

Application Instructions

Specialty Crop Multi-State Program

California Department of Food and Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has developed this document to assist applicants, or “multi-state partners,” to meet the requirements of the Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP) [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#). Instructions for each component of the application are below.

Templates for the Project Narrative Application, Budget Narrative Instructions, Supplemental Contractual Budget Template, Letter Verification of Cost Share, and Letter of Commitment are available on CDFA’s SCMP website at: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/SCMP.html.

Project Narrative Application:

The Project Narrative Application must respond to each section described in the SCMP NOFO and below. The Project Narrative Application must be typed, single-spaced, in an 11-point font, not to exceed 30 pages (16 original form pages + 14 pages of applicant content). *DO NOT modify the SCMP Project Narrative form, this includes removing instructions and/or any unapplicable Outcomes or Indicators.*

***Note:** The Supplemental Contractual Budget Narrative, Personnel Qualifications, Letters of Commitment and Letter of Verification for Cost Share do not count toward the 30-page Project Narrative Application maximum.*

Project Abstract

Include a summary in 250 words or less. The summary should include a concise outline of the project purpose, activities to be performed, expected deliverables and outcomes, intended beneficiaries, and any other pertinent information.

Alignment and Intent

Project Purpose:

Multi-state partners must develop projects that bring together teams for solutions to practical problems that cross state boundaries and address the needs of specialty crop growers in the areas of food safety, plant pests and disease, research, crop-specific projects addressing common issues, or marketing and promotion.

Objectives:

List the objectives of the project. The objectives must be related to addressing the issue(s), problem(s), or need(s) in relation to the statutory language of the program.

Project Beneficiaries:

Provide the number of affected producers and processors as well as a description of the benefits you intend to achieve as a result of the project.

Technical Merit

Work Plan:

Describes the activities and timeline associated with each project objective, including the following:

- The anticipated date of completion
- How and where the activities will take place
- Required resources
- Milestone(s) for assessing progress and success
- Training and Technical Assistance (if applicable)
- Person(s) responsible for completing the activity (includes all collaborators and contractors)

Support from Other Federal or State Grant Programs:

Indicate whether the proposed project has been or will be submitted to another federal program for funding. If the proposed project has or will be, provide the grant program name.

How the SCMP Project Differs or Supplements the Other Grant Program's Efforts:

Indicate whether the proposed project builds on work previously funded by a federal program. If the proposed project does, provide the year and grant program name, and describe how the proposed project, if funded, would not duplicate work previously funded by the federal government.

Achievability

Expected Measurable Outcomes and Indicators:

Projects must select at least one outcome and one associated indicator (and sub-indicator, if applicable). ***Do not delete any Outcomes or Indicators not selected, simply check N/A.**

For each completed outcome and indicator, describe how you derived the numbers, how you intend to measure and achieve each relevant outcome and indicator, and any potential challenges to achieving the estimated targets and action steps for addressing them.

Project Dissemination:

Describe how you will disseminate the project results (positive and negative) to similar organizations, stakeholders, and others that may be interested in the project results or implementing a similar project.

Project Sustainability:

Describe how the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the project's period of performance (without grant funds).

Expertise and Partners

Key Personnel:

List key staff, including personnel and external project partners and collaborators that comprise the Project Team, their roles, and their relevant experience and past successes in developing and operating projects similar to this project.

Management Plan, Data Sharing, and Public Access:

Describe your management plan for coordinating, communicating, and sharing data and reports among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, both internally to personnel and externally to partners and collaborators.

Fiscal Plan and Resources

Budget Summary

The budget must show the total cost for the project and describe how category costs listed in the budget are derived. Applicants must ensure the information provided below reflects the minimum 25 percent cost share requirement.

Budget Narrative

For each budget category, provide detailed breakdown of the cost and explain, as applicable, how the amounts requested were determined and why it is necessary for the completion of the project.

Note: When applicable, applicants should include the cost share value and type per budget category.

** A separate form, Budget Narrative Instructions, is provided with further directions on how to draft the proposal budget. The budget data and justifications should be inserted into the Project Narrative Application form once finalized to ensure the maximum page limit is not exceeded.*

Supplemental Contractual Budget Narrative

Complete the separate Supplemental Contractual Budget Narrative for all Contractors. This form is required but does not count towards the 30-page maximum limit for the Project Narrative Application form.

Letter of Verification for Cost Share

Applicants **MUST** provide written proof of the cost share commitments from every party, including the applicant, who will contribute cash or in-kind cost sharing to the project. Submit one letter verifying the cost share for EACH cash or in-kind resource that is being contributed. The letter must be signed by the cost sharing contributor organization.

For example, if the cost share contribution will be provided by the applicant organization and two partners, a total of three cost share verification letters are required.

Note: All cost sharing contributions must be committed or secured at the time an applicant is selected for an award.

Personnel Qualifications

Provide a one- to two-page resume or summary of relevant experience and/or qualifications of the principal investigator(s) and for each of the other major project participants. *Longer resumes will be disregarded.*

Note: The Personnel Qualifications does not count toward the 30-page Project Narrative maximum.

Letters of Commitment

Applicants must provide letters of commitment (in MS Word or PDF) from all project partners and collaborators. The letters must state the partner or collaborator agrees to the project management plan presented in the Project Narrative. *Emails will not be accepted.* Commitment letters must include the following:

- Project applicant
- Project title
- A short introduction describing the partnering organization's mission and its interest in SCMP development
- What the organization commits to participating in and supporting
- The time period of the partnership
- Roles of the participating individuals, as applicable, and any individual time commitment
- A statement that these individuals and the organization agree to abide by the management plan contained in the application

Submit Letters of Commitment on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are LETTERS OF COMMITMENT. Letters must accompany the proposal at the time of application. Unsigned letters will not be accepted.

Note: SCMP does not require Congressional letters of support and such letters do not carry additional weight during the evaluation process. Additionally, the Letters of Commitment do not count toward the 30-page Project Narrative maximum.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

SCMP has a statutory indirect cost cap of 8 percent. Negotiated indirect cost rate agreements that exceed 8 percent will not be accepted. Applicants that have an indirect cost rate lower than 8 percent must submit their negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

Application Submission

File Format

All sections of the application must be submitted in the original file format.

- Project Narrative Application – Word document
- Budget Narrative Instructions - Word document
- Supplemental Contractual Budget Narrative- Word document
- Letter of Verification for Cost Share – Combined PDF document
- Personnel Qualifications – Combined PDF document
- Letters of Commitment – Word or PDF document
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) – PDF document

Submission Information

All sections of the application are to be submitted at one time via email to grants@cdfa.ca.gov by **1:59 p.m. PT on August 31, 2026**. Late submissions will not be accepted. It is encouraged to submit your application prior to the deadline to ensure

application completeness and delivery. Please note, CDFA's email system has a file size limitation and can only accept a single PDF file up to 10 MB.