

2026 SPECIALTY CROP MULTI STATE PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Q. How much funding is available for Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP) and what are the minimum and maximum award amounts?
A. The United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA, AMS) anticipates that up to \$14.3 million will be awarded to Multi-State Partners for projects ranging from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000.

2. Q. Are there any cost sharing requirements for the 2026 SCMP?
A. Yes, for 2026 SCMP a cost share is required from non-Federal sources in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions, equal to 25 percent of the amount of Federal funds being requested. This cost share requirement applies to each project, whether funded through a participating State or through direct application to AMS. See sections 2.4 Cost Sharing and section 4.5 Letters of Verification for Cost Sharing Funds in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) for additional guidance. *Please note CDFA cannot assist with the cost share requirement.*

3. Q. What is the maximum grant duration?
A. SCMP proposals may have a duration of up to three years from the date of award.

4. Q. When can SCMP projects begin?
A. SCMP awards start dates are to be determined. If awarded funds, recipients may begin their projects once awards are announced and grant agreements are executed.

5. Q. What is the deadline for SCMP proposals?
A. Multi-State Partners must submit SCMP proposals to California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) by 1:59 PM PDT on August 31, 2026. Late submissions will not be accepted.

6. Q. How should applicants submit proposals?
A. Multi-State Partners must submit a complete application package to grants@cdfa.ca.gov by 1:59 PM PDT on August 31, 2026. Note that the Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool (FAAST) system will not be used for SCMP.

- Q. The NOFO has instructions for applicants to apply through SAM.gov and grants.gov (section 5.2). Do these instructions apply to Multi-State Partners applying through CDFA?
A. Multi-State Partners applying for the SCMP through CDFA need to submit a complete application package directly to CDFA via email to grants.cdfa.ca.gov.

7. Q. Will CDFA submit all applications received for SCMP to USDA AMS?
A. CDFA must screen all proposals to ensure that they:
 - Materially adhere to the requirements of the NOFO;
 - Fit into at least one of the NOFO's project category types;
 - Meet the NOFO's definition of a multi-state project;
 - Differ from and/or supplement but do not duplicate projects currently or previously funded by the SCBGP or another Federal award program;
 - Do not name any partner with current performance and compliance violations relating to a SCBGP-funded project; and

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- Adhere to the 25 percent cost share requirement and includes necessary documentation.

All complete and appropriate SCMP applications will be submitted by CDFA to USDA, AMS.

8. Q. Will CDFA assist Multi-State Partners in developing SCMP proposals?
A. Mandatory templates are available on the CDFA website. Applications must be submitted on the Project Narrative Application Form, submitted to CDFA as a word document. CDFA will conduct a webinar on June 18, 2026, providing an overview of the SCMP application. A replay of the webinar will be available on the CDFA YouTube page: [California Department of Food and Agriculture - YouTube](#) a few days after the webinar is completed. Questions can also be submitted by email to grants@cdfa.ca.gov through 5:00pm PDT on August 15, 2026, please add SCMP to the subject line.
9. Q. What are “Participating States”, “Non-Participating States” and “Multi-State Partners?”
A. Participating States are state departments of agriculture that will accept applications for the SCMP, submit proposals received to USDA, AMS, and administer grants if funds are awarded. Non-Participating States are state departments of agriculture that have declined to accept SCMP applications. Multi-State Partners are entities or organizations in any state or U.S. territory that will develop SCMP proposals.
10. Q. Can organizations outside of a Participating State submit or partner on a SCMP proposal?
A. Proposals will be accepted from Multi-State Partners in any state or U.S. Territory. It is not necessary for an organization to reside in a Participating State to submit, or partner on, a proposal.
11. Q. Does each Multi-State Partner develop their own application and budget and submit their proposal to their own Participating State?
A. Multi-State Partners should develop a single application and submit their application to a single Participating State. Multi-State Partners may develop a budget for each partner; however, if selected for funding one Multi-State Partner will act as the primary applicant and the other Multi-State Partners will be incorporated into the budget as contractors.
12. Q. Does CDFA have program priorities for SCMP?
A. Priorities for SCMP are developed at the national level. The project types appropriate for SCMP are described on USDA, AMS’s [NOFO](#), beginning on page twelve.
13. Q. Can SCMP proposals benefit a specialty crop that is grown in only one state?
A. SCMP proposals are expected to benefit more than one geographic area. It may not be possible to accomplish this goal with a project focused on a specialty crop grown primarily or exclusively in one state. However, such a project may be appropriate for the [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program \(SCBGP\)](#).
14. Q. Can Multi-State Partners submit a proposal to any Participating State?
A. Multi-State Partners in a Participating State must submit their proposal to the state in which they reside. Multi-State Partners in Non-Participating States may opt to submit their applications to a participating state, or to USDA-AMS directly through [grants.gov](https://www.usda.gov/grants).

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15. Q. What is the maximum indirect cost rate for SCMP?
A. Total indirect costs (including indirect for project partners and contractors) are limited by federal statute to 8 percent of the total federal award. 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.
16. Q. Can Multi-State Partners outside the state of California be the lead Principal Investigator (PI) of a project?
A. It is not necessary that the Multi-State Partner within California act as the lead PI on a project. It is up to the Multi-State Partners to determine the best person or organization to lead the project.
17. Q. Does CDFA's email system have a file size limitation?
A. CDFA's email system cannot accept email attachments greater than 10 MB (approximately 5,000 pages of text only).
18. Q. Can a Multi-State Partner submit more than one application?
A. There is no prohibition against submitting multiple applications. However, each application should be for a unique project. Additionally, Multi-State Partners cannot submit the same application to multiple Participating States.
19. Q. Are individuals eligible to apply to the SCMP?
A. Individuals are not eligible to apply to the SCMP. Projects must benefit the specialty crop industry in more than one state and cannot benefit a single individual or entity.
20. Q. Where can applicants view prior SCMP awarded grants?
A. Project descriptions of previously awarded SCMP grants can be found on the USDA, AMS SCMP website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scmp/awarded-grants>
21. Q. Where can applicants view information on allowable costs and activities for the SCMP?
A. Information on allowable costs and activities for the SCMP can be found on the USDA, AMS Grants Division General Terms and conditions: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY26AMSGDGeneralTermsandConditions.pdf>.
22. Q. Can a proposal address multiple priorities/project types as outlined in the USDA, AMS RFA?
A. Applications must address at least one project type but may address more than one.
23. Q. Does the SCMP application have a page limit?
A. The SCMP Project Narrative must be typed, single-spaced, in an 11-point font, not to exceed 15 8.5 x 11 pages (excluding existing Project Narrative Application form content). *For example, if the Project Narrative form is 15 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, your narrative may be up to 30 pages (15 original form pages + 15 pages of applicant content).* DO NOT modify the SCMP Project Narrative

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Application form. Letters of Verification for Cost Share, Letters of Commitment, and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) do not count toward the 15-page limit. Personnel Qualifications do not count toward the 15-page limit; however, resumes or curriculum vitae provided cannot exceed two pages per person.