

***2013 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT  
PROGRAM***

**NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY  
REQUEST FOR CONCEPT PROPOSALS**

**CATALOGUE OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE 10.170**



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF  
FOOD & AGRICULTURE**

Federal Funds Management Office  
1220 N Street, Room 120  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 657-3231  
Email: [grants@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:grants@cdfa.ca.gov)

# Table of Contents

---

Purpose.....	3
Funding .....	3
Eligibility .....	3
Solicitation Process.....	3
Timeline .....	4
Program Goals and Objectives.....	4
Funding Categories .....	6
Requirements and Application Procedures.....	6
Requirements .....	6
Application Procedures .....	7
Assistance & Questions.....	7
APPENDIX A.....	i
Funding Categories .....	i
Market Enhancement .....	i
Agriculture Education.....	i
Nutrition.....	i
Environmental Stewardship and Conservation .....	ii
Plant Health and Invasive Species Impact Mitigation .....	ii
Food Safety .....	ii
Federal Cost Principles .....	iii
Concept Proposal Questions .....	iii
Review Criteria .....	iv
Process .....	iv
Feedback .....	v
APPENDIX B .....	i
Phase I, Concept Proposal.....	i
Budget Template.....	i
Scoring Criteria.....	ii

# 2013 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability

---

## Purpose

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award 2013 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds for proposals that solely enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops.

Specialty crops are fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgrp> for a comprehensive list of specialty crops.

## Funding

Grant awards ranging from \$50,000 to \$400,000 for two (2) years, nine (9) months and cannot be expended before October 1, 2013 or after June 30, 2016.

Funding is contingent upon passage of the Farm Bill (Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012).

## Eligibility

Non-profit and for-profit organizations; local, state and federal government entities, including tribal governments; and public, private colleges and universities are eligible to apply.

## Solicitation Process

### *Phase I, Concept Proposal:*

Submit online in the format of responses to questions regarding the proposal and applicant organization. CDFA advises all applicants as to the outcome of Concept Proposal review.

### *Phase II, Grant Proposal:*

Successful concept proposal applicants are invited to participate. Submit online in the format of responses to questions regarding the proposal. Specific requirements and instructions are included in the "Invitation to Submit Grant Proposals" notification.

## KEY POINTS

*Solely enhance California specialty crops.*

*\$50,000–\$400,000  
per project  
Duration: 10/2013–6/2016*

*Cannot directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.*

*Brief & concise equivalent to 3 pages*

*\* Invitation Only \*  
February 2013  
Equivalent to 5 pages plus attachments*

## Timeline

<b>Phase I Concept Proposal</b>	November 1, 2012	Release Notice of Funding Availability - Request for Concept Proposals
	November 5 – 15, 2012	SCBGP Workshops & Webinars
	December 7, 2012 5:00 pm PST	Concept Proposals Due
<b>Phase II Grant Proposal</b>	February 2013	Invitation to Submit Grant Proposals
	March 22, 2013 5:00 pm PDT	Grant Proposals Due
	July 2013	Grant Proposals to USDA for Approval
<b>Award</b>	October 2013	Announce & Award SCBGP Funding

## Program Goals and Objectives

1. *Enhance the marketability and competitiveness of specialty crops through the development of markets (local, domestic, and international) for all California producers to leverage the work and commitment of a diversity of stakeholders:*
  - a. Expand California Grown participation among specialty crop producers, marketing orders and other stakeholder groups through innovative marketing and promotional activities;
  - b. Create economic opportunities for specialty crop producers through market development activities that focus on local, regional, or international markets;
  - c. Connect farmers to consumers by enhancing direct marketing opportunities that highlight production practices, individual farmers, and growing locations;
  - d. Further develop and enhance agritourism opportunities in local communities through partnerships with community organizations to enhance the economic viability of specialty crop producers.

## KEY POINTS

*Schedule & locations:  
www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants*

*No late proposals—  
Submit Early!*

*No late proposals—  
Submit Early!*

*Every applicant notified*

*Address at least one  
program goal and objective*

2. *Expand access to healthy, safe California specialty crops at school, at work and in their neighborhoods:*
  - a. Improve nutritional awareness of children and adults and increase consumption of California specialty crops;
  - b. Enhance utilization of California grown specialty crops by improving the efficiency of the processing and distribution systems from farm-to-table;
  - c. Encourage and expand the availability of affordable and locally grown specialty crops through farm-to-fork programs that make it easier for producers to sell to local institutions;
  - d. Assist specialty crop growers and others in the distribution chain to develop and implement Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices.
3. *Expand stewardship practices, natural resource conservation and the development of ecosystem services to improve the environmental and financial performance of California specialty crop growers:*
  - a. Develop and implement beneficial management practices that improve farm viability and the agricultural economy as well as the environment;
  - b. Create markets that economically reward and promote good environmental stewardship;
  - c. Promote energy conservation and the use of renewable energy produced from biomass wastes, including wood, agricultural production, food processing and other organic wastes;
  - d. Develop strategies to enable specialty crop growers to adapt to climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and by sequestering carbon;
  - e. Prevent and manage pests and diseases to minimize economic and environmental harm to specialty crop growers.
4. *Ensure the viability of California specialty crops by investing in the next generation of operators:*
  - a. Train and equip the next generation of young and beginning farmers in agronomic, economic and environmental stewardship skills;
  - b. Create and implement workforce training programs to maintain the technical skills required to keep the California specialty crops sector competitive;
  - c. Introduce and recruit young people to the variety of specialty crop career opportunities;
  - d. Support research to spur innovation in new specialty crop product development and solve production issues;

- e. Expand organic and sustainable production practices;
- f. Increase capacity for small-scale specialty crop production and distribution into urban communities.

Concept Proposals should be consistent and address at least one Program Goal and Objective.

Project proposals should, if appropriate:

- Demonstrate a high likelihood of success
- Describe the specialty crop grower benefit and grower connection to the project
- Be scalable to the larger community based on the outcome of the project
- Proposals for ongoing projects should illustrate a sustainable funding source beyond the life of the proposed grant

All research proposals should include an outreach component that addresses how the conclusions and research findings will be extended to specialty crop growers.

## Funding Categories

Although Concept Proposals may address multiple Funding Categories, applicants must select a single Category (identified in Appendix A) that is the primary focus of their proposal. There is no limit on the number of Concept Proposals applicants may submit.

## Requirements and Application Procedures

### Requirements

Federal cost principles are regulations used to determine allowable costs, and ensure consistent treatment of costs.

There is a set of Federal cost principles for determining allowable costs for each organization type. Recipients are responsible for identifying the Federal cost principles appropriate to their organization and for the consistent application of these cost principles to the SCBGP grant funds. Recipients are responsible for ensuring their contractors/consultants comply with applicable Federal requirements.

For each organization type, there is a set of Federal requirements. See Appendix for a list of applicable administrative requirements and cost principles by organization type.

Indirect cost: Maximum Indirect Cost is five percent of total personnel costs. Rate is subject to change, pending passage of the 2012 Farm Bill and USDA SCBGP regulations.

## KEY POINTS

*\*Incorporate an outreach component\**

*Each submission must represent a unique project.*

*Appendix A, page i*

*Appendix A, page iii*

*Indirect cost - 5% maximum*

## KEY POINTS

*Register Early!*

*Internet Explorer 6.0 or above required; disable pop-up blocker*

*Appendix A, page iii*

*Most sections include character limitations*

*[www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants)*

*Final deadline for FAQs:  
12/4/2012, 5 pm PST*

*Technical Support?  
Contact SWRCB  
(866) 434-1083  
[Faast\\_admin@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov)*

## Application Procedures

CDFA has entered into a service agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to host a web-based Concept and Grant Proposal solicitation process.

Applicants must register and receive a logon account to the Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST) in order to submit Concept Proposals. FAAST can be accessed through the SWRCB website, <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov> or the CDFA website, <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants>.

The FAAST system is organized into various tabs and utilizes a question and answer format. See Appendix for a list of the Concept Proposal application questions as they appear in the FAAST system.

## Assistance & Questions

CDFA will conduct Workshops and Webinars on the 2013 SCBGP solicitation process, use of the FAAST system and grant writing tips the weeks of November 5–15, 2012. Please visit CDFA’s SCBGP website for date, times, and locations.

Email all questions about the solicitation process to: [grants@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:grants@cdfa.ca.gov). Responses to all questions received during the workshops, webinars or by email will be posted to CDFA’s SCBGP website according to the following schedule:

Questions Received by:	Responses Posted by:
11/20/12 – 5:00 pm PST	11/21/12 – 5:00 pm PST
11/27/12 – 5:00 pm PST	11/28/12 – 5:00 pm PST
12/04/12 – 5:00 pm PST	12/05/12 – 5:00 pm PST

December 4, 2012 at 5:00 pm PST 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.

The SWRCB website at: <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov> contains a Frequently Asked Questions section and a User’s Manual for the FAAST system. If after reading the information available on the website, you have questions about the FAAST System, please contact FAAST customer service at (866) 434-1083, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm or contact the SWRCB staff via email, [faast\\_admin@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov).

# Appendix A

---

## KEY POINTS

### Funding Categories

#### Market Enhancement

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that promote the California Grown message and increase or develop long-term sales and competitiveness of specialty crop products.

Examples:

- Support statewide market promotion and awareness of specialty crops
- Support specialty crop marketing concepts that target the unique characteristics of local and regional areas
- Increase customers and sales of California specialty crops at Certified Farmers' Markets

#### Agriculture Education

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects 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.

Examples:

- Strengthen specialty crop agricultural job training skills for beginning farmers
- Educate consumers about California's specialty crops
- Reconnect communities with specialty crop production
- Educate the public about the identity and threat of invasive species to California specialty crops

#### Nutrition

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that improve access and consumption of specialty crops and/or that integrate human health and nutrition with specialty crops.

Examples:

- Increase participation in under-utilized federal nutrition assistance programs
- Develop community and school gardens, urban farms, and other innovative projects that support local and regional food systems
- Increase consumption of specialty crops among all populations through vigorous marketing, promotion and public/private partnerships
- Implement school initiatives that link cafeterias, classrooms, gardens, parents, worksites, and communities with local farmers
- Develop farm-to-fork networks that include schools, worksites, retail, and restaurant outlets to connect local agriculture with nearby communities
- Promote and/or demonstrate the health benefits of California specialty crops

*Examples under each Funding Category are suggestions—should not be considered exclusive.*

## KEY POINTS

*Reminder:  
Examples under each  
Funding Category are  
suggestions—should not be  
considered exclusive.*

### Environmental Stewardship and Conservation

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that enhance soil health and the conservation of agricultural land, water, habitat, and biodiversity as well as proposals that address agriculture’s specialty crop contribution to adaptation and/or mitigation of climate change.

Examples:

- Integrate resource base issues (i.e. improve both air and water resources)
- Address regulatory challenges for California’s specialty crop growers
- Assist communities and/or decision makers in planning for specialty crop agriculture
- Assist growers “in adapting to” climate change by conducting research and implementation of strategies where technologies are already available – such as water use efficiency and invasive pest detection, control and management
- Accelerate Best Management Practices (BMP) implementation for water conservation and efficiency

### Plant Health and Invasive Species Impact Mitigation

In this Funding Category, CDFA will consider projects that address pests and diseases that affect the production of California’s specialty crops. This includes applied research related to the probability and impact of invasive pest, disease and weed threats to specialty crops, and research to develop tools to detect, eradicate and control pests and diseases.

Examples:

- Enhance the speed and reliability of detection
- Develop new tools for eradication
- Develop plants resistant to pests and diseases
- Develop secondary inspection and detection capacity
- Conduct pest surveys to ascertain threat and spread of threat
- Develop pest protocol programs for a subsector of specialty crops

### Food Safety

CDFA has entered into a partnership agreement with the University of California, Davis’ Center for Produce Safety (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) 757-5777 or visit the CPS website at <http://cps.ucdavis.edu> for the solicitation timeline and proposal requirements.

*CDFA partners with CPS—  
separate solicitation*

## Federal Cost Principles

Federal Cost Principles Summary Table		
Organization Type	Administrative Requirements	Cost Principles
State, local or Indian tribal government	7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3016	2 CFR 225
Private non-profit organization other than an (1) institution of higher education, (2) hospital, or (3) organization named in OMB Circular A-122 as not subject to that circular.	7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019	2 CFR 230
Colleges and Universities	7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019	2 CFR 220
For-profit organization other than a hospital and an organization named in OMB Circular A-122 as not subject to that circular.	7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019	Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 31.2. Contract with Commercial Organizations, codified at 48 CFR 31.2.

### Concept Proposal Questions (as they appear in FFAST)

Applicants must respond to the following under the General Information and Project Budget tabs:

Applicant Organization:

Legal name of organization that will be the lead applicant for this project

Submitting Organization:

Name of organization submitting proposal

Project Title:

Clear, concise and brief

Project Description:

Summary of proposal

Project Budget:

Funds requested and anticipated matching funds

Applicants must also respond to the following Concept Proposal questions based on SCBGP requirements under the Application Questionnaire tab:

1. Organization Type:

Type that correctly reflects the nature of applicant organization

2. Funding Category:

Select one of the following which most accurately aligns with the nature of the proposal.

- Market Enhancement
- Agriculture Education

### KEY POINTS

*Allowable and unallowable costs*

*Applicant is responsible for determining which cost principles apply—the cost principles flow down to sub recipients (based on organization type)*

*Use non-technical language*

*Matching funds not required—strongly encouraged*

- Nutrition
- Environmental Stewardship and Conservation
- Plant Health and Invasive Species Impact Mitigation

3. Project Purpose:

Identify the specific issue, problem or need that the project will address, and explain why the proposal is important and timely.

4. Identify the main objective(s) of the proposal and how it meets one of the program’s goals and objectives of the 2013 SCBGP.

5. Prior Year SCBGP Project:

Indicate if the proposal builds on a previously funded SCBGP project. If ‘YES,’ provide the Grant Agreement number(s), explain how the new proposal compliments previous work, the results of the completed work and long-term quantifiable effects of the results—specifically the impact on the specialty crop industry. Include sustainability efforts.

6. Potential Impact:

Identify and quantify beneficiaries. State economic impact(s) to specialty crop industry.

7. Expected Measurable Outcome(s):

Provide at least one distinct, quantifiable and measureable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the proposal’s purpose and is of direct importance to intended beneficiaries.

8. Project Duration:

Estimate the “Start Date” and “End Date” in mm/yyyy format.

9. Work Plan:

Describe activities that will be performed to accomplish project objectives and support expected measurable outcomes.

10. Budget:

Download, complete and attach the “Budget Template.”

**KEY POINTS**

*Text box—500 character limit*

*Text box—500 character limit; Program goals and objectives listed on page 3*

*Text box—1000 character limit*

*Text box—500 character limit*

*Text box—1000 character limit*

*Duration:  
October 2013 – June 2016*

*Text box—1000 character limit; do not include matching fund/or in-kind contribution activities*

*See Appendix B, page i  
Verify budget is attached*

*See Appendix B, page ii*

**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 Review Criteria](#).

**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 (Technical Review Committee) will perform the Technical Review. The Technical Review Committee is made up of growers, industry, universities, public agencies and representatives from non-profits with an interest and expertise in specialty crops and agricultural systems.

### **Feedback**

Applicants who were not invited to participate in Phase II – Grant Proposal will receive feedback on their Concept Proposal within 60 days after receiving notification.

# Appendix B

---

## Phase I, Concept Proposal

### Budget Template

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program PIN# (insert PIN # here)	
Budget Categories	GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED
A. Personnel	
B. Fringe Benefits	
C. Travel	
D. Equipment ( <i>&gt; \$5,000</i> )	
E. Supplies ( <i>&lt; \$5,000</i> )	
F. Contractual <i>*Note (A)</i>	
G. Other Costs	
H. Total Direct Costs (sum of sections A-G)	\$ -
I. Total Indirect Costs <i>(Cannot Exceed 5% of Personnel + Fringe Benefits)</i> <i>*Note (B)</i>	\$ -
J. Total Grant Funds (sum of H+I)	\$ -

**Notes:**

*(A) Contractual hourly rates are established by U.S Office of Personnel Management GS-14 Step 10.*

*To access the GS -14 step 10 visit:*

*<http://www.opm.gov/oca/12tables/indexGS.asp>*

*(B) Rate subject to change, pending passage of 2012 Farm Bill & SCBGP regulations*

## Scoring Criteria

<b>SCORING CRITERIA</b>	
<b>1. PROJECT PURPOSE</b>	Maximum Points
Is the issue, problem or need addressed? Is proposal important and timely? Are proposal objectives identified? Is a SCBGP objective and goal identified?	<b>15</b>
<b>2. POTENTIAL IMPACT</b>	
Are beneficiaries identified? Is impact to beneficiaries explained? Does the number of beneficiaries justify the investment?	<b>10</b>
<b>3. EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES</b>	
Is at least one distinct, quantifiable measurable outcome that supports the proposal's purpose described? Are the outcomes appropriate?	<b>10</b>
<b>4. WORK PLAN</b>	
Do the activities relate to the proposal's objectives? Can the activities be performed within the proposed timeline?	<b>10</b>
<b>5. BUDGET</b>	
Is the amount requested reasonable and appropriate?	<b>5</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>