

2026 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE II, GRANT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
DECEMBER 15, 2025

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. Where can Applicants find more information about completing the Grant Proposal Application?
A. The [Grant Proposal Instructions](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2026_SCBGP_Grant_Proposal_Instructions.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2026_SCBGP_Grant_Proposal_Instructions.pdf) detail the proposal questions and scoring criteria on pages 4 - 12, and include examples of the required templates in the appendices.
 2. Q. How can Applicants receive an invitation to apply during the Phase II, Grant Application stage?
A. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) is a two-phase annual funding opportunity. Applicants must first submit a Concept Proposal during Phase I, which typically opens in late summer each year with the release of the *Request for Concept Proposals*. Concept Proposals are reviewed by the Technical Review Committee (TRC), and selected applicants are invited to participate in Phase II, which involves submitting a full Grant Proposal. To stay informed about when Phase I opens for an upcoming funding cycle, please sign up for the [SCBGP mailing list](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CADFA/subscriber/new) (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CADFA/subscriber/new>) to be informed when Phase I opens for the next year's funding opportunity.
 3. Q. Can project staff, including a Principal Investigator (PI) or co-PI, be changed from the Concept Proposal phase?
A. Yes; however, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) cannot predict how the TRC will respond to substantial changes in project personnel.
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ELIGIBILITY

1. Q. Can SCBGP projects be used to provide direct assistance to farmers?
A. Providing direct assistance to farmers may be allowable under SCBGP, as long as the assistance does not give selected individual farmers an unfair competitive advantage over those not selected or constitute an unallowable giveaway. Examples of allowable activities include providing technical assistance, training, or business or marketing guidance; other educational activities are generally allowable. Direct financial assistance, such as funding on-farm supplies or equipment, providing capital improvements, subsidizing labor costs, directly promoting an individual farm or farmer, or similar activities are not allowable. Applicants are encouraged to describe the criteria and process used to select how those to receive assistance will be selected.
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FAAST

1. Q. What should an Applicant do if they are having issues with FAAST?
A. Applicants should reach out to the FAAST Help Desk via telephone or email at either 1-866-434-1083 or FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov.
 2. Q. What attachments are required for the Grant Proposal phase in FAAST?
A. The required attachments can be found in the Grant Phase (Phase 2) application in FAAST. After logging in, applicants should navigate to the Attachments tab in their application to view the list of required attachments. Applicants must submit the following templates: the Project Objectives and Work Plan, the Outcome Measures, the Budget Narrative, and, if applicable, Cost Sharing.
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PRIOR-YEAR SCBG PROJECTS

No questions at this time.

PROJECT OVERSIGHT

1. Q. Who is eligible to lead a project?
A. Applicants are responsible for designating the appropriate individual as the Principal Investigator, Project Director, or Project Manager in their application. Resumes or CVs must be uploaded to FAAST for all key project personnel.
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OTHER SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL OR STATE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

No questions at this time.

FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

1. Q. Can the funding category be changed from the Concept Proposal application?
A. No, changes to the funding category selected during the Concept Proposal phase are not permitted.
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PROGRAM PRIORITIES

No questions at this time.

PROJECT PURPOSE

No questions at this time.

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PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

1. Q. Where should activities conducted by cooperating entities or contractors be listed?
A. Activities conducted by cooperating entities or contractors, including outreach efforts, should be included in the Work Plan under the appropriate objective.
2. Q. Can activities in the work plan be combined if they are repeated monthly or annually?
A. Yes, applicants may list repeating activities in a single row across multiple months or years. For example: "Activity 1: Mar-May 2027; Mar-May 2028." CDFA encourages applicants to carefully review work plans to ensure they are clear and understandable to a lay reader.
3. Q. Should Applicants include the activities of individuals providing in-kind contributions in the work plan? And if so, how should Applicants clarify that their contributions are in-kind?
A. Any individual or entity performing work that is essential to the success of the project should be included in the Work Plan.

Costs and contributions covered through in-kind or matching funds must be described in the Cost Share template. Cost Share is not a requirement of SCBGP and is discouraged by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); CDFA recommends only including costs or activities that are essential to the success of the project as Cost Share. Note that costs or activities covered with Cost Share are subject to the same requirements as those covered with grant funds.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

1. Q. How are project beneficiaries defined?
A. Project beneficiaries are specialty crop stakeholders who will directly benefit from project activities but will not receive grant funds. The estimated number of project beneficiaries should be reasonable, trackable, and reportable within the duration of the grant. Individuals such as employees of the applicant organization, contractors, individuals receiving stipends, or anyone otherwise directly receiving grant funds should not be included as project beneficiaries.

SPECIALTY CROP ENHANCEMENT

No questions at this time.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

No questions at this time.

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EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

1. Q. What is the difference between a cooperating entity and a collaborator, and how is that different from a contractor?
A. A contractor is an individual or organization that receives grant funds to carry out specific project-related activities or services. Cooperating entities and collaborators are organizations or individuals that will contribute to the project but do not necessarily receive grant funding; CDFA does not differentiate between the terms. Applicants should list all collaborators on the "Cooperating Entities" tab in FFAST.
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OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. What section of the application should address procedural details, including research methodology?
A. Experimental design should be described in the Work Plan. The Outcome Measures section should include a description of the data collection methods, specifying how data will be collected, measured, and analyzed to evaluate project outcomes.
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BUDGET SECTION

1. Q. Where can Applicants find information about which costs are allowable or unallowable?
A. The Code of Federal Regulations; federal SCBGP and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, requirements; applicable federal, state, local, and Tribal laws and regulations; and other programmatic requirements determine which costs are allowable or unallowable.

CDFA has created the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/allowable_and_unallowable_cost_activities.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/allowable_and_unallowable_cost_activities.pdf) to summarize this information.
2. Q. Which template is required for the Budget Narrative?
A. The required template is linked in the [Grant Proposal Instructions](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2026_SCBGP_Grant_Proposal_Instructions.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2026_SCBGP_Grant_Proposal_Instructions.pdf) and in [FAAST](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/>). It is also available on the [SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) as of December 8, 2025, at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/form_1-6-2-2_scbgp_budget_narrative.docx.

The top lines include "Budget Narrative" and "Form 1.6.2.2".

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3. Q. Should individuals that work at a different University campus from the Applicant or PI be included in A. Personnel or F. Contractual?
- A. For the purposes of SCBGP, these individuals and/or organizations are considered contractors.
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PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES

1. Q. Where can Applicants find information about the requirements for selecting a contractor?
- A. Information regarding the requirements for selecting a contractor can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations. CDFA has created a reference document titled [Procuring Goods and Services](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/pdfs/SCBGP_Procuring_Goods_and_Services.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/pdfs/SCBGP_Procuring_Goods_and_Services.pdf), which summarizes these federal procurement requirements.
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COST SHARE

No questions at this time.

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Q. Will the individuals who review the Grant Proposal application be the same as those who reviewed the Concept Proposal application?
- A. Reviewer teams remain consistent within each funding category. While CDFA makes every effort to ensure that the same individuals review a project throughout both phases of the application process, projects may be reassigned to different reviewers to balance reviewer workloads.
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GRANT MANAGEMENT

No questions at this time.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

1. Q. Where can Applicants find the application for the Additional Assistance Program?
- A. The application for the Additional Assistance Program is available on the California Department of Food and Agriculture's [SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/). Interested Applicants are encouraged to email grants@cdfa.ca.gov to request the application and to begin receiving one-on-one technical assistance.