2018 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE II, GRANT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
January 31, 2018

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. Is a recording or PowerPoint of the 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) Grant Proposal webinar available?
   A. A recording of the 2018 Grant Proposal webinar and PDF copies of the PowerPoint presentations will be posted to the California Department of Agriculture (CDFA) SCBGP website (www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants) on January 19, 2018. In addition, answers to questions received during both webinars will be incorporated into the weekly Questions & Answers (Q&A) posted to CDFA's website.

2. 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.

3. Q. *Revised: January 31, 2018:* How should applicants respond to administrative or technical feedback in the grant proposal application? Can applicants make changes to the concept proposal application?
   A. Feedback provided from the administrative review and the Technical Review Committee should be taken as suggestions to consider during the preparation of the 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. Changes to the concept proposal application cannot be made as it is locked for editing.

4. Q. How many concept proposals have advanced to the grant proposal phase?
   A. Of the 237 concept proposals that were submitted, approximately 50 percent were invited to participate in the grant proposal phase.

5. Q. How can applicants access their concept proposal phase feedback?
   A. All feedback from the concept proposal phase from both the administrative review and the technical review should be available in FAAST under the Feedback tab. However, if the concept proposal feedback is not viewable in FAAST for any reason, please contact CDFA via grants@cdfa.ca.gov for assistance.

6. Q. Can applicants make changes to the cooperating entities listed on the concept proposal application?
   A. Applicants may add, remove, or otherwise change cooperating entities in the grant proposal phase.

7. Q. Can applicants include other attachments outside of the required or optional attachments mentioned in the 2018 Grant Proposal Instructions?
   A. Attachments other than the required or optional attachments detailed in the Grant Proposal Instructions are highly discouraged. Technical Review Committee members are not required to review extraneous attachments.

8. Q. Can applicants include their logo on marketing materials developed to promote specialty crops?
   A. The inclusion of the applicant's logo is generally allowable if the purpose of the materials is solely to promote the eligible specialty crop, rather than the organization. Additionally, the size and placement of the organization's logo should be substantially less prominent than the specialty crop(s) being promoted.

9. Q. Can the applicant organization change from the concept proposal phase to the grant proposal phase?
   A. Yes, it is possible to change the applicant organization by contacting the FAAST help desk at (866) 434-1083 or faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov; however, CDFA cannot anticipate how this would be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.

10. Q. Will the Technical Review Committee review the concept proposal as well as the grant proposal?
    A. During grant proposal review, the Technical Review Committee is only required to review the answers and attachments of the grant proposal. Applicants should not rely on answers provided during the concept proposal phase to supplement their grant proposal answers or attachments.

11. Q. Can projects be for less time than the maximum grant duration? If so, is there a minimum amount of time for a project?
    A. Projects may be for less time than the maximum grant duration. While there is no minimum project duration, applicants must ensure project goals can be accomplished within the project duration specified.

12. Q. Can project start and end dates change from the concept proposal to the grant proposal?
    A. Applicants may adjust their project start and end dates as long as all activities occur within the allowable grant period (November 1, 2018 through April 30, 2021). 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.

13. Q. Can new project personnel be added to the project in the grant proposal phase?
    A. Yes, project personnel including the Project Director, Project Manager, Principal Investigators, cooperators, contractors, and other staff may be added in the grant proposal phase.

14. Q. Can applicants expand the Project Description response in the grant proposal phase?
    A. Yes, applicants may add or change information in the Project Description response.

15. Q. Should employees of the applicant be included in the Cooperating Entities section in FAAST?
    A. No, employees of the applicant should not be included within the Cooperating Entities section in FAAST. Cooperating entities are organizations an applicant will work with to plan and/or implement the proposed project. Cooperating entities can include individuals who may receive a portion of the SCBGP funds and/or contribute cost share. There is no restriction on what types of organizations may serve as cooperating entities, provided the organization will have a role in project activities and has agreed to participate as a cooperator.

16. Q. Where can applicants include information about relevant prior work not funded by the SCBGP in the grant proposal?
    A. Applicants may incorporate information about relevant prior work within their responses to the grant proposal questions, or it can be highlighted in the curriculum vitae (CV) or resume.

17. Q. Should all staff that will be working on the project be listed in the grant proposal?
    A. Staff members from the applicant organization or contractors that will receive grant funds (i.e. salary, benefits and/or travel, etc.) should be included in the Budget Narrative. Individuals who will participate in the project but not request grant funds may document their time as an in-kind contribution on the Cost Sharing Template. All individuals who will participate in project activities should be listed on the Project Objectives and Work Plan template.

New Questions: January 31, 2018

18. Q.   Do projects that are intended to benefit beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers receive additional consideration?
     A.   While providing support to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers is important to the specialty crop industry, SCBGP projects are not required to directly benefit beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and this is not a factor in the scoring criteria developed for technical review.

ELIGIBILITY

No questions at this time.

FIXED AMOUNT AWARDS

No questions at this time.

FAAST APPLICATION

No questions at this time.

FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

No questions at this time.

PROJECT PURPOSE

1.   Q.   Within Project Purpose, are applicants required to cite the program priorities verbatim?
     A.   While applicants are not required to cite the full program priority verbatim in the grant proposal phase, applicants must make clear the specific priority or priorities their project will address.

2.   Q.   Where should applicants include information about their organization's capacity or qualifications?
     A.   Information about the applicant organization's qualifications to address the specific and existing issue, problem, or need that the proposal will address may be included as part of the Project Purpose response.

3.   Q.   Project Purpose is included in the questionnaire for both the concept proposal and the grant proposal phases. If the project purpose is unchanged from the concept proposal phase, are applicants expected to provide a response to this question in the grant proposal phase?
     A.   This question is provided in the grant proposal phase questionnaire to provide applicants the opportunity to expand upon, refine, or modify the project purpose response if needed. If there are no changes to the project purpose, applicants can restate the information from the grant proposal phase. Applicants should not leave this question blank as unanswered questions may result in disqualification of a proposal.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

1. Q. How should applicants describe the need for project materials requested in the Budget Narrative?
    A. A justification for all supplies or scientific research equipment should be described in the Budget Narrative in the appropriate category. The justification should include a description of how each item is necessary for the completion of the project's objectives and outcomes.

2. Q. Where should applicants detail any project methodology?
    A. Generally, a description of project methodology would be appropriate within the Project Objective and Work Plan and/or the Outcome Measures templates.

3. Q. What information should be included in the Project Objectives and Work Plan? How should it be submitted?
    A. Applicants should provide a description of objectives and activities that is sufficient to demonstrate the objective and activity are allowable. The description should also demonstrate that the activities are necessary to the project and appropriate to achieve the stated outcomes. The Project Objectives and Work Plan should also identify the individual(s) who will complete the work and the approximate timeframe in which the work will occur. Additional details, such as methodology or research parameters may be more appropriate to the description sections of the Outcome Measures template. The Project Objectives and Work Plan must be submitted as a MS Word Document using the attachments tab in FAAST and may not exceed four pages.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

1. Q. Is it necessary for projects to benefit all California specialty crop growers?
    A. Proposals must benefit the specialty crop industry; however it is not necessary, and may not be feasible, for a project to benefit all specialty crop growers or all growers of a specific commodity.

SPECIALTY CROP ENHANCEMENT

No questions at this time.

PRIOR YEAR SCBGP PROJECTS

1. Q. For proposals that build upon a previously funded SCBGP project, how should applicants summarize project objectives and efforts that are ongoing?
    A. Applicants should describe any outcomes and efforts of the project to date and should be able to demonstrate that the project will, or is expected to reach the original project outcomes, even if those outcomes have not yet been fully realized.

2. Q. If a proposal builds upon a project previously funded by a federal or state grant program other than SCBGP, should this information be described in the grant proposal application?
    A. Applicants should provide this information in the grant proposal application to assist in the technical review of the proposal and to help CDFA ensure that the proposal will not duplicate activities funded by another source.

3. Q. What information is required to demonstrate that a proposal builds upon a previous SCBGP project?

    A. Applicants can demonstrate that a proposal builds upon a prior SCBGP project by briefly describing the previous project and explaining how the proposal will compliment, rather than duplicate the efforts of the previous project to achieve new goals and outcomes.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

1. Q. Are all proposals required to demonstrate sustainability?

    A. Yes, all applicants should describe the likelihood of their project becoming self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on grant funds, and/or the benefit to California's specialty crop industry that will result from the project beyond the grant duration.

New Questions: January 31, 2018

2. Q. How will the answer to Project Sustainability be reviewed/scored by the Technical Review Committee? Is it necessary to demonstrate a project will become fully self-sustaining?

    A. Scoring of Project Sustainability will be based on the extent to which the proposal demonstrates the project will become self-sustaining and/or that the benefit of the project will continue beyond the grant duration without relying indefinitely on SCBGP funding. Projects should not be indefinitely dependent on grant funding and CDFA cannot anticipate how projects that will not become fully sustainable will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.

OTHER SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

1. Q. Should applicants include funding from a commodity board or commission in the response to question 7, Other Support from Federal or State Grant Programs?

    A. Commodity boards and commissions are typically state sponsored entities, but funded as non-profits. If an applicant has or will receive funding from a commodity board or commission for work related to their SCBGP application, this information should be described in the response to question 7, along with an explanation of how the proposed SCBGP project will supplement, rather than duplicate the existing funding.

2. Q. Is project funding from another federal grant program considered cost share?

    A. Generally, funds from one federal program cannot be considered cost share for another federal grant program. Proposals that have already received or anticipate funding from another federal or state grant program must list the amount of grant funds requested or awarded by the program and address how the proposed SCBGP project supplements rather than duplicates activities including detail of the tracking mechanisms in place to ensure the SCBGP does not fund duplicate costs and activities.

EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

1. Q. What types of organizations are considered specialty crop stakeholders?

    A. Individuals or 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, or any other organizations or individuals with a direct interest in the industry are considered stakeholders. The general public, legislators, elected officials, or any organizations not directly affiliated with the specialty crop industry are not.

2. Q. How should letters of support be submitted?
    A. Letters of support should be written on the stakeholder's official letterhead, be addressed to the 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 FAAST as a MS Word Document or PDF; letters sent directly to CDFA via mail, fax, or email will not be considered.

3. Q. Can applicants submit letters of support from entities that are not considered specialty crop stakeholders?
    A. Yes, however, each project should be able to evidence support from the specialty crop industry in addition to any support from other entities.

4. Q. Does CDFA provide templates or sample letters of support?
    A. CDFA does not provide templates or sample letters of support. Letters of support should explain why the stakeholder is supportive of the project and why the stakeholder feels the applicant is qualified to execute the project.

5. Q. How can applicants demonstrate industry support for their project?
    A. The External Project Support response should demonstrate specialty crop industry support by identifying at least one specialty crop stakeholder and explaining why they believe the project is important and timely for the specialty crop industry. 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. Applicants may also attach letters of support or include cost share, if applicable, to demonstrate industry support for their project.

6. Q. Who should submit letters of support?
    A. Letters of support may come from specialty crop stakeholders, individuals, or 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.

7. Q. How many letters of support should be submitted?
    A. While letters of support are strongly encouraged, they are not mandatory and there are no requirements for the number of letters of support for SCBGP proposals.

8. Q. Should a project stakeholder that will provide cost share for a proposal also provide a letter of support?
    A. While a stakeholder that will provide cost share may also provide a letter of support, the letter of support is not necessary as support for the project is apparent in the contribution of cost share.

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OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. What kind of projects are appropriate for Outcome Measure 8 (Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development)?
   A. Outcome Measure 8 typically focuses on increasing the specialty crop industry workforce and would be appropriate for projects that increase participation in specialty crop careers, or create or maintain jobs in the specialty crop industry. An example of a project that would relate to Outcome Measure 8 could be developing a training program for beginning farmers.

2. Q. What is the proper way to express increased sales in Outcome Measure 1?
   A. The specific measure must be expressed as a dollar value and percentage increase in sales of one or more specialty crops in one or more states or foreign markets as the result of marketing and/or promotion activities. For example, an expected outcome of growth in sales could be expressed as "increase in sales from $1 million to $1.05 million, with a growth in sales of 5 percent."

3. Q. For Outcome Measure 1, what information should be provided if a baseline of sales does not already exist?
   A. If no baseline sales data exists, applicants may enter To Be Determined/TBD or words to that effect for both the baseline and the amount by which sales will be increased. In this scenario, establishing a baseline should be included in the description of data collection methods and/or description of activities to monitor, and report on outcomes sections of the Outcome Measures template.

4. Q. Are there specific conditions or requirements associated with the indicators for each outcome measure?
   A. Outcomes and indicators must be reasonable, measurable, and relevant to the applicant's proposal. Additionally, outcomes and indicators must demonstrate a benefit to the specialty crop industry rather than to a single organization, such as the applicant. For example, project activities that increase the applicant's profitability and capacity may also create jobs for potential employees of the applicant; however this outcome would not be appropriate as it primarily benefits the applicant organization.

5. 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.

6. Q. Can the grant proposal identify different outcome measures and indicators than those listed in the concept proposal?
   A. Applicants may select outcome measures and indicators that are different than those specified in the concept proposal. However, all proposals submitted to California Grown Promotion funding category and any other marketing and promotion proposals must include the outcome to increase sales.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. Q. Are costs associated with capital expenditures allowable?
   A. Capital expenditures are costs to acquire capital assets (e.g. buildings or land) or expenditures to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Costs associated with capital expenditures, such as purchasing and/or building a greenhouse or installing an underground cooling irrigation system are unallowable.

2. 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 (+/- 10-20 percent) may be questioned. If the budget changes, applicants must ensure the revised amount is between $25,000 and $300,000 ($25,000 and $150,000 for Fixed Amount Awards) and update the amount listed under Funds Requested on the Project Budget tab in FAAST.

3. Q. If work associated with a project contractor will involve multiple employees from a single organization, should each employee be listed as a separate contactor?
   A. No, multiple employees from a single organization would be considered one contractor. A contractor's employees, their wages, fringe benefits, etc. can be detailed in the contractual breakdown within the Budget Narrative.

4. Q. Is breakfast ever allowable as a grant funded expense?
   A. Breakfast costs are generally allowable while on travel necessary for the project that includes an overnight stay, including hotel costs that are inclusive of continental breakfast. Breakfast costs for meetings are generally not allowable, as participants are expected to have sufficient time to obtain breakfast before the meeting begins.

5. Q. How should the Level of Effort for full time equivalents (FTE) employees be shown in Salary and Wages table?
   A. Applicants should list the average yearly FTE salaried employees will work over the course of the project, rather than a cumulative percentage of FTE over the course of the project, which could result in FTE exceeding 100 percent.

6. Q. Are there specific requirements or formulas that should be used in the Personnel section of the Budget Narrative?
   A. There are no specific requirements or formulas applicants must use when developing the Personnel section of the Budget Narrative. Applicants should estimate the actual time to be spent by an employee working on the project in Section A. Salary and Wages, and follow their organization's established fringe benefit rate in Section B. Fringe Benefits.

7. Q. How should costs for video production be categorized?
   A. The rental of film production equipment for use by the applicant would typically be considered a category G Other cost. However, the costs to hire a third party to produce a video (e.g., a production crew) would typically be considered a category F Contractual cost.

8.   Q.   How can applicants determine the fee structure of a contractor?
      A.   Generally, the contractor should explain their fee structure as part of the procurement process. If a contractor has not yet been selected, the applicant should provide their best estimate of the anticipated contractual fee structure.

9.   Q.   When is it necessary to provide a justification for a contractor?
      A.   When procuring contractual services, applicants must follow the requirements described in the contractual services supplement. Additionally, a justification must be provided and prior approval must be obtained by CDFA, and possibly USDA when a contractor will be selected by noncompetitive proposal or a contractor has salaries and wages or fees for professional services that exceed the General Schedule Grade 15 Step 10 (GS 15 Step 10) for the locality in which work will occur, or the contractor will utilize a flat rate.

10.   Q.   Where should travel by people who are neither employees of the applicant nor contractors be listed?
      A.   Travel for people who are neither employees of the applicant nor contractors, such as a volunteer project collaborator, should be listed in the Budget Narrative section C Travel.

11.   Q.   If project personnel, including applicant organization staff or contractual employees, have not yet been identified, what should applicants provide in the Budget Narrative?
      A.   Applicants should include information that is known such as the position/title, estimated salary or contractual rate and a description of activities that the project personnel will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project, including timelines for each activity.

12.   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 section G Other.

13.   Q.   How should conference expenses be listed in the Budget Narrative?
      A.   Travel costs including airfare, hotel, mileage and per diem should be included in the Budget Narrative section C Travel. Conference registration fees belong in section G Other.

14.   Q.   Can SCBGP funds be used to cover costs for recipe development, supplies and meal preparation for events that will promote specialty crops? Are there specific requirements?
      A.   If the purpose of the event is to promote specialty crops through tastings and recipe samplings, this would generally be an allowable activity under the SCBGP. However, costs should be reasonable and the proposal should adequately demonstrate that prepared meals are necessary to complete the project's goals and activities, and will solely support the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Additionally, all recipes must be greater than 50 percent of a specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water.

15. Q. *Revised: January 31, 2018:* Are meal costs for meetings allowable and can program income be used to cover these expenses?
    A. Costs of meals are generally allowable when reasonable and necessary for the continuity of a meeting (excluding travel meal costs). Program income may also be used to cover these expenses; however, program income cannot be used for unallowable costs or activities. Reference page 7 of the Allowable/Unallowable Costs and Activities Table.

16. Q. How should the level of effort for staff be calculated on the Budget Narrative?
    A. The level of effort for salaried staff should be represented as a percentage of Full Time Equivalent (FTE). The level of effort for hourly staff should be represented by the number of hours worked and hourly rate.

17. Q. How should applicants estimate the cost per unit in the travel section of the Budget Narrative?
    A. Applicants can estimate the per unit travel costs for items such as mileage, hotel, and meals by referring to the guidelines provided by the General Services Administration, available at www.gsa.gov. For expenses that may be unknown, such as airfare, the applicant should provide an estimate based on current information available.

18. Q. How should applicants determine supply costs if the exact amount has not yet been determined?
    A. Applicants should provide an estimate for the supplies that will be required to complete their project.

19. Q. Can salary that is included in the cost share template (in-kind or matching funds) be used towards calculating indirect costs in the Budget Narrative?
    A. No, only salary and fringe benefits that are paid for with grant funds can be used to calculate indirect costs.

20. Q. What are micro-purchase and simplified acquisition?
    A. Micro-purchase refers to the procurement of goods or services below $3,000 which can be done without soliciting competitive bids as long as the costs are reasonable. Simplified acquisition refers to the procurement of services greater than $3,000 up to $150,000. Purchases at this level can use streamlined procurement methods that are relatively simple and informal in which price or rate quotes must be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources. Note that the thresholds for micro-purchase and simplified acquisition are subject to change.

21. Q. What is included in a cost price analysis?
    A. The purpose of a cost price analysis is to determine the reasonableness of the price for a product or service. It consists of evaluating prices (using estimates, price lists, and prior invoices) to determine if a given quote is fair and reasonable to the cost for comparable products or services.

22. Q. If an applicant will fund activities of another organization related to their project would that organization be considered a contractor?
    A. Yes, any individual or organization other than the applicant that will receive grant funds would be considered a contractor.

23. Q. Can applicants forego the competitive bid process?
    A. Generally, applicants are not allowed to bypass the competitive bidding process, except in very limited circumstances as described in 2 CFR 200.320(f). Note that CDFA will not provide exceptions to the competitive process under 2 CFR 200.320(f)(3) and all other circumstances necessitating procurement by noncompetitive process require prior approval from CDFA and USDA.

24. Q. How should indirect costs for contractors be accounted for in the Budget Narrative?
    A. Contractors that utilize a salary and wages fee structure may request indirect costs in the contractual section of the Budget Narrative. Contractual indirect costs cannot be included as part of the indirect costs for the applicant.

New Questions: January 31, 2018

25. Q. Can applicants lease a vehicle using SCBGP funds?
    A. A long term vehicle lease would be considered the rental of general purpose equipment and would only be allowable if the applicant is able to demonstrate that the vehicle lease is necessary to carry out the activities of the project. Costs for the vehicle lease should be included in the Budget Narrative in section G Other. If a proposal that includes a vehicle lease is awarded funds, fuel costs for the leased vehicle can only be paid using SCBGP funds when the vehicle is used for travel necessary to the project and should be listed in section C Travel. Note that insurance and maintenance costs for a leased vehicle are considered indirect costs and cannot be charged directly.

26. Q. Are all cooperating entities considered contractors?
    A. No, not all cooperating entities are considered contractors. If personnel from a cooperating entity will provide services which will be paid for with grant funds, they should be listed under the contractual section of the Budget Narrative. If personnel from cooperating entities will donate time and/or provide matching funds, they should be listed in the Cost Sharing template.

27. Q. If a proposal will have no expenses within a section of the budget narrative, what information should be provided for that section?
    A. Applicants can either leave blank or enter "$0" in the subtotal for any sections of the budget narrative that are not applicable to their projects. Applicants are discouraged from deleting sections of the budget narrative, even if no costs are being requested within that section.

28. Q. Where should costs for vehicle rentals be listed in the Budget Narrative?
    A. Vehicle rental costs are allowable when related to travel that is necessary for the project and should be listed in the Budget Narrative section C Travel. Applicants should utilize the most economical rental vehicle option available when estimating their vehicle rental costs. If selected for funding, excessive costs will be disallowed and/or reduced to a reasonable, allowable rate.

29. Q. When determining if a justification and prior approval are required for contractual services that exceed GS 15 Step 10, do applicants use the 2017 or 2018 pay table?
    A. Applicants should use the pay table in effect at the time a contractor is selected or the contractual agreement is executed to determine whether a justification and prior approval are required. For contractors that have already been selected, applicants should utilize the 2018 pay table. Whether or not a contractual rate exceeds GS 15 Step 10 for the applicant's locality/area, compensation for contractors should be reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services. Reference the Contractual Services supplement for additional guidance.

2018 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE II, GRANT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
January 31, 2018

COST SHARING

1. Q. Can costs for the use of an existing facility or system such as a greenhouse be considered cost share?
   A. Costs for the use of existing facilities or systems, including unrecovered facilities costs within an established indirect cost rate, are considered cost share and the estimated value of the use of the facility can be reported as an in-kind contribution.

2. Q. Is income generated from project activities considered cost share?
   A. Income generated directly from project activities (e.g. fees from participants for a grant funded seminar) are considered program income, rather than cost share. If Program Income will be earned as a result of the project, the applicant must describe how the income will be used to further enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Program Income may not be used for infrastructure, capital improvements, or any other unallowable costs or activities.

3. Q. If project activities will include unallowable costs, can cost share be used to cover those expenses?
   A. If a project will include costs that are unallowable, the applicant must describe how the project will ensure that SCBGP funds are not used toward those costs. One appropriate method to address this would be the inclusion of matching funds and a description of how those funds will cover any unallowable costs within the Cost Share template.

PROJECT OVERSIGHT

1. Q. Should contractors provide resumes or curriculum vitae (CVs)?
   A. Yes, curriculum vitaes (CVs) or resumes (whichever is most applicable) for the Project Directors, Project Managers, Principal Investigators, contractors or any other collaborators who will receive a portion of the grant funds should be attached.

New Questions: January 31, 2018

2. Q. If project collaborators are not receiving grant funds do they need to provide a resume or CV?
   A. Project collaborators who are not receiving grants funds are not required to provide a resume or CV. However, there is no prohibition against including this documentation for unpaid collaborators. Additionally, this information may be helpful to the Technical Review Committee, particularly if an unpaid project collaborator will significantly contribute to a project.

3. Q. Can applicants provide other documentation in lieu of a resume or CV in response to Project Oversight?
   A. Applicants should only attach resumes or CVs to their grant proposal in response to Project Oversight. Documentation such as an organization's annual report, or the professional bios/profiles of employees or contractors are not acceptable in lieu of a CV or resume.

2018 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE II, GRANT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
January 31, 2018

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Q. Can CDFA provide clarification on the Technical Review Committee and CDFA Administrative Review Feedback for their concept proposal in FAAST?
   A. To maintain the integrity and competitiveness of the SCBGP, CDFA is unable to provide applicants with clarification on feedback provided in FAAST.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

1. Q. If awarded funds, can recipients make changes to their project budget?
   A. In the event that a change to the project's budget items is necessary, recipients are required to complete and submit a Scope of Work (SOW) revision along with a Line Item Shift Request (LISR) in advance to adjust budget line items. A SOW revision must be made in writing and provide sufficient information to explain the need and how the change affects the project. Approval for the LISR must be obtained from CDFA, and possibly from USDA, prior to incurring costs under the revised budget. Additional information on circumstances requiring prior approval can be found on the 2017 Grant Management Procedures Manual. (Please note: the 2018 Grant Management Procedures Manual is not currently complete and will be updated soon. The Office of Grants Administration anticipates that some changes may be made to the procedures listed once the most recent version is released.)

2. Q. How do contractors obtain compensation for expenses incurred for work on a project?
   A. Contractors must invoice the recipient directly for actual costs incurred related to project activities. Once the contractor has been paid for services, the recipient can seek reimbursement from CDFA. Only the recipient listed on the executed grant agreement can invoice CDFA for costs associated with an awarded SCBGP project. Contractors cannot invoice CDFA directly.

3. Q. If awarded funds, can grant recipients request a budget increase to cover unexpected costs? Can the Budget Narrative include estimates for cost overrun or inflation?
   A. The amount of a grant agreement cannot increase if funds are awarded. Additionally, projections for inflation or cost overrun are not permitted. If costs exceed projected estimates in the Budget Narrative, recipients can redirect funds from another cost category by submitting a Line Item Shift Request.

4. Q. Are applicants required to conduct a competitive bid for contractors before the grant period begins?
   A. No, applicants do not have to complete the bidding process prior to the start of the grant. However, prior approval is required by CDFA and possibly USDA for contractors selected after funds are awarded.