

2024 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE II, GRANT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
DECEMBER 22, 2023

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. Can the application name be updated?
A. Applicants may update the application name, also referred to as the project title. The application name/title should concisely describe the project in 15 words or less to create a unique, specific title.
2. Q. Are diversity, equity, and inclusion factored in the scoring of proposals?
A. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is not a specific scoring criterion within the grant application. However, CDFA has identified a number of priorities intended to support socially disadvantaged, underserved, and beginning farmers, along with underserved communities to best ensure the program benefits all Californians.
3. Q. Should applicants directly address the feedback received on the Concept Proposal?
A. Applicant responses within AmpliFund and content provided on the required templates may be responsive to feedback received. However, applicants should not provide a direct/formal response to feedback, nor attempt to respond point-by-point to reviewer feedback.
4. Q. What constitutes a cooperating entity? For example, would a partner organization which does not receive any grant funding constitute a cooperating entity?
A. Project collaborators, also referred to as cooperating entities, are organizations that the applicant organization will work with to plan and/or implement the proposed project. There are no restrictions on what types of organizations may serve as cooperating entities. The organization must have a role in project activities and agree to participate as a cooperator with or without grant funding.

ELIGIBILITY

No questions at this time.

AMPLIFUND

1. Q. How do applicants start a new 2024 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) application for the Grant Proposal phase?
A. The Concept Proposal will not be automatically transferred to a Grant Proposal application. A new application must be started under the Grant Proposal opportunity here: <https://www.gotomygrants.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/f88cee4b-286b-4174-b2ac-5bc81e8353f8>
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PRIOR-YEAR SCBGP PROJECTS

1. Q. How can applicants demonstrate that a proposal builds upon a previously funded SCBGP project?
A. Applicants should briefly describe the accomplishments of the previously funded project, and how the activities of the new proposal will differ from and expand upon those accomplishments. Examples of building upon a prior project include: using knowledge gained through research for practical application, expanding the reach of marketing efforts to markets that haven't previously been accessed, enhancing established training to reach new students or address new technologies/regulations, etc.
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PROJECT OVERSIGHT

1. Q. Who should provide résumés or curriculum vitae (CV)?
A. Resumes or CVs should be provided for the Project Director, Project Manager, Principal Investigator (PI), and any collaborator or contractor responsible for the development or execution of the project. Project support staff such as interns, student assistants, or part time staff do not need to submit a résumé/CV. If a résumé/CV is not available (i.e., position is not yet filled), applicants may provide the duty statement for the role that will be performing the work.
 2. Q. Can the Project Director change between the Concept Proposal application and the Grant Proposal application?
A. Yes, the Project Director can be changed between the Concept Proposal phase and the Grant Proposal phase. Please provide a résumé or CV for the new Project Director.
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OTHER SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL OR STATE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

No questions at this time.

FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

No questions at this time

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. The scoring criteria for Project Objectives and Work Plan does not appear to be correct in AmpliFund. Please provide the correct scoring criteria.
A. Scoring will be based on the relevance of the project objectives and activities to the project purpose, the importance of the objectives to California's specialty crop industry, the clarity of the work plan, and the likelihood that the objectives will be successful.
 2. Q. Can the Project Objectives or the Work Plan change from the Concept Proposal phase to the Grant Proposal phase?
A. Yes, the Project Objectives and Work Plan may be updated as applicants further develop their Grant Proposal. In the Project Objectives and Work Plan template there should be a description of the individual objectives necessary to achieve the overall project goal(s). Within the Work Plan, applicants should list the activities necessary to complete each objective. Applicants may include additional information that they feel is applicable and pertinent to the prompt provided. The Project Objectives and Work Plan template must not exceed five pages.
 3. Q. Can additional text, figures, and hyperlinks be added to the Project Objectives and Work Plan and Budget Narrative templates?
A. Applicants should not include additional text, figures, and hyperlinks within their Grant Proposal. Projects selected for funding must conform with the application formatting requirements developed by USDA. Attachments should not be altered unless adding additional rows to tables.
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PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

1. Q. How are project beneficiaries defined?
A. Project beneficiaries are the specialty crop stakeholders that will directly benefit from project activities. The estimated number of project beneficiaries should be reasonable, trackable, and reportable within the grant duration.
2. Q. What is the relationship between the project beneficiaries and the figures listed in the outcome measures?
A. Project beneficiaries are the specialty crop stakeholders that will directly benefit from project activities. The figures within the outcome measures are not necessarily directly related to beneficiaries and multiple outcome measures do not include a metric that relates to individuals or specialty crop stakeholders (e.g., outcomes related to sales increases or research goals accomplished). In developing project beneficiaries and outcome measures, applicants should ensure that both metrics are reasonable and reportable within the grant duration.
3. Q. Should consumers be counted as project beneficiaries?
A. Project beneficiaries can include any individuals (including individual entities) that will directly benefit from the project but not receive SCBGP funds. While consumers could

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potentially be considered project beneficiaries, they should only be counted if the project will have capacity to document and report on the direct benefit to those consumers during the duration of the grant, if the proposal is selected for funding.

4. Q. How precise should the number of beneficiaries be? Is having more beneficiaries preferable?
- A. If awarded funding, applicants will be required to report on the number of beneficiaries. Thus, the number of beneficiaries should be reasonably estimated as a number that can be measured, tracked, and reported upon during the grant duration. The number of beneficiaries will depend on the objectives and activities of each project.
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SPECIALTY CROP ENHANCEMENT

No questions at this time.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

No questions at this time.

EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

1. Q. Should the External Support response be written by the external stakeholder(s)?
- A. All sections of the Grant Proposal should be drafted by the applicant organization or a named grant writer. Cooperators and supporters can submit letters of support. Applicant organizations may interview supporters and then use that information to help craft the project narrative.
2. Q. Can organizations submit letters of support if they do not have an official letterhead? Is a specific template required?
- A. Yes, organizations that do not have an official letterhead can submit letters of support, provided they clearly identify themselves within the letter, such as with a header. If available, letters of support should be written on official letterhead and should explain why the stakeholder supports the project.
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OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. For Outcome Measure 1, Indicator 1.1, can social media or website analytics be used to measure knowledge gained?
- A. The actual increase in knowledge for Outcome Measure 1, Indicator 1.1 must be measured, such as through surveys or pre- and post-quizzes. Common social media analytics such as reach, clicks, engagement rate, shares, impressions, etc. alone are not sufficient to measure knowledge gained .

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2. Q. Can indicators and sub-indicators be determined through the use of statistical sampling?
A. Applicants are encouraged to use actual numbers rather than extrapolating data from a smaller sample set.
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BUDGET SECTION

1. Q. Can costs identified in the Concept Proposal phase be reallocated to different cost categories in the Grant Proposal phase?
A. Yes, costs may be revised, added, or removed for the Grant Proposal phase. Additionally, the budget between categories may be revised as needed. Although there is no limit on the amount the budget may change, CDFA cannot anticipate how changes will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee and substantial changes (plus or minus 20 percent) may be questioned.
2. Q. Where should the procurement process for obtaining contractors be described in the Grant Proposal?
A. The type of procurement process can be explained within F. Contractual of the budget narrative section.
3. Q. Do the lodging rates established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) include taxes and fees?
A. No, the GSA rate listed only accounts for the allowable nightly hotel rate. Applicants may add a reasonable amount for estimated hotel taxes and fees to the lodging rate identified in the budget table. If applicants choose to include these costs, please include a statement in the trip justification that taxes and fees are included in the lodging rate.
4. Q. How should an employee's annual salary increase be addressed in the budget?
A. The amount of funds requested for an employee should be the total amount that employee will be compensated for the entire project. Within the employee justification, applicants may note that the salary per year will change and include calculations of the total cost based on the annual salary.
5. Q. How should the destination be indicated within C. Travel if the exact travel location is not yet known?
A. Applicants should indicate "to be determined" as the location. Additional information can be provided within the justification narrative if the general county or area has been determined.
6. Q. How can applicants determine if costs associated with growing specialty crops are allowed?
A. Applicants should consider the end use of the crops to be grown. If they will primarily be given away for free to individuals (regardless of the individuals' involvement in the production and/or harvesting of the crops), then this would be considered an unallowable donation and SCBGP funds cannot be used. If the end use of the crops is primarily education (e.g., sampling, demonstrations, etc.) or to be sold at market value, then this is generally considered allowable and SCBGP funds can be used. Please note: if crops are

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sold at market value the funds earned would be considered program income and must be reinvested into the project in support of allowable costs and activities.

7. Q. What costs should be included under F. Contractual?
A. The Contractual question should include 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, special purpose equipment, supplies, other, and indirect costs. In the description column, list the services to be provided by each contractor that will work on the project and be paid with grant funds and provide a brief breakdown of costs. Reference pages 2-3 of the Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/allowable_and_unallowable_cost_activities.pdf) for restrictions on contractual costs.
8. Q. Where do rental costs belong in the budget?
A. Rental costs, such as equipment or venue space, would belong in category G. Other.
9. Q. If the method of travel for a trip is not yet determined, what should applicants put into C. Travel for these costs?
A. Applicants should estimate the method of travel to the best of their ability. Additional information can be provided within the justification narrative.

PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES

1. Q. Is a competitive process required for all contractors? Can cooperators, collaborators, co-applicants, etc. be excluded from the competitive process?
A. All entities listed under the contractual section of the budget narrative are subject to the procurement requirements set forth in 2 CFR 200.317 through 200.327 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d>). Bid documents are not required as part of the Grant Proposal application.

COST SHARE

1. Q. Can costs be split between cost share and grant funds?
A. Yes, the portion of the cost share should be clearly identified in the Cost Sharing template. The portion of the costs covered by cost share should not be included in the Budget Narrative Template.
2. Q. Should cost share be reported if funds have not been secured?
A. No, applicants should only include cost share that is committed to the project.

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3. Q. Are there rates that should be used for in-kind contributions?
A. In-kind contributions should have an equivalent value to the donation of goods or services, including time volunteered, to a project.
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REVIEW PROCESS

No questions at this time.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

No questions at this time.
