

2021 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Request for Concept Proposals

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE 10.170

Released:

September 18, 2020

Concept Proposals Due:

By 5:00 pm PT on October 23, 2020

No late submissions accepted



California Department of Food and Agriculture

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About the Program

Purpose

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds projects that enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops. The SCBGP is designed to support all sectors of California's specialty crop industry and improve the performance of California specialty crops within local, domestic, national, and international markets. Specialty crops are fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). Visit USDA's [What is a Specialty Crop website](https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgrp/specialty-crop) (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgrp/specialty-crop>) for a list of eligible and ineligible commodities and a comprehensive definition of specialty crops.

Funding and Duration

CDFA anticipates that up to \$22 million will be awarded to projects enhancing the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Grant amounts range from \$50,000 to \$450,000. The maximum grant duration is two (2) years, six (6) months, and grant funds cannot be expended before November 1, 2021, or after April 30, 2024. Projects submitted to the Additional Assistance for Historically Underrepresented Organizations Program will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and may last up to two years. CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

Separate of the competitive process, CDFA may award up to \$3 million for proposals that address urgent or critical issues affecting California specialty crop agriculture, including prioritizing projects that address impacts of COVID-19 on California's specialty crop industry.

Eligibility

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. Individuals are not eligible to apply. There is no limit on the number of concept proposals applicants may submit; however, each concept proposal must be for a wholly unique project.

Additional notes to help determine eligibility:

- Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. For example, the program will not fund a project to start or expand a farm or business venture.

- Recipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that offer equivalent products or services.
- Projects must enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Projects benefiting non-specialty crops will not be selected for funding.
- Projects must address at least one of the program priorities identified by CDFA. To view these priorities, reference [pages 7-12 of the Request for Concept Proposals \(RFCP\)](#).
- Additional Assistance for Historically Underrepresented Organizations proposals have additional eligibility restrictions as outlined on [pages 13-15 of the RFCP](#).

Other Grant Programs

All projects submitted to the SCBGP must increase the competitiveness of California specialty crops and cannot benefit an individual entity or organization. The following is a list of other CDFA and USDA grant programs for applicants with projects which may be better suited to these interests.

Nutrition Incentive Projects

The California Nutrition Incentive Program encourages the purchase and consumption of fresh California fruits, vegetables and nuts through the CalFresh program by providing monetary incentives at the point of purchase at selected Certified Farmers Markets, mobile markets, community supported agriculture programs and retailers.

<https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/cnip.html>.

Regional Business Enterprises and Local Food Projects

The Farmers' Market Promotion Program and the Local Food Promotion Program 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. Please be advised that local match is a requirement of the Local Food Promotion Program.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp> or

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>.

Bioenergy Projects

See the United States Department of Agriculture energy website for information on how to submit projects supporting biobased products and bioenergy and energy programs, including biofuels and other alternative uses for agricultural and forestry commodities.

<https://www.usda.gov/energy/matrix/home>.

Projects That Support Individual Farmers and Ranchers

Healthy Soils Projects

The Healthy Soils Program supports the implementation or implementation and demonstration of agricultural management practices that improve soil organic matter and reduce greenhouse gases on California agricultural operations <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysouls/>.

Dairy Digester Projects

The Dairy Digester Research & Development Program supports the installation of dairy digesters in California which result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/ddrdp/>.

Alternative Manure Management Projects

The Alternative Manure Management Program supports the implementation of non-digester manure management practices in California which result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/AMMP/>.

Solicitation Process and Timeline

Phase I: Concept Proposal

CDFA's SCBGP consists of a two-phase solicitation process. During Phase I, applicants must submit a concept proposal (i.e., an overview of their proposal) 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

For Phase II, successful concept proposal applicants will be invited to submit a grant proposal (i.e., a more detailed description of their proposal) 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.

Schedule for Phase I: Concept Proposal

Phase I	Date
Release Request for Concept Proposals (RFCP)	September 18, 2020
Webinars	September 29, 2020 – October 15, 2020
Concept proposals due	October 23, 2020, 5:00 pm PT

Schedule for Phase II: Grant Proposal (by invitation only)

Phase II	Date
Invitation to submit grant proposals	January 2021
Grant proposals due	February 12, 2021, 5:00 pm PT
Grant proposals to USDA for approval	May 2021

Schedule for Awards

Awards	Date
Announce and award funding	Fall 2021

How to Apply

Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST)

Applicants are required to complete and submit both their concept proposals and grant proposals online using the [FAAST system](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>). FAAST is hosted by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

Applicants must create a user account in FAAST in order to submit their proposals. FAAST is organized into various tabs and utilizes a question and answer format. Questions are answered in one or more of the following formats: a drop-down menu, a text box with predetermined character limitations, or a document attachment. Responses to all questions must be submitted in the manner and format required by the concept proposal application questionnaire in FAAST without exception.

The SWRCB website contains a Frequently Asked Questions section and a User Manual for the FAAST system. For questions about the FAAST system, please contact FAAST customer service at (866) 434-1083, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Pacific Time or via email, faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov.

Computer System Recommendations

To ensure concept proposals and attachments are submitted successfully, CDFA strongly encourages all applicants to comply with the computer system recommendations provided by the SWRCB. CDFA cannot guarantee that the FAAST system or the required templates will be compatible with other browsers or operating systems. Use of other browsers or operating systems will limit the ability of CDFA and SWRCB staff to provide applicants with technical assistance, should any issues arise.

CDFA and SWRCB recommend that applicants:

- Use a Windows PC with Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher.
- Disable pop-up blocking software while using FAAST.
- Save work often – the system will time out after 90 minutes and any unsaved work will be lost.

Funding Areas, Funding Categories, and Program Priorities

CDFA has developed three funding areas, with one to three categories within each area. In practice, concept proposals might seem to address elements from multiple funding areas and funding categories. However, applicants *must* select the one funding category that identifies the primary focus of their concept proposal. Identifying a funding category ensures that concept proposals are evaluated by reviewers with the appropriate area of expertise. The selected funding category cannot be changed once the concept proposal is submitted. Applicants may not submit multiple concept proposals for a single project or submit the same proposal to multiple funding categories.

Concept proposals should:

- Demonstrate a high likelihood of success.
- Be scalable to the larger community.
- Identify the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address.
- Demonstrate industry need and support.
- Include an outreach component addressing how project results, research findings, and conclusions will be extended to specialty crop growers.

For examples of project types appropriate for each funding category, reference [Appendix B on page 31](#).

Funding Area I: Market Enhancement

Proposals in this funding area will focus on increasing sales of California specialty crops through promotion of the unique qualities of specialty crops grown in California, developing new markets, increasing opportunities in existing markets, improving availability, and increasing demand.

Market Enhancement Category A: Grown in California

In this funding category, CDFA will consider proposals that enhance the marketability and long-term competitiveness of specialty crops by leveraging the unique qualities of specialty crops grown in California. Specifically, these proposals should seek to increase the awareness and consumption of specialty crop products through the development of markets (local, regional, institutional, national, and international) for all California producers through cooperative promotion and partnerships.

All proposals submitted to Market Enhancement Category A must address at least one of the following program priorities:

- 1) Increasing marketing opportunities for California specialty crops by leveraging the California grown identity.
- 2) Expanding opportunities for specialty crop producers, marketing orders, and other specialty crop stakeholders through innovative marketing and promotional activities that incorporate multiple specialty crop products leveraging the unique qualities of specialty crops grown in California.
- 3) Creating economic opportunities for specialty crop producers, including organic producers, through specialty crop market development activities that focus on local, regional, institutional, national, and international markets by leveraging the unique qualities of specialty crops grown in California.
- 4) Emphasizing the quality, food safety, and healthy lifestyle benefits of specialty crops of specialty crops grown in California.
- 5) Developing stewardship focused educational initiatives (as defined by economic opportunity, equitable labor practices, and/or environmental stewardship) that expand the consumer marketability of California specialty crops leveraging the California grown identity.
- 6) Promoting California grown specialty crops by highlighting California's specialty crop farmers, including farmers of color and women farmers and their contributions to California's rich agricultural history.
- 7) Supporting market opportunities for small and midsized farmers through regional aggregation and distribution.

Funding Area II: Access, Education, and Training

Proposals in this funding area will focus on improving the competitiveness of California specialty crops through improving access to and consumption of California specialty crops, providing nutritional education for consumers in order to increase consumption, and providing training for producers and growers to equip them for current and future challenges in specialty crop agriculture.

Access, Education, and Training Category A: Healthy Specialty Crops for All Californians

In this funding category, CDFA will consider proposals that improve access to and consumption of California specialty crops and/or improve the public's knowledge and understanding of specialty crop agriculture and its beneficial importance to the health

and well-being of all Californians. Proposals submitted to the Healthy Specialty Crops for All Californians category should seek to improve access to and consumption of healthy, safe California specialty crops for improved nutrition and overall health.

All proposals submitted to Access, Education, and Training Category A must address at least one of the following program priorities:

- 1) Education to increase specialty crop consumption through healthy eating habits.
- 2) Increasing knowledge of how to produce, prepare, or preserve specialty crops.
- 3) Increasing the awareness of and demand for locally sourced specialty crops.
- 4) Increasing the availability of specialty crops in homes, schools, the workplace, hospitals, prisons, and in other underserved communities.
- 5) Increasing specialty crop production and/or distribution capacity into underserved urban and rural communities.
- 6) Increasing consumption of healthy California specialty crops in schools by developing connections between farmers and school nutrition directors/officials that include tools and resources for building strong partnerships.

Access, Education, and Training Category B: Equity, Opportunity, and Education for All California Specialty Crop Farmers

In this funding category, CDFA will consider proposals that benefit all current and future California specialty crop farmers by providing education and training, including improving equity through culturally appropriate education and training for socially disadvantaged farmers in areas including business development and regulatory compliance. Proposals submitted to the Equity, Opportunity, and Education for All California Specialty Crop Farmers category should seek to ensure the viability of California specialty crops by investing in training for growers/producers/operators to address current and future challenges.

All proposals submitted to Access, Education, and Training Category B must address at least one of the following program priorities:

- 1) Training and equipping the next generation of young, beginning, veteran, and urban socially disadvantaged farmers in agronomic, economic, and environmental stewardship skills.
- 2) Introducing and recruiting members of socially disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, including women and veterans, to the variety of specialty crop career opportunities.
- 3) Providing support to specialty crop producers in adopting the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act.
- 4) Providing training to support specialty crop producers in adopting environmentally responsible farming methods.
- 5) Creating and implementing workforce training programs to develop and maintain the technical skills required to keep the California specialty crops sector competitive.
- 6) Assisting specialty crop farmers in adapting to workplace health and safety requirements resulting from COVID-19.
- 7) Assisting specialty crop farmers in adapting to changing market conditions and uncertainty resulting from COVID-19, including partnering with organizations such as food banks to create additional market outlets for California specialty crops.

Funding Area III: Research

Proposals in this funding area will focus on improving the competitiveness of California specialty crops through projects that invest in specialty crop research, including research that focuses on conservation and environmental outcomes, pest and disease control, and organic and environmentally sustainable production practices. While research may be the primary objective of proposals in this funding area, all SCBGP projects are required to include an outreach component that communicates project efforts to specialty crop stakeholders. In developing the outreach component, applicants are strongly encouraged to include outreach to historically underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers.

Research Category A: Environmental Stewardship and Conservation

In this funding category, CDFA will consider proposals that address specialty crop agriculture's potential to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, contribute to conservation of agricultural land and water, and/or enhance soil health. Proposals submitted to the Environmental Stewardship and Conservation category should seek to

expand stewardship practices and natural resource conservation to improve the environmental and financial performance of California specialty crop growers.

All proposals submitted to Research Category A must address at least one of the following program priorities:

- 1) Developing strategies and tools to enable specialty crop farmers to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and sequestering carbon.
- 2) Developing strategies and tools to enable specialty crop farmers to adapt to climate change.
- 3) Developing innovations in both water use efficiency and drought resilience.
- 4) Improving soil health by identifying specific specialty crop management practices that build the soil organic matter content.
- 5) Research to develop new methods to expand organic and/or environmentally sustainable production practices, including mechanization of methods to enhance environmental stewardship.
- 6) Conducting research and/or outreach projects to assist growers with improved irrigation and/or nutrient management practices.

Research Category B: Plant Health and Pest Management

In this funding category, CDFA will consider proposal that address pests and diseases that affect the production of California's specialty crops. Proposals submitted to the Plant Health and Pest Management category should incorporate research related to the probability and impact of invasive pest, disease, and weed threats to specialty crops, as well as research to develop tools to detect, eradicate, and control pests and diseases.

All proposals submitted to Research Category B must address at least one of the following program priorities:

- 1) Developing new tools to detect, eradicate, and control pests and diseases.
- 2) Preventing and managing pests and diseases to minimize economic and environmental harm to specialty crop farmers.
- 3) Enhancing speed and reliability of detection methods.

- 4) Addressing threats through the use of innovative solutions such as integrated pest management techniques, biologically integrated farming systems, or other engineering or cultural solutions.

Research Category C: Food Safety (Separate proposal solicitation)

CDFA will continue its 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) 554-9706 or visit the [CPS website](http://www.centerforproducesafety.org) (<http://www.centerforproducesafety.org>) for the solicitation timeline and proposal requirements.

Additional Assistance for Historically Underrepresented Organizations

The intent of the Additional Assistance for Historically Underrepresented Organizations (Additional Assistance) program is to provide a process through which organizations that have been historically underrepresented in the SCBGP can participate and successfully implement their SCBGP projects. Non-profit organizations and tribal governments that have not previously received SCBGP funding, do not have technical expertise with grant writing, and who work directly in either supporting socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers or providing nutrition education and/or access to specialty crops in underserved communities are eligible to apply for this program. Applicants to this program will complete the same questionnaire and attachments as all other funding areas. Concept proposals accepted for advancement under this process will receive assistance from CDFA to develop a full proposal for submission for USDA.

This program will provide:

- Application assistance and guidance to submit a full proposal to the program.
- One-on-one technical assistance throughout the project as needed.
- Opportunities for direct feedback and support in order to successfully implement the project.
- Networking opportunity with other grant recipients in this category to foster informal support networks among grantees.

Category A: Supporting Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Specialty Crop Farmers

In this category, CDFA will consider proposals that benefit beginning and/or socially disadvantaged specialty crop farmers through education and training and increase socially disadvantaged farmer engagement with the agricultural industry. Engagement may include outreach and education to socially disadvantaged farmers to increase knowledge and participation in state, local, and federal resources.*

*Note that SCBGP funds may not be used to increase participation in another state or federal grant program.

Proposals should address one of the priorities in Access, Education, and Training Category B and/or at least one of the following program priorities:

- 1) Providing culturally competent and appropriate outreach and training on agronomic, economic (farm business and marketing skills), and/or

environmental stewardship skills to socially disadvantaged California specialty crop producers.

- 2) Providing training on historical or cultural solutions to plant health, conservation practices, and pest management concerns.
- 3) Highlighting and encouraging awareness of culturally significant specialty crops and/or cultivation practices for farmers and/or consumers.
- 4) Developing culturally appropriate networking and training opportunities for socially disadvantaged specialty crop farmers to develop business and technical skills to enhance their specialty crop business.

Category B: Improving Specialty Crop Nutrition Education and Access for all Californians

CDFA will consider proposals that improve the public's knowledge and understanding of specialty crop agriculture and its beneficial importance to the health and well-being of all Californians and/or improve access to and consumption of specialty crops in underserved communities. Proposals submitted to this category should seek to increase access to and consumption of healthy and safe California specialty crops for improved nutrition and overall health.

Proposals should address one of the priorities in Access, Education, and Training Category A and/or at least one of the following program priorities:

- 1) Increasing the availability of specialty crops in underserved urban and/or rural areas with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 2) Providing outreach and educational opportunities in underserved communities about growing, purchasing, and/or consuming specialty crops.

Additional Information

The Additional Assistance program includes the following requirements:

- Individuals; for-profit organizations; local, state, and federal government entities; and public or private colleges and universities are not eligible to apply.
- Organizations that have submitted concept proposals for the 2021 SCBGP under other funding categories are not eligible to apply.

- Organizations may submit no more than one proposal to the Additional Assistance program.
- Proposals can request funding between \$25,000 and \$100,000.
- The maximum project duration is two years.

Concept Proposal Questions and Scoring

Applicants must respond to the following questions under the General Information, Project Budget, and Application Questionnaire tabs in the [FAAST system](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>). Failure to answer one or more application questions may result in disqualification.

Applicant Organization:

Legal name of the organization that will serve as lead for the project and will receive grant funds.

Submitting Organization:

Legal name of the organization submitting the proposal on behalf of the applicant.

Project Title:

Concisely describe the project in 15 words or less.

Project Description:

Summarize the need for the project, describe the goals and outcomes, and present a plan for evaluating and measuring the success of the project.

Project Budget:

- **Funds Requested:** The total amount of SCBGP funds requested for the project. This number must match the amount listed under category I in the project's Budget template. Funds requested must range from \$50,000 to \$450,000 (\$25,000 to \$100,000 for Additional Assistance proposals); requests outside of this range may result in disqualification.
- **Local Cost Match:** The total amount of cost sharing (matching funds and in-kind contributions) committed to the project from other sources, if applicable. Cost sharing is not a requirement of the SCBGP; however, cost sharing is encouraged and may serve as evidence to demonstrate industry commitment to, or support for, the project.
- **Total Budget:** The sum of Funds Requested plus Local Cost Match.

1. Organization Type (not a scored question):

Using the drop-down menu, select the organization type that best describes the applicant.

2. Funding Area and Funding Category (not a scored question):

Using the drop-down menu, select the most appropriate funding area and funding category for the project. Failure to select a funding area and funding category will result in disqualification.

3. Program Priorities (5 points):

Enter verbatim at least one of the 2021 SCBGP program priorities for the chosen funding category as described on [pages 7-12 of the RFCP](#) and briefly explain how the project addresses the priority(s) identified.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the extent to which the project demonstrates a link to the program priorities identified in the 2021 RFCP.

4. Project Purpose (10 points):

All of the following must be addressed within the text boxes provided:

- Identify the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address.
- Explain why the proposal is important and timely for the specialty crop industry.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on how clearly the proposal states the specific issue, problem, or need the project will address, as well as the timeliness and relevance to the specialty crop industry.

5. Prior Year SCBGP Projects (not a scored question):

Using the drop-down menu, indicate if this project builds upon a prior-year project. If "Yes," all of the following must be addressed within the text boxes provided:

- Provide the specialty crop block grant agreement number(s) (e.g., 17-0275-001-SC or SCB13090).
- Describe how the project differs from and builds upon the previous work.

6. Project Sustainability (5 points):

SCBGP projects should have a long-term impact without relying indefinitely on grant funding. Within the text box, describe:

- The likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on SCBGP funds, and/or;
- The benefit(s) to California's specialty crop industry resulting from the project that will continue beyond the grant duration.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring 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.

7. Project Beneficiaries (5 points):

All of the following must be addressed within the text boxes provided:

- Estimate the number of project beneficiaries. The number cited should be a reasonable estimate of the number of individuals that could realistically be directly impacted by the results of the project. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the number of beneficiaries is trackable and reportable.
- Identify and quantify the project beneficiaries and describe how they will benefit from the project objectives (list the specific specialty crops that will be affected, if possible).
- Succinctly address how the proposal benefits the specialty crop industry, rather than directly benefiting a single individual or organization, such as the applicant.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on how clearly the proposal identifies and quantifies the beneficiaries and explains how they will directly benefit, as well as the relevance and significance of the anticipated project benefit(s) to the specialty crop industry.

8. Outcome Measures (10 points):

Download the required [Outcome Measures template](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_OutcomeMeasuresTemplate.docx) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_OutcomeMeasuresTemplate.docx), complete it, and upload it to the application using the attachments tab in FAAST. The Outcome Measures template must be submitted as a Microsoft Word Document (do not submit a PDF) and must use the required Microsoft Word Document template (do not alter the template in any way, except to add numbers and a description of data collection methods for the outcomes and indicators selected). For a completed example of the Outcome Measures template, reference [Appendix D on page 35](#).

All of the following must be addressed in the Outcome Measures template:

- **Outcome:** Using the check boxes provided, select at least one of the eight outcome measures.
- **Indicator:** Using the check boxes provided, identify at least one indicator for each selected outcome. Complete the fillable text fields for each indicator

selected. If there are multiple sub-indicators under a selected indicator, enter a value for at least one.

- **Description:** Within the description section for each outcome selected, describe the data collection methods for the outcome(s) and indicator(s) selected. The description of data collection methods must apply specifically to the Outcome Measure selected and not to other aspects of the project.

All selected outcome measures and related indicators/sub-indicators must be achievable during the grant duration.

Outcome measures and the associated indicators were developed by USDA and the Office of Management and Budget and cannot be altered or amended in any way. Altering the language of the outcomes or indicators, or providing responses in a format other than that described in the document, may result in disqualification of a proposal. Reference the [Outcome Measures supplement](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBG_P_OutcomeMeasuresSupplement.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBG_P_OutcomeMeasuresSupplement.pdf) for additional information on the required outcomes and indicators.

Note: All marketing and promotion projects as well as all proposals submitted to the Grown in California funding category must identify Outcome 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the significance of the anticipated project outcome, the relevance to the project activities, soundness of data collection methods, and likelihood of success.

9. Project Duration (not a scored question):

Within the text boxes provided, enter a start and end date for the project. Projects cannot start before November 1, 2021 or continue beyond April 30, 2024. Failure to provide a project start and end date within the allowable duration may result in disqualification.

10. Work Plan and Outreach (10 points):

Within the text boxes provided, all of the following must be addressed:

- Briefly describe the project activities that are necessary to accomplish project objectives and support outcome measures. Each project activity should include an approximation of when it will occur (MON YYYY; e.g., Dec 2021, or May 2022 – Jun 2022). Include tasks for all personnel responsible for carrying out project activities.

- Describe how the project results will be shared with the target audience, stakeholders, and other interested parties beyond those directly involved in the project. In developing the outreach component, applicants are strongly encouraged to include outreach to historically underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers. Examples of such activities include presentations at professional conferences or producer meetings, publication of articles in professional journals or the agricultural press, educational brochures, websites, etc.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the clarity of the work plan, the relevance of the specific project activities to the project purpose, and how well the project outlines a plan to disseminate project results.

11. Budget (5 points):

Download the required [Budget template](#)

(https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_BudgetTemplate.docx), complete it, and upload it to the application using the attachments tab in FFAST. All budget items should support enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops and correlate to the goal(s) of the project. Before completing the Budget template, review the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](#)

(https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf)

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the extent to which the budget is reasonable and appropriate to achieve the project goals.

Total number of points achievable in the concept proposal: 50 Points

Concept Proposal Budget

Download the required Microsoft Word Document (.doc) Budget template from the [FAAST system](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov) (https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov) or from the [CDFA SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/). Click on the link and select "Save as," save the file where appropriate, open the saved file and enter the proposal budget information, save the completed document and upload on the attachments tab in FAAST.

For each budget category listed below, enter the amount of SCBGP funds requested (rounded to the nearest whole dollar) and a brief description of the costs or activities covered. A description is required for each budget category in which funds are requested, except for category H. Indirect Costs and category I. Total SCBGP Funds Requested. Failure to submit the required Budget template or submission of an alternate template/file type may result in disqualification. A completed sample budget is available in [Appendix C on page 34](#).

Salary and wages, fringe benefits, travel, scientific research equipment, supplies, other, and indirect costs for individuals not employed by the applicant organization must be listed under category F. Contractual.

A. Salary and Wages

Estimate the total cost of salary and wages for time spent on the project by individuals employed by the applicant organization. In the description column, list the title of each employee and the approximate time spent on the project (number of hours or percent full time equivalent).

B. Fringe Benefits

Estimate the total cost of fringe benefits for time spent on the project by individuals employed by the applicant organization in accordance with the applicant organization's established fringe benefits policy. In the description column, list the approximate fringe benefit rate and types of benefits included in the applicant organization's established fringe benefits policy.

C. Travel

Estimate the total cost of project related travel for all individuals except contractual personnel. In the description column, describe the travel that will be necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project. Use the rates established by the

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) available on the [GSA website](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates) (<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>) to develop the travel cost estimate. Reference pages 14-15 of the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](#) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBG_P_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) for restrictions on travel costs.

D. Scientific Research Equipment

Estimate the total cost to purchase any scientific research equipment necessary to achieve project objectives. Scientific research equipment is nonexpendable, tangible personal property with a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000 to be used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. In the description column, list the scientific research equipment to be purchased. Reference page 3 of the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](#) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBG_P_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) for restrictions on scientific research equipment.

E. Supplies

Estimate the total cost to purchase supplies necessary to achieve project objectives. Supplies are items with an acquisition cost less than \$5,000 per unit that are used exclusively for the objectives of the project. In the description column, list the types of supplies to be purchased. General use office supplies (paper, printer ink, pens, etc.), facilities costs (telephone, internet, etc.), and administrative costs are considered indirect and should not be included under category E. Supplies. Reference [pages 24-25 of the RFCP](#) for more information about direct and indirect costs.

F. Contractual

Estimate the total cost of work on the project that will be performed by individuals/organizations other than the applicant (e.g., consultants, contractors, partner organizations, etc.). This amount should include all associated salary and wages, fringe benefits, travel, scientific research equipment, supplies, other, and indirect costs. In the description column, list the services to be provided and the contractors that will work on the project and be paid with grant funds. Reference page 2 of the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](#) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBG_P_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) for restrictions on contractual costs.

G. Other

Estimate the total cost of all other project related expenses. Expenses typically listed under category G. Other include registration fees to attend professional conferences, speaker/trainer fees, stipends, fees to publish in academic journals, fees for data collection and lab analysis, meeting space or equipment rentals, subscriptions, etc. In the description column, list the specific types of expenses necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project.

H. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are facilities and administrative costs that cannot easily be tied directly to the activities of the grant. Examples of common indirect costs include administrative/clerical services, rent, utilities, internet and telephone service, maintenance, and general office supplies. The maximum amount of indirect costs allowable is 8 percent of total personnel costs (category A. Salary and Wages plus category B. Fringe Benefits). Reference [pages 24-25 of the RFCP](#) for more information about indirect costs. *Formula: (A. Salary and Wages + B. Fringe Benefits) x 0.08 = Maximum Indirect Costs*

I. Total SCBGP Funds Requested

To calculate the total SCBGP funds requested, add up the amounts requested for categories A through H. This total must match the amount listed under "Funds Requested" in FFAST and cannot be less than \$50,000 or greater than \$450,000 (\$25,000 to \$100,000 for Additional Assistance proposals).

J. Program Income

Estimate the amount of income (if any) that may be generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the award. In the description column, explain how the program income will be generated and how it will be used to further support the project objectives. Program income must be spent on activities that support the goals and objectives of the project and must comply with restrictions on allowable and unallowable costs and activities.

Requirements and Limitations

2021 USDA Guidance

As of the date of this publication USDA has not provided CDFA or any other state department of agriculture with a Request for Applications or Terms and Conditions for the 2021 SCBGP. If necessary, CDFA will prepare, and make available, a supplement to this document to advise applicants of any changes to the program upon receipt of USDA's Request for Applications. CDFA and all applicants will be subject to the terms of USDA's Request for Applications and Terms and Conditions.

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, 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](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=898fdaa0b947dd0bf8c962a137d230dd&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5) (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=898fdaa0b947dd0bf8c962a137d230dd&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5).
- For-profit organizations will be subject to [48 CFR Subpart 31.2](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=9b6facc60293cad8d7dd87f703f5f2fe&rgn=div6&view=text&node=48:1.0.1.5.30.2&idno=48) (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=9b6facc60293cad8d7dd87f703f5f2fe&rgn=div6&view=text&node=48:1.0.1.5.30.2&idno=48).

Unallowable Costs

CDFA has developed an [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) to assist applicants in preparing their proposal budget. The table provides overall guidance for the handling of common costs and includes USDA and CDFA requirements specific to this program. Proposals with unallowable costs may be subject to disqualification as described below.

Indirect Costs

The indirect cost rate for the SCBGP is limited by federal statute. The rate published in this solicitation document ensures conformity to the federal statute. Applicants that might ordinarily be eligible to receive a higher indirect rate from other state or federal programs are responsible for ensuring that their organization/institution will allow an exception for this program before submitting an application.

The maximum indirect cost rate is 8 percent of total personnel costs (budget category A. Salary and Wages plus category B. 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, 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 that is necessary for the project, equipment and supplies used for the project to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, and the hiring of qualified contractors to achieve project objectives.

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 and directly related 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.

The following are considered indirect and should not be included in the Budget template as direct costs:

- Information technology services.
- Rent.
- Utilities and internet service.
- Telephone service (mobile and land-line).
- General office supplies.
- Insurance.
- Maintenance.

Travel

The maximum travel rates allowable are the lesser of the rates in effect at the time of travel as established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) available on the [GSA website](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates) (https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates), or the Recipient's established travel policy. Applicants should apply the current government mileage rate for personally owned vehicles used for travel related to the project available on the [IRS website](https://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates) (https://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates).

In accordance with [California Assembly Bill 1887](https://oag.ca.gov/ab1887) (https://oag.ca.gov/ab1887), state funded and state sponsored travel to states with discriminatory laws is prohibited. SCBGP funds cannot be used to support costs for travel to states with active discriminatory laws. As of the issuance of this document the following states are subject to California's ban on state funded and state sponsored travel: Alabama, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas.

Note: International travel must comply with the [Fly America Act, 49 U.S.C. 40118](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title49/pdf/USCODE-2011-title49-subtitleVII-partA-subparti-chap401-sec40118.pdf) (https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title49/pdf/USCODE-2011-title49-subtitleVII-partA-subparti-chap401-sec40118.pdf) and [Foreign Travel Per Diem allowances](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp) (https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp). Also, consideration should be given to the use of alternative technologies such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing if they are available, appropriate for the project, and less costly.

Review and Notification

Review 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 Scoring section on pages 16-20](#).

Review 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 will perform the technical review. The Technical Review Committee 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.

Notification and Feedback

Proposals that are disqualified utilizing the criteria below will be notified within 21 days of the concept proposal due date. All other applicants will be notified regarding the status of their concept proposals in January 2021. Successful applicants will be invited to Phase II and will receive instructions for submitting a grant proposal. Applicants not invited to participate in Phase II will receive feedback on their concept proposal within 60 days after receiving notification.

To ensure all communications are received, points of contact listed in the application should add grants@cdfa.ca.gov to their email safe senders list, address book, or contact list.

Disqualifications

The following will result in the disqualification of a project proposal:

- Proposals from individual applicants.
- Proposals that include additional documentation of any kind to circumvent the character limitations within the FFAST system.
- Incomplete proposals: proposals with one or more unanswered questions.
- Incomplete proposals: proposals with missing, blank, unreadable, corrupt, or otherwise unusable attachments.
- Proposals that include activities outside the grant duration.

- Proposals for less than the minimum award amount or more than the maximum award amount.
- Proposals with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project objectives, including indirect costs that exceed the limit set forth in this document.
- Proposals with altered, amended, or replaced outcome measures, indicators, and/or sub-indicators.
- Proposals submitted to the Additional Assistance program by organizations that are ineligible to apply.

APPEAL RIGHTS: Any discretionary action taken by the Office of Grants Administration (OGA) may be appealed to CDFA's Office of Hearings and Appeals Office within ten (10) days of receiving a notice of disqualification from CDFA. The appeal must be in writing and signed by the responsible party named on the grant application or their authorized agent. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the OGA decision being challenged. The submission must be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Hearings and Appeals, 1220 N Street, Suite 315, Sacramento CA 95814 or emailed to CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov. If submissions are not received within the time frame provided above the appeal will be denied.

Assistance and Questions

Concept Proposal Webinars

CDFA will conduct webinars on the 2021 SCBGP solicitation process, the concept proposal application, and use of the FFAST system between September 29 – October 15, 2020. Please visit the [CDFA SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/SCBGP) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) for dates, times, and locations. All applicants are encouraged to participate in a webinar.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

CDFA will conduct three rounds of Q&A to address general questions about the concept proposal phase. Email all questions about the solicitation process to: grants@cdfa.ca.gov. Responses to all questions received during the webinars or by email will be posted to the CDFA SCBGP website according to the following schedule:

Schedule for Q&A

Questions Received by:	Responses Posted by:
October 5, 2020 at 8:00 am PT	October 9, 2020 at 5:00 pm PT
October 12, 2020 at 8:00 am PT	October 16, 2020 at 5:00 pm PT
October 19, 2020 at 8:00 am PT	October 21, 2020 at 5:00 pm PT

October 19, 2020, at 8:00 am PT 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.

Appendix A: Concept Proposal Tips

The Office of Grants Administration receives hundreds of grant applications every funding cycle. To help ensure that a proposal is accurately submitted and well-received by the technical review committee please consider the following advice when composing the concept proposal.

- Do not wait until the last minute to prepare or submit the concept proposal. Allow ample time for composition, research, review, and submittal.
- Compose answers to questions in a word processing document so they can be checked for grammar, spelling, syntax, and overall clarity before entering them into the FFAST system.
- Double-check the project budget against the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf). Too many unallowable costs listed in the budget may result in disqualification.
- Check the math. Review the budget to ensure the added costs from each budget category equal the total requested funds.
- Double-check to ensure the most appropriate funding category has been selected for the proposal. Identifying the most appropriate category ensures proposals are evaluated by reviewers with the most relevant expertise. The selected funding category cannot be changed once the concept proposal is submitted.
- Only attach the required documents. Attaching additional documents may result in disqualification.
- Ensure that all attachments are submitted in the required format.
- Before submitting the concept proposal, view all attached documents to ensure that the correct documents have been attached.

Appendix B: Project Examples

Market Enhancement Category A: Grown in California

- Development of cooperative marketing activities that leverage the unique qualities of specialty crops grown in California such as quality, food safety, and lifestyle benefits.
- Increase the sales of specialty crops through multi-commodity promotions that leverage the unique qualities of specialty crops grown in California.
- Create economic opportunities for specialty crop producers through commodity content development and social media activities leveraging the unique qualities of specialty crops grown in California.
- Support specialty crop marketing concepts that target the unique characteristics of California specialty crops in domestic and international markets.
- Develop marketing concepts that promote the healthy lifestyle benefits of specialty crops grown in California.

Access, Education, and Training Category A: Healthy Specialty Crops for All Californians

- Increase child nutritional knowledge through education in the classroom.
- Increase interest in specialty crops through experiential learning (such as school gardens).
- Develop training or demonstrations to educate families on increasing consumption of specialty crops in their diets.
- Improve knowledge of the health benefits of specialty crops among children, seniors, and caregivers.
- Strengthen the local food system in underserved communities by supporting production, distribution, access points, and consumption of specialty crops.
- Address “food deserts” with improved access to specialty crops at farmers’ markets, corner stores, grocery stores, food hubs, or other systems.
- Utilize regional, local, or native crops to address disparities in access.

Access, Education, and Training Category B: Equity, Opportunity, and Education for All California Specialty Crop Farmers

- Assist specialty crop farmers in adopting Good Agricultural Practices, Good Handling Practices, and Good Manufacturing Practices.

- Design and conduct culturally appropriate business skills training for socially disadvantaged farmers.
- Recruit and train new specialty crop farmers in the skills for sustainable food production.
- Develop and implement sustainable farming practices and beneficial management practice tools that improve farm viability and the agricultural economy as well as the environment.
- Accelerate Best Management Practices implementation in specialty crop production for water conservation and efficiency.
- Evaluate and develop recommendations to address changing market conditions due to COVID-19.

Research Category A: Environmental Stewardship and Conservation

- Improve the environmental sustainability of specialty crop products through development of farming or processing methods that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Assist communities in implementing climate smart agriculture planning for specialty crops in California.
- Research and develop new technologies to improve water use efficiency and drought resiliency (such as improving the water holding capacity of soil) in specialty crop production.
- Development of tools and programs that improve environmentally sustainable farming practices for specialty crop growers in California.

Research Category B: Plant Health and Pest Management

- Enhance the speed and reliability of detection methods for 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 for pests affecting specialty crops.
- Conduct pest surveys to ascertain the threat and/or spread of threat to specialty crops.
- Develop pest protocol programs for a subsector of specialty crops.

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop to make a profit, or to expand production of a single business or organization.
- An organization requests grant funds to make grants to individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual business.
- A non-profit organization requests grant funds to purchase produce to sell to other entities at cost or a higher price than the purchase price while competing with other private companies who sell produce in the area.
- A sole proprietor requests grant funds to redesign her/his logo in order to make her/his specialty crop value-added product stand out at the local farmers' market.
- A single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase its membership.

Appendix C: Budget Template Example

Proposal Identification Number (PIN)	12345
Total SCBGP Funds Requested	\$130,524

For each budget category described in column one below, enter the amount of Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds requested (rounded to the nearest whole dollar) in column two and a description of the costs or activities to be covered in column three. A description is required for each budget category in which funds are requested, except for category H. Indirect Costs and category I. Total SCBGP Funds Requested. Failure to submit the required budget template or submission of an alternate template/file type may result in disqualification.

Budget Categories	Amount of Funds Requested (Rounded to nearest whole dollar)	Description of Costs or Activities (Required except for categories H. and I.)
A. Salary and Wages Cost of salary and wages for time spent working on the project by employees of the applicant organization.	\$83,500	Environmental Scientist, Jane Doe; 50% FTE. Student Assistant, John Smith; 600 Hours.
B. Fringe Benefits Cost of fringe benefits for time spent working on the project in accordance with the applicant organization's established fringe benefits policy.	\$17,370	Environmental Scientist, Jane Doe; 30% fringe. Student Assistant, John Smith; 2% fringe. Fringe benefits policy includes health insurance, sick leave, and retirement.
C. Travel ¹ Cost of project related travel for all individuals except contractual personnel.	\$5,184	Monthly travel from Sacramento to Salinas for sample collection; 20 trips total.
D. Scientific Research Equipment Cost to purchase scientific research equipment (for items greater than \$5,000 per unit) necessary to achieve project objectives.	\$6,000	Electron microscope to analyze fruit fly larvae infections.
E. Supplies Cost to purchase supplies (for items less than \$5,000 per unit) necessary to achieve project objectives.	\$10,000	Field trials: flow meters, soil moisture sensors, soil amendments, bags. Lab supplies: gloves, pipettes, reagents, glassware.
F. Contractual ² Cost of work by individuals/organizations other than the applicant (e.g., cooperators, consultants, contractors, partners, etc.)	\$20,000	Herbologist, Ramona Fig: Will teach educational herbology seminars to farmers in Santa Cruz County. Graphic Designer, To Be Determined: Will develop website to disseminate evapotranspiration statistics.
G. Other Cost of all other expenses (e.g., conference registration, speaker/trainer fees, stipends, publication fees, data collection, lab analysis, rentals, subscriptions, etc.).	\$2,000	Conference registration fees for three staff to attend the Ornamental Growers conference to present project results. Stipends for guest farmers to present educational seminars at student roundtables.
H. Indirect Costs Facilities and administrative costs.	\$6,470	<i>Must not exceed 8.00% of total personnel costs (A. Salary and Wages + B. Fringe Benefits)</i>
I. Total SCBGP Funds Requested Sum of categories A through H.	\$130,524	<i>Must match "Funds Requested" in FAAST and be within the grant funding range as specified in the 2021 RFCP.</i>
J. Program Income Income (if any) that may be generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the award.	\$500	A registration fee (\$5 per person) will be charged to attend the workshops. Workshop registration fees will be used to pay for attendee materials.

Appendix D: Outcome Measures Template Example

Proposal Identification Number (PIN)	12345
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Select at least one of the eight outcome measures and at least one indicator for each selected outcome. Complete the fillable text fields for the indicator(s) selected. (Note: If there are multiple sub-indicators under the selected indicator, applicants must enter a value for at least one.) Within the Description section, describe the data collection methods for the outcome(s) and indicator(s) selected. Applicants may delete or leave blank any outcomes not applicable to their proposal. Outcome measures and the associated indicators were developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Office of Management and Budget and cannot be altered or amended in any way. Altering the language of the outcomes or indicators, or providing responses in a format other than that described in the document will result in disqualification of a proposal.

Outcome 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales.

Indicator 1: Sales increased from \$40 million to \$60 million and by 50 percent as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities.

Description of data collection methods: Sales data will be collected using a series of surveys provided to all Sacramento County winegrape growers. An initial survey to be distributed in November 2021 will establish the baseline price that growers received for winegrapes. This survey will be repeated in 2022 and 2023 to monitor the increase in winegrape sales that has occurred during the grant duration. Survey questions will include the price of winegrapes per ton, volume of cases sold, and number of jobs created since the beginning of promotional efforts. Data collected will be used to monitor the increase in sales due to project activities.

Outcome 2: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption.

Indicator 1: Of the Enter number children and youth reached,

- Enter number gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops.
- Enter number reported an intention to eat more specialty crops.
- Enter number reported eating more specialty crops.

Indicator 2: Of the Enter number adults reached,

- Enter number gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops.
- Enter number reported an intention to eat more specialty crops.
- Enter number reported eating more specialty crops.

Indicator 3: Enter number new and improved technologies and processes to enhance the nutritional value and consumer acceptance of specialty crops (excluding patents).

Indicator 4: Enter number new specialty crops and/or specialty crop products introduced to consumers.

Description of data collection methods: Enter a description of the data collection methods that will be used to demonstrate progress toward achieving the selected Indicator(s) and Subindicator(s).

Outcome 3: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access and awareness.

Appendix E: Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. What are specialty crops?

A. The Farm Bill defines specialty crops as "fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture)." Eligible plants must be cultivated or managed and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification to be considered specialty crops. Visit USDA's [What is a Specialty Crop website](#) (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop>) for a comprehensive list of eligible and ineligible crops. Please note that cannabis is not considered a specialty crop.

2. Q. When are concept proposals due?

A. Concept proposals must be submitted through the State Water Resources Control Board's [Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool \(FAAST\)](#) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>) by 5:00 pm PT on October 23, 2020.

3. Q. Will the presentations from the SCBGP webinars be available online?

A. A link to the presentations will be available on the [CDFA SCBGP website](#) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) following the final webinar. PDFs of the PowerPoint slides will be available upon request by sending an email to grants@cdfa.ca.gov.

4. Q. Will CDFa provide answers to specific questions regarding the eligibility of concept proposals or assist applicants in selecting a funding category, program priority, and/or outcome measure(s) and indicator(s)?

A. With the exception of Additional Assistance proposals, CDFa is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with feedback on specific proposals during the solicitation process. CDFa cannot provide guidance on the most appropriate funding category, program priority, and/or outcome measure(s) and indicator(s) for a concept proposal.

5. Q. Are projects required to incorporate current safety guidelines pertaining to COVID-19?

A. All projects are expected to comply with the most current recommendations of the [California Department of Public Health](#)

(<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>).

6. Q. Do certain organization types or commodities receive higher priority for funding than others?

A. There is no consideration given to an organization or commodity type in the scoring of proposals. CDFA ensures the review process has no conflicts of interest and reviewers are instructed to review each project on its individual merits.

7. Q. What are federal cost principles?

A. 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, consistent application of cost principles to the SCBGP grant funds, and ensuring contractors or consultants comply with federal cost principle requirements. To view the federal cost principles, reference [page 24 of the RFCP](#).

8. Q. How does an applicant determine if a proposal is appropriate for the SCBGP?

A. All proposals must enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, meet at least one of the program priorities as described in the RFCP, and be able to achieve at least one outcome measure and indicator during the grant duration to be eligible for this program.

9. Q. Is the SCBGP concept proposal application available as a Word document? Is there a page limit?

A. The concept proposal application is not available as a Word document. All applicants must complete and submit the concept proposal application using the [FAAST system](#) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>). As a result, there is no page limit. However, each question in FAAST is assigned a character limit.

10. Q. Where can applicants find the character limits for each question?

A. The character limit for each question is provided in FAAST. This limit includes letters, numbers, punctuation, spaces, and special characters.

11. Q. Where can applicants find information about projects awarded SCBGP funding in past years?

- A. Applicants can find project abstracts and Final Performance Reports for past grant awards on the [CDFA SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/). Note: Program requirements change year to year, so past projects may not necessarily conform to current program requirements.

12. Q. Are projects required to last for two years and six months?

- A. Two years and six months is the maximum project duration. As long as projects do not start before November 1, 2021 or end after April 30, 2024, any duration is allowed. For Additional Assistance proposals, two years is the maximum project duration.

13. Q. How does USDA define beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers?

- A. USDA defines beginning farmers as an individual or entity that has not operated a farm for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation. A socially disadvantaged farmer is a farmer who is a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

14. Q. How can an applicant determine if a piece of equipment is considered scientific research equipment?

- A. Scientific research equipment is defined as equipment which is used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities and has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. Applicants must be able to explain how the equipment qualifies as scientific research equipment and why it is required for the specific project or program proposed. Applicants should utilize the RFCP and the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) to determine whether equipment meets the definition of scientific research equipment.

15. Q. Can proposals promote an organization’s image, logo, or brand name allowable?

A. SCBGP funds cannot be used to promote an organization’s image, logo, or brand name. SCBGP funds must be used to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Projects submitted to the Grown in California funding category should focus on promoting the specialty crops identified rather than promoting the CA GROWN logo or brand.

16. Q. The phrase “solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops” was removed from the SCBGP under the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill). How does this change the program and can funds now benefit non-specialty crops?

A. The removal of this phrase does not substantially change the SCBGP. This language supports that some projects may indirectly benefit non-specialty crops while primarily benefiting specialty crops. SCBGP funds still cannot be used to directly benefit an ineligible commodity or provide a benefit or profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

17. Q. Can cooperators or contractors outside the state of California or outside the United States be involved in project activities?

A. There is no prohibition on cooperating or contracting with an organization outside of California or the United States, provided the country is not listed on the [Office of Foreign Assets Control Active Sanctions List](https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/office-of-foreign-assets-control-sanctions-programs-and-information) (<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/office-of-foreign-assets-control-sanctions-programs-and-information>) and that the applicant sufficiently demonstrates that the primary benefit of the project will be to California specialty crops. In addition, in accordance with [California Assembly Bill 1887](https://oag.ca.gov/ab1887) (<https://oag.ca.gov/ab1887>), state funded and state sponsored travel to states with discriminatory laws is prohibited. SCBGP funds cannot be used to support costs for travel to or within states with active discriminatory laws.

18. Q. What is a DUNS number and is it required to submit a concept proposal?

A. A DUNS number is a Data Universal Numbering System number, a proprietary system developed and regulated by Dun & Bradstreet that assigns a unique numeric identifier to a single business entity. A DUNS number is not required prior to submitting a concept proposal; however, if awarded SCBGP funds, recipients will need to obtain a DUNS number before a grant agreement can be executed.

19. Q. Are fiscal sponsorships allowable under the SCBGP?

- A. Proposals that involve a fiscal sponsorship are subject to the following requirements: 1) the fiscal sponsorship arrangement and the identities of the involved parties must be clearly disclosed within the proposal; 2) if awarded funds, the fiscal sponsor, rather than the sponsored organization, is the grant recipient; is responsible for executing the grant agreement; and must ensure all project activities and costs, including activities of the sponsored organization, contractors, or consultants, comply with applicable federal regulations and requirements and grant terms and conditions; 3) changes to the recipient (such as a change from the non-profit fiscal sponsor to the sponsored organization) or key personnel require USDA and CDFA approval; and 4) fiscal sponsorship fees cannot be charged as a direct cost. Fiscal sponsorship fees may be allowable as an indirect cost, if charged consistent with the sponsored organization's established policies.

20. Q. Do first-time applicants have to apply to the Additional Assistance program?

- A. First-time applicants are not required to apply to the Additional Assistance program. However, organizations that do apply for this program are not permitted to apply to any other funding category.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Q. Who is eligible to apply for SCBGP funding?

- A. 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. Individuals are not eligible to apply. The Additional Assistance program has additional restrictions as outlined on [pages 13-15 of the RFCP.](#)

2. Q. Are applicants allowed to submit the same proposal for funding to more than one grant program?

- A. Applicants may submit the same proposal to multiple state or federal award programs; however, applicants are required to disclose the other grant programs if invited back to the grant proposal phase. If the proposal is selected for funding by another state or federal award program after the proposal is submitted to the SCBGP, the applicant must inform CDFA immediately. Applicants are allowed to receive SCBGP funds to support activities within a project funded through

multiple grant sources. However, SCBGP funds may not be used to duplicate activities funded by another grant source.

3. **Q. Are past SCBGP recipients more or less likely to receive funding? Is there a waiting period required between receiving SCBGP funding?**
 - A. Past recipients are not more or less likely to receive funding and all proposals are reviewed on their individual merit. However, failure to adequately explain how a proposal builds upon previously funded work may negatively impact scoring. Additionally, any significant issues with an organization's past performance may affect the probability of funding or necessitate additional requirements if funds are awarded. There is no waiting period required between receiving SCBGP grants; an organization could apply for and receive funding for projects in any year.

4. **Q. Are sole proprietors eligible to apply?**
 - A. Sole proprietors are eligible to apply. However, CDFA encourages sole proprietors to partner with another organization such as a local Farm Bureau or cooperative extension, a commodity board, or other growers. Although sole proprietors may apply for SCBGP funds, applicants must demonstrate that their proposal will benefit the specialty crop industry, rather than their organization.

FAAST APPLICATION

1. **Q. Can changes be made to a concept proposal that has already been submitted in FAAST?**
 - A. Changes can be made to concept proposals that have already been submitted in FAAST. If such a change is necessary, applicants should contact the FAAST Help Desk at (866) 434-1083 or FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov and reference the 2021 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program along with their PIN. All requests must be received within a reasonable amount of time before the submission deadline, no changes can be made after the submission deadline, and applicants are still required to resubmit their revised proposal before the submission deadline.

2. **Q. Can applicants use their existing FAAST account to submit a concept proposal?**
 - A. Applicants that already have a FAAST account may use their existing account to access the 2021 SCBGP application and submit their proposal.

3. **Q. Is a federal tax ID required prior to submitting a concept proposal?**
 - A. Applicants must have a legal business name and a federal tax ID in order to submit a concept proposal. Applicants may begin an application in FFAST prior to receiving a federal tax ID number, however, a federal tax ID number must be entered in FFAST prior to submitting a concept proposal.

FUNDING AREA AND CATEGORY

1. **Q. Can an organization submit two projects to the same funding category?**
 - A. An organization may submit more than one proposal to a single funding category as long as the proposals are for unique projects. However, applicants to the Additional Assistance program may only submit one proposal.

2. **Q. Are examples available of projects that would be eligible under each funding category?**
 - A. Yes, there are examples of possible projects for each funding category provided in the 2021 RFCP in [Appendix B on page 31](#). Please note that these examples are not intended to be all inclusive.

3. **Q. Does CDFA allocate a set amount of funding or number of projects per funding category?**
 - A. CDFA does not allocate a set amount of funding or number of projects per funding category. Similarly, CDFA does not allocate a set amount of funding to address a particular issue, including COVID-19

4. **Q. If an applicant selects the wrong funding category, will they be disqualified?**
 - A. Applicants will not be disqualified for selecting the wrong funding category. However, the Technical Review Committee is comprised of subject matter experts who may not be qualified to review proposals submitted to an inappropriate funding category. This may affect the probability of success for a given project. For this reason, applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the program priorities and select the funding category that most closely aligns with their project.

OUTCOME MEASURES

1. **Q. Where can applicants find additional information about the outcome measures and indicators/sub-indicators?**
 - A. The outcome measures, indicators, and sub-indicators have been developed by USDA and the Office of Management and Budget for nationwide reporting purposes and cannot be altered, amended, or replaced. Projects must accomplish all selected outcome measures and associated indicators and, if applicable, sub-indicators during the grant duration. Refer to the Outcome Measures supplemental document for specific information on outcomes and indicators/sub-indicators.

2. **Q. Do projects that address more than one outcome measure receive a higher priority for funding?**
 - A. The number of outcome measures a project will address is not a factor in the scoring of proposals.

3. **Q. If an applicant selects more than one outcome measure and/or indicator, do they all have to be achievable within the grant duration?**
 - A. All selected outcome measures and associated indicators and sub-indicators must be achievable within the grant duration.

BUDGET TEMPLATE

1. **Q. What are fringe benefits?**
 - A. Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits should follow an organization's established policy and may include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (vacation, family-related, sick, or military) employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Please refer to [2 CFR 200.431](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=35fcd29238edd42c8b1f8b1628e39d47&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5#se2.1.200_1431) (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=35fcd29238edd42c8b1f8b1628e39d47&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5#se2.1.200_1431) for more information.

2. **Q. Does the SCBGP impose a maximum fringe benefit rate?**
 - A. There is no maximum fringe benefit rate and applicants should follow their organization's established policies. However, fringe benefit rates greater than 50 percent may be questioned by USDA and additional information may be required.

3. **Q. What are indirect costs and is there a maximum rate?**
- A. 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. Typically, these involve costs to run an organization as a whole, including administrative staff salaries, information technology services, rent, utilities, internet and telephone service, general use office supplies, insurance, and maintenance. The maximum amount of indirect costs an organization is allowed is 8 percent of the total personnel costs (budget category A. Salary and Wages plus category B. Fringe Benefits).
4. **Q. Can applicants charge an indirect cost rate greater than the eight percent of total personnel costs?**
- A. The indirect cost rate for the SCBGP is established in federal statute. Please reference 2 CFR 200.414 (c)(1) (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1414&rgn=div8) as well as the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79 10010(4) (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/agricultural-act-2014-pl-113-79-feb-7-2014>). This statutory limitation covers both applicant indirect and CDFA’s costs to administer the program. For this reason, CDFA will not accept requests for indirect costs greater than eight percent of total personnel costs. Applicants that might ordinarily be eligible to receive a higher indirect rate from other state or federal programs are responsible for ensuring that their organization/institution will allow an exception for this program before submitting an application.
5. **Q. What is program income?**
- A. Program income refers to net income generated during the grant period by a supported project activity or earned as a direct result of the award. If a project will generate program income, applications must provide a description of how it will be generated and how it will be used to enhance specialty crops. Program income cannot be used as a net profit and it must be spent before the end of the grant period in accordance with restrictions on allowable and unallowable costs and activities.
6. **Q. What is the difference between “scientific research and “general purpose” equipment? Is there a minimum or maximum cost limit for special purpose equipment?**
- A. Both “scientific research” and “general purpose” equipment refer to tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit. “Scientific research” equipment used

only for research, scientific, or other technical activities may be conditionally allowable. “General purpose” equipment is used for purposes other than research, scientific, or other technical activities and is not allowable. The amount that can be charged for scientific research equipment cannot exceed the maximum award amount.

7. Q. What is the General Schedule 15 (GS-15), Step 10?

A. The GS-15, Step 10 is the maximum pay allowed annually and hourly for contractors and consultants by the federal government. Applicants should use the GS-15, Step 10 rate for their area when developing contractual cost estimates to ensure rates are reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services. Contractor costs exceeding the GS-15, Step 10 rate must be paid from a source other than SCBGP funds unless a justification is provided and approved by CDFA and USDA. To access the GS-15 step 10 rate, reference the [U.S. Office of Personnel Pay and Leave website](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/) (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>) and click on GS Pay Tables under General Schedule and Locality Pay Tables.

COST SHARE

1. Q. What is the difference between matching funds and in-kind contributions?

A. Matching funds refers to a dollar amount committed to a project from a source other than the SCBGP. An in-kind contribution is the estimated dollar value of any time, property, or supplies donated to a project.

2. Q. Is there any restriction on the kind of funds or resources that can be used for cost sharing?

A. Funds from other state or federal grant programs are not considered matching funds. Applicants will need to 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" if invited to the grant proposal phase. Reference [2 CFR Part 200.306 \(b\)\(5\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=201623e52a9fd321ebc67f5d2bc9365f&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1306&rgn=div8) (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=201623e52a9fd321ebc67f5d2bc9365f&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1306&rgn=div8).

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Q. What is the Technical Review Committee and how does the review process work?

A. The Technical Review Committee is a group of volunteers with knowledge and expertise regarding the California specialty crop industry. This committee is broken up by funding category and reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations to CDFA on proposals submitted for funding to California's SCBGP. The reviewers evaluate and score proposals individually and then meet to have an open discussion. The committee's recommendations are then presented to CDFA.

2. Q. What is required to serve on the Technical Review Committee (TRC)? May TRC members submit concept proposals?

A. All individuals interested in serving on the TRC submit an application form and a copy of their resume to grants@cdfa.ca.gov, which are reviewed for experience and expertise. TRC members are asked to complete and sign conflict of interest disclosures and complete state mandated training. In addition, applications and resumes are reviewed to identify possible conflicts of interest. All TRC members are recused from reviewing/discussing any proposals where conflicts of interest are identified or would likely occur. TRC members and their organizations may submit concept proposals, however said TRC members are prohibited from reviewing/discussing them.

3. Q. How does the review process work between CDFA and USDA for projects that receive funding?

A. CDFA's administrative and technical review process helps to ensure that the proposals recommended to USDA for funding are timely and important for California specialty crops and comply with all program rules and regulations. USDA has the final say regarding which proposal receive funding. USDA may approach CDFA with questions on specific proposals, in which case CDFA will work with the applicant to resolve any issues. In some cases, USDA may ultimately elect to decline a proposal.