive funding for a project that has been submitted to the 2017 SCBGP. SCBGP funds cannot duplicate activities supported by other state or federal programs. If awarded funding from another source, applicants must either demonstrate that funds from each program will go towards different activities or be prepared to decline funding from one program or the other. Failure to disclose other support from federal or state grant programs, whether applied for or received, will result in the disqualification of a proposal.

New Questions: February 23, 2017

2. Q. Should applicants report other support that is neither from federal nor state grant programs?
 - A. Support that is from sources other than federal or state grant programs would be considered cost sharing. The amount, source, and activities funded by support from other sources should be described on the Cost Sharing summary.
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EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

1. Q. Who should be listed in the External Project Support response?
 - A. The External Project Support response should identify at least one specific specialty crop stakeholder and explain why they believe the project is important and timely for the specialty crop industry. Specialty crop stakeholders include individuals/organizations involved in the specialty crop industry such as growers, companies, certified crop advisors (CCAs) and pest control advisors (PCAs), commodity boards or commissions, trade associations, etc. The External Project Support response should not reference the applicant, cooperators, contractors, or any other entity that will participate in project activities, receive project funding, or contribute cost share. In addition,

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members of the general public, legislators, or any organizations that are not affiliated with the specialty crop industry should not be included in the External Project Support response.

2. Q. Are letters of support required?
A. Letters of support are not a requirement of the SCBGP but are strongly encouraged to demonstrate industry support for a project. If applicable, letters of support should be provided in addition to (rather than in lieu of) a narrative response to the External Project Support question.

 3. Q. **Revised: February 23, 2017:** Who should submit letters of support?
A. Letters of support may come from specialty crop stakeholders, individuals, and organizations that are supportive of what the project will accomplish but who are not directly involved in project activities. Do not include letters of support from the applicant, cooperators, contractors, or any other entity that will participate in project activities, receive project funding, or contribute cost share. Letters of support from project beneficiaries are appropriate, so long as the benefit received is not in the form of grant funding. For example, letters of support from specialty crop farmers who will receive training through the grant are appropriate; letters of support from the employees of the applicant or a contractor are not. In addition, do not include letters of support from members of the general public, legislators, elected officials, or any organizations that are not affiliated with the specialty crop industry.

 4. Q. **Revised: February 23, 2017:** How should letters of support be submitted?
A. Letters of support should be written on the stakeholder's official letterhead, be addressed to CDFA Office of Grants Administration, and explain why the stakeholder supports the project. All letters of support must be attached to the grant proposal application in FFAST; letters sent directly to CDFA via mail or email will not be considered.
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OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. Can applicants modify the outcome measures, indicators, or sub-indicators?
A. The outcome measures, indicators, and sub-indicators are defined by USDA and the Office of Management and Budget and cannot be altered, amended or replaced. All projects must accomplish at least one outcome measure and indicator/sub-indicator as listed in the [Outcome Measures template](#) within the grant duration. Any additional project outcomes that do not align with those provided on the Outcome Measures template may be discussed in other portions of the grant proposal, as appropriate.

2. Q. Are marketing and promotion proposals allowed to select an outcome measure other than increasing sales? What if a baseline of sales in dollars does not already exist?
A. All proposals submitted to California Grown Promotion funding category and any other proposals that meet the definition of marketing and promotion as described in the [Outcome Measures supplement](#) must select the outcome to increase sales. If no baseline data exists, establishing a baseline of sales dollars must be included in the project activities and in the description section of the outcome measures template.

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3. Q. How can applicants provide a number for the selected indicator and/or sub-indicator if the impact is not yet known?
- A. Both CDFA and USDA understand that outcome measures described at this phase are projections. Applicants should provide an estimate that is reasonable and achievable for the selected indicators and/or sub-indicators.
4. Q. If all projects are required to enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops, does this mean all projects must identify Outcome Measure 1?
- A. The overall mission of the SCBGP is to enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Even if a project's activities do not focus on increasing sales of specialty crops directly (e.g., a marketing campaign), all projects should include some discussion of how project activities will support the overall mission of the program. Discussing the likelihood of contributing to increased purchases/consumption of specialty crops or possible benefits for farmers is appropriate for all projects and does not necessarily mean a project must select Outcome Measure 1; only projects involving marketing or promotion of specialty crops as defined in the Outcome Measures supplement are required to select the outcome to increase sales. In addition, discussion of the plausibility of project activities contributing to increased purchase/consumption is not restricted to the Outcome Measures section and may be discussed in any section of the grant proposal application, as appropriate.
5. Q. For outcome 1, are projects required to demonstrate that the increase in sales is due to an increased volume of specialty crops sold? Is it acceptable if increased sales is due to an increase in price?
- A. An increase in total sales dollars is not required to be the result of an increase in the volume of specialty crops sold. It is acceptable for an increase in total sales dollars to be the result of an increase in price as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities. However, applicants must provide the baseline and projected total sales, rather than only providing the original and increased price. For example, it would not be appropriate to state that prices increased from \$5 per pound to \$7 per pound as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities because this only measures the per unit sales increase rather than the overall industry impact. A more appropriate response would be stating that overall sales of a given specialty crop increased from \$125,000 to \$175,000 as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities; the description section can be used to explain that the projected sales increase is due to an increase in price from \$5 to \$7 per pound while the volume of crops sold will remain at 25,000 pounds.

New Questions: February 23, 2017

6. Q. Can the grant proposal identify different outcome measures and indicators than those listed in the concept proposal?
- A. Applicants may select different outcome measures and indicators from the concept proposal to grant proposal phase. However, CDFA cannot anticipate how the TRC will view substantial changes to the project.
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BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. Q. Can the amount of SCBGP funding requested change from the concept proposal phase to the grant proposal phase?
A. The amount of SCBGP funding requested in the grant proposal phase may increase or decrease from the concept proposal phase. Although there is no limit on the amount that the budget may change, CDFA cannot anticipate how changes will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee and substantial changes (+/- 20%) may be questioned. If the budget changes, ensure the revised amount is between \$50,000 and \$450,000 (\$50,000 and \$150,000 for fixed amount awards) and update the amount listed under Funds Requested on the Project Budget tab in FAAST.
2. Q. Should applicants update the concept proposal budget template to reflect changes for the grant proposal phase?
A. The only required budget attachment for the grant proposal phase is the budget narrative. Do not update and resubmit the concept proposal budget template.
3. Q. Is a separate budget narrative attachment required for each contractor?
A. All project related expenses, including contractual expenses, should be described on one budget narrative attachment; do not provide multiple budget narrative attachments. However, a detailed breakdown of all associated expenses for each contractor (e.g., salary or fees for service, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, indirect, etc.) must be provided within the contractual section.
4. Q. What is the limit for compensation for individual contractors/consultants?
A. Compensation for individual contractual fees should be reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services. Salary and wages or fees for professional services for contractors/consultants cannot exceed the GS-15 step 10 for your locality/area without justification. A justification for an individual contractor/consultant may include but is not limited to: a cost/price analysis; an explanation of unique qualifications, special expertise due to the complexity of the project/task or limited pool of available or qualified contractors/consultants; or historical data supporting the rate charged by contractors/consultants. Reference the Contractual Services supplement for additional guidance on contractual restrictions.
5. Q. Can institutions charge an indirect cost rate greater than eight percent of total personnel costs under the provisions of Assembly Bill 20 or 2 CFR 200.331(a)(4)?
A. The indirect cost rate for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is established in federal statute and therefore supersedes the provisions of Assembly Bill 20 and 2 CFR 200.331(a)(4). Please reference 2 CFR 200.414 (c)(1) as well as section 10010(4) of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79. CDFA has established a maximum indirect cost rate of eight percent of total personnel costs (salary and wages plus fringe benefits) for California Specialty Crop Block Grant Program projects. This cap is necessary for CDFA to be able to administer the program and adhere to all statutory requirements. Accordingly, CDFA will not accept requests for indirect costs greater than eight percent of total personnel costs.
6. Q. USDA's Request for Applications states that indirect costs are limited to eight percent of the total federal funds provided under the award. Why does CDFA cap applicants' indirect rate at eight percent of total personnel costs?
A. Section 10010(4) of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79 prohibits states from using more than eight percent of SCBGP funds received for administrative expenses. This eight percent maximum includes all indirect costs associated with the SCBGP, both indirect costs incurred by

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awardees as well as CDFA's costs incurred during administration of the program (both pre- and post-award). Per USDA program requirements described in their Request for Applications, it is at the discretion of participating state departments of agriculture to determine the maximum indirect rate for their states' SCBGP projects. Participating states can decide to allow applicants no indirect costs at all, the full eight percent, or somewhere in between. In order to allow CDFA to adequately administer the program and adhere to all statutory requirements, the maximum indirect rate for California SCBGP applicants has been capped at eight percent of total personnel costs. If CDFA allowed applicants to charge the full eight percent, it would not be possible for CDFA to administer the program.

7. Q. What is general purpose equipment and is it an allowable cost?
A. General purpose equipment is tangible personal property with a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit that is used for purposes other than research or scientific activities. General purpose equipment includes items such as motor vehicles, tractors, information technology systems, etc. Purchasing general purpose equipment with SCBGP funds is not allowable. However, renting general purpose equipment may be allowable if the applicant can demonstrate that the equipment is necessary for activities of the project and solely enhances the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Costs to rent general purpose equipment should be listed in the Budget Narrative under section G Other.
8. Q. How much detail should be provided in section E Supplies? Can applicants group similar items together in the Supplies Table using broad terms (e.g., reagents, glassware, etc.)?
A. Supply costs must be broken down into the cost per unit whenever possible. In some cases, it may be appropriate to group similar items together using broad terms in the Supplies Table. However, the Supplies Justification section must include a description of the individual supplies included in the grouping, a basis for how the cost estimate was determined, and a description of how the supplies are necessary for the completion of the project's objectives and outcomes.
9. Q. Which section of the Budget Narrative should graduate student researcher tuition and fees be listed under?
A. The budget template developed by USDA in 2016 for SCBGP projects limits the amount listed under section B Fringe Benefits to a percentage of the amount listed under section A Salaries and Wages for each employee. To conform to the template developed by USDA, costs such as graduate student researcher tuition and fees should be listed under section G Other.
10. Q. How should costs be broken down by grant year in the budget narrative?
A. It is not necessary to provide the cost per year in section A Salary and Wages, section B Fringe Benefits, or section H Indirect Costs. For section C Travel, the approximate dates of travel should be provided in the justification section. For section D Scientific Research Equipment, section E Supplies, and section G Other, provide the grant year the items requested will be purchased in the "Acquire When?" column in the table.
11. Q. How should full time equivalents (FTE) be shown in the "Level of Effort" column of the section A Salary and Wages table? For example, should FTE for an individual spending 100% of their time on a project for 2.5 years be listed as 250% to indicate 2.5 years at full time?
A. Do not list the cumulative percentage FTE for any individual in section A Salary and Wages. The percentage listed under the "Level of Effort" column should be the average FTE the individual will work over the course of the project. Do not provide an FTE exceeding 100%, as this would indicate that the individual would be working more than full time.

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12. Q. How should applicants determine travel costs for meetings/site visits (e.g., hotel, mileage, airfare) if the locations have not yet been determined?
A. Applicants should provide an estimate of travel costs for meetings/site visits based on a best guess of where the meetings/site visits will take place or by using past site visit locations.
13. Q. Where in the budget narrative should costs for leasing greenhouse space or land be listed?
A. Costs for leasing greenhouse space or land should be listed under G Other.
14. Q. Does the federal statutory limit on indirect costs for SCBGP apply only to administrative costs? If so, can applicants or contractors include both the maximum indirect cost and their federally negotiated facilities costs in the project budget?
A. While the federal statute does not specifically reference facilities costs, USDA's annual Request for Applications has defined the limit on indirect costs as inclusive of both facilities and administrative costs. Applicants/contractors may not increase their indirect cost rate to include facilities costs or include these costs as a separate direct charge in the budget. The inclusion of said costs will subject a proposal to disqualification.
15. Q. Should applicants submit a copy of their fringe benefits policy with their application?
A. Applicants should not submit a copy of their fringe benefits policy with their application. However, please note there is a declaration included in the Budget Narrative affirming that the applicant will adhere to their organization's established fringe benefits policy. In addition, the organization's fringe benefits policy will be subject to review during the audit process if the project is ultimately awarded funding.
16. Q. Will project participants be provided with government identification in order to receive reduced government rates at hotels for project-related travel?
A. Project participants will not be provided with government identification.
17. Q. Where should travel by people who are neither employees of the applicant nor contractors be listed? For example, volunteers who are traveling to assist with a project.
A. Travel for people who are neither employees of the applicant nor contractors should be listed under section C Travel in the Budget Narrative.
18. Q. How should costs be broken down for contractors? Should a separate travel description be provided for each contractor?
A. A detailed breakdown of budget sections A through H (e.g., salary or fees for service, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, indirect, etc.) is required for each contractor not utilizing a flat rate fee structure. Costs for travel undertaken by a contractor should be detailed in the travel section of the contractor's breakdown per the guidelines provided in the budget narrative template. If travel costs are requested for multiple contractors, the travel costs for each contractor must be listed separately within each contractor's cost breakdown.
19. Q. Is there a limit to the number of items an applicant can list under supplies?
A. There is no limit to the number of items an applicant can list under supplies.

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20. Q. Would costs for technical services (e.g., lab analysis fees) that are greater than \$5,000 be considered scientific research equipment?
A. Scientific Research Equipment refers to an item of tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000 that is used only for scientific or research purposes. Lab analysis fees would not be considered equipment and should be listed under section G Other.
21. Q. What are cost principles?
A. Federal cost principles are regulations based on organization type used to determine allowable costs and ensure consistent treatment of costs. In addition to CDFA and USDA program requirements, applicants are responsible for identifying the federal cost principles appropriate to their organization, ensuring the consistent application of cost principles to the SCBGP grant funds, and ensuring contractors or consultants comply with federal cost principle requirements. State, local or Indian tribal governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities will be subject to 2 CFR 200. For-profit organizations will be subject to 48 CFR Subpart 31.2.
22. Q. Where should a contractor hourly rate for professional services be listed?
A. A contractor's hourly rate must be listed under section A Salary and Wages / Fee for Professional Services in the contractor's cost breakdown. Applicants may use the justification section to clarify that the cost listed in the table is an hourly professional services fee rather than the contractor's salary.
23. Q. Are applicants required to conduct a competitive bid for contractors which have been used in the past?
A. Generally, a competitive process conforming an organization's policies and the cost principles is required when selecting a contractor. Having previously utilized a competitive process to select a contractor for other work is not a sufficient justification for foregoing a new competitive process.
24. Q. Does the procurement process apply to project partners and cooperators?
A. Yes, the procurement process applies to project partners and cooperators. Applicant organizations must comply with their organization policies and the federal cost principles.
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COST SHARING

1. Q. What is the difference between matching funds and/or in-kind contributions?
A. Matching funds refers to real dollar contributions to a project from sources other than the SCBGP. In-kind contributions refer to the determined values of assets donated to the project (e.g., equipment, use of land, volunteered staff time, etc.). If matching funds and/or in-kind contributions have been secured for the project, applicants must complete and attach the [Cost Sharing template](#).

New Questions: February 23, 2017

2. Q. If an organization has an indirect cost rate agreement that exceeds the eight percent SCBGP program requirement can the difference be considered cost sharing?
A. The difference between the applicant's indirect cost rate and the program limit of eight percent of personnel costs can be considered cost sharing. This extends to items of cost treated as direct costs by the applicant organization, but defined as indirect in the Grant Proposal Instructions.

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3. Q. Can funds from other state or federal grants be used as matching funds?
A. Funds from other state or federal grant programs are not considered matching funds. Applicants must disclose if they have applied for or are receiving state or federal funds for a project submitted to the SCBGP in the "Other Support from Federal or State Grant Programs" question in FFAST. Reference [2 CFR Part 200.306 \(b\)\(5\)](#).
4. Q. Can the actual amount of cost share change from the amount listed in the grant proposal? Are the organizations listed committed to the amounts in the Cost Sharing attachment?
A. The Cost Sharing attachment does not constitute an explicit commitment. However, applicants will be expected to report on cost share, including if the applicant has less than originally claimed in the grant proposal.
5. Q. Should applicants include requested/pending funds in the Cost Sharing attachment? What about matching funds that will be provided by a private source that has not yet been identified?
A. Only secured cost share should be included in the Cost Sharing attachment. If the source of cost share has not yet been identified, it would be considered unsecured funds and should therefore not be listed in the Cost Sharing attachment.
6. Q. If cost share is not scored or required by the program, what is the advantage to showing cost share? Is there a recommended ratio of cost share?
A. The Technical Review Committee may view cost share as an indicator of industry support for your project. Because cost share is not required there is no recommended level of cost share.
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PROJECT OVERSIGHT

New Questions: February 23, 2017

1. Q. Is there a required template for Curriculum Vitae (CV)s or resumes? Are there page length restrictions?
A. There is no required template for CVs or resumes and there are no page length restrictions.
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REVIEW PROCESS

No questions at this time.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

No questions at this time.