

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. Is there a limit on the number of concept proposals an applicant organization can submit?
A. CDFA does not impose a limit on the number of concept proposals that an applicant can submit; however, each concept proposal should be for a unique project. Submitting the same concept proposal over multiple funding categories is prohibited.
2. Q. I would like to submit a proposal to begin growing specialty crops on my property. Is that allowable under this program?
A. No, applicants may not use SCBGP funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop to make a profit, or to expand production of a single business or organization.
3. Q. Does the SCBGP offer grants to support persons with disabilities?
A. Although there is not a funding category within the SCBGP that specifically focuses on persons with disabilities, CDFA welcomes all proposals that enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops, including among individuals with disabilities. Please refer to [the 2016 Request for Concept Proposals \(RFCP\)](#) for more information on the types of projects the program is seeking. For information on other grant programs that may specifically support persons with disabilities, please visit the [California state grants website](#) and the [federal grants website](#).
4. Q. How likely is a project to receive funding if many of the crops involved are not listed on the eligible crops list? Are some types of specialty crops more likely to receive funding than others?
A. The eligible crops list provided by USDA is not intended to be all-inclusive. Crops that meet the criteria outlined in [USDA Definition of Specialty Crops](#) are eligible to receive funding. All proposals are evaluated on their merit and potential to benefit the specialty crop industry; there is no preference assigned to certain specialty crops.
5. Q. If an organization submits more than one project, is only one eligible to advance to the next round?
A. There is no limit on the number of projects from a single organization that can advance to the next round. Whether or not a proposal advances to the next round of competition depends on the merit of the individual proposal.
6. Q. How can applicants show partnerships, cooperators, and industry support for their projects? Should letters of support be included?
A. There is a section in FFAST where applicants can list cooperating entities. Cooperating entities can include organizations that may receive a portion of the SCBGP funds and/or provide matching funds or in-kind contributions. There is no minimum or maximum number of cooperating entities required. It is not necessary to provide letters of support during the concept proposal phase. Successful applicants will have an opportunity to submit letters of support during the grant proposal phase.
7. Q. Does the organization type question in FFAST refer to the applicant or submitting organization?
A. Please specify the organization type for the applicant organization.
8. Q. If I am applying on behalf of a large government agency, who should be listed as the applicant - the agency or the department? Where should other agencies working on the project be listed?
A. The department should be listed as the applicant. Other agencies that will be working on the project should be listed as cooperating entities.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

9. Q. Is the material covered during the webinars the same as the workshops?
A. Yes, the same information is covered in the workshops and webinars. However, the questions that are asked may be different. We encourage all applicants to visit our website at www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants to review the questions and answers received during the workshops and webinars.
10. Q. How can applicants that have applied unsuccessfully in the past follow up on the feedback they received on their proposals?
A. Applicants can view feedback received for previous proposals by logging into the FFAST system. CDFA encourages applicants to utilize technical and administrative feedback on prior submissions to build stronger proposals. However, please keep in mind that requirements change from year to year; be sure to follow the instructions provided in the [2016 RFCP](#).
11. Q. What attachments are required to be submitted with the concept proposal application?
A. The budget template is the only required attachment in the concept proposal phase. Because this is the only required attachment, the Technical Review Committee is not required to review/consider any additional documents attached to the concept proposal application. For this reason, applicants are discouraged from relying on additional attachments to support or explain their concept proposal.
12. Q. Can a concept proposal address more than one type of specialty crop?
A. Yes, a concept proposal can address more than one type of specialty crop, but it is not required. Benefiting multiple specialty crops does not necessarily increase the chances of a project proposal receiving a SCBGP award.
13. Q. Can nutrition education and research take place in domestic and/or export markets?
A. Yes, but the end result of the project must benefit California specialty crops.
14. Q. Is USDA's guidance and allowable/unallowable costs for 2016 available yet?
A. USDA's allowable/unallowable costs for 2015 are [available online](#). CDFA will update applicants as soon as USDA's 2016 guidance is available; however, this will likely occur sometime between the concept and grant proposal phase. CDFA does not anticipate many significant changes and will notify applicants when USDA's guidance is released.
15. Q. Will the webinar materials or a recording be available online for those who were unable to attend?
A. Yes, CDFA will publish a recording of the webinar and PDF versions of the presentations during the week of November 16. This information will be available on the SCBGP website, www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants.
16. Q. Do certain organization types or commodities receive higher priority for funding than others?
A. There is no consideration given to organization or commodity type in the scoring of proposals. CDFA ensures the review process has no conflicts of interest and reviewers are required to review each project on its individual merits.
17. Q. Are proposals that benefit federally designated promise zones given additional consideration?
A. There is no additional consideration given to proposals that benefit promise zones in the scoring of proposals. However, in USDA's 2015 request for applications, improving food access in underserved communities is considered an issue affecting the specialty crop industry.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

18. Q. Are a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registration on the System for Award Management (SAM) required prior to submitting a concept proposal?
- A. A DUNS number and registration on the SAM is not required prior to submitting a concept proposal. However, if advanced to the grant proposal phase and ultimately awarded SCBGP funds, recipients will need to obtain a DUNS number and register on the SAM before SCBGP funds are awarded. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the registration process early.
19. Q. Can an organization hire new staff or select a contractor to serve as a project director or project manager?
- A. Yes, an applicant organization may hire new staff or select a contractor to serve as the project manager or project director for a project. However, we ask that applicants provide contact information for staff already employed by the organization in the FFAST application. The contact information listed in FFAST is how CDFA will contact you regarding the status of your concept proposal. If new staff are hired, applicants may update the project manager or project director contact information.
-

ELIGIBILITY

1. Q. Can an organization apply to the 2016 SCBGP if they have an ongoing SCBGP project?
- A. Yes, organizations previously awarded SCBGP funds are eligible to apply for 2016 SCBGP funds. This includes organizations with ongoing SCBGP projects.
2. Q. Are marijuana and hemp considered specialty crops?
- A. No, neither marijuana nor hemp are considered specialty crops. Marijuana is ineligible because it is federally controlled as an illegal drug. Hemp is ineligible because it is a fiber crop. Oil seed, field and grain, forage, and fiber crops are not considered specialty crops. Please reference [USDA's list of eligible specialty crops](#).
3. Q. Is it possible to submit a concept proposal on behalf of an organization that has not yet been established? The organization does not yet have a business name or federal tax ID.
- A. No, it is not possible to submit a concept proposal on behalf of an organization that has not yet been established. Applicants must have a legal business name and a federal tax ID in order to submit a concept proposal. You may begin an application in FFAST prior to receiving a federal tax ID number; however, you must enter a federal tax ID number prior to submitting your concept proposal.
4. Q. How do I determine if my proposal is appropriate for SCBGP?
- A. All proposals must solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, meet at least one of the program priorities as described in the [RFCP](#) and be able to achieve at least one outcome measure and indicator to be eligible for this program. Please refer to the [RFCP](#) to determine if your proposal is appropriate.
5. Q. Are limited liability companies (LLCs) eligible to apply?
- A. Limited liability companies that operate as a for-profit, or not-for-profit are eligible to apply for the SCBGP.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

6. Q. If an organization is currently receiving funds from another source, can the organization apply for SCBGP funding?
- A. Yes; however, SCBGP funds cannot duplicate activities funded by another state or federal grant program. If invited to the grant proposal phase, any organization that is currently receiving funding from another state or federal grant program will be required to provide a detailed description that differentiates the activities of the current funding from SCBGP funding.
-

FIXED AMOUNT AWARDS

1. Q. Do fixed amount award proposals use the same application as the other concept proposals?
- A. Yes, fixed amount award proposals should be submitted using the same application as the other concept proposals in FFAST. Fixed amount award proposals will have a separate application form if advanced to the grant proposal phase.
2. Q. Is it necessary to submit the budget template for a fixed amount award proposal? How should the budget for fixed amount awards be determined?
- A. Yes, the budget template is a required attachment for all concept proposals. Submitting a concept proposal without a completed budget template will result in disqualification. Although fixed amount awards will be reimbursed based on outcomes achieved rather than costs incurred, it is still necessary to submit a completed budget template attachment as a basis for your estimated project costs. Budgets for fixed amount awards must be developed in compliance with the federal cost principles, USDA program requirements and CDFA program requirements.
3. Q. Is it necessary to use Product Safety Alliance or other Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recognized curriculum for Food Safety Modernization Act Fixed Amount Award projects, or can applicants develop their own curriculum?
- A. Applicants may develop their own food safety curriculum when applying to the Food Safety Modernization Act Fixed Amount Award, and the use of previously recognized curriculum is not required. However, applicants that develop new curriculum are strongly encouraged to submit their training to FDA for recognition.
4. Q. Can an organization apply for a fixed amount award as well as to one of the other funding categories?
- A. Yes, but all projects submitted must be unique. Applicants cannot submit the same project to multiple funding categories.
5. Q. Do fixed amount awards have the same start date as the other awards?
- A. Yes, the earliest start date for all 2016 SCBGP projects, including fixed amount awards, is October 1, 2016. Projects are allowed to start later than October 1, 2016 but must be completed by March 31, 2019. Please note that fixed amount awards can only be two years in duration.
-

FAAST APPLICATION

1. Q. What are the character limits for each question in the concept proposal? Are spaces included in the character count?
- A. The character limit for each question is listed in the FFAST application. Applicants may enter up to 2,000 characters for the work plan response and up to 1,000 characters for all other responses in the concept proposal application. Character limits include spaces and special characters.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

2. Q. In the project budget tab in FFAST, what is the difference between funds requested, local cost match, and total budget?
A. Funds requested is the amount of SCBGP funding requested from CDFA and must be between \$50,000 and \$450,000 (or between \$50,000 and \$150,000 for fixed amount awards). Local cost match is the amount of matching funds and in-kind contributions committed to your project. Total budget is the sum of funds requested and local cost match.
 3. Q. Is the SCBGP concept proposal application available as a Word document? Is there a page limit?
A. No, the concept proposal application is not available as a Word document. All applicants must complete and submit the concept proposal application using the FFAST system. As a result, there is no page limit. However, each question in FFAST is assigned a character limit; reference FFAST Application Q&A #1 above.
 4. Q. Is information about the project location required?
A. Applicants are not required to enter information about their project's location in FFAST. However, it is helpful for applicants to provide the county because it assists CDFA in determining where to conduct outreach.
-

FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

1. Q. Can an organization submit two projects to the same funding category?
A. Yes, an organization may submit more than one proposal to a single funding category as long as the proposals are for unique projects.
2. Q. For projects that will increase access by getting more specialty crops into stores, is it a requirement to show that they are California grown specialty crops?
A. It is not explicitly a requirement that projects increasing access to specialty crops use exclusively California grown specialty crops. SCBGP funds awarded to California should benefit California grown specialty crops to the extent possible, however it is not a requirement.
3. Q. Can projects emphasize local or regionally grown specialty crops or must all projects benefit California grown specialty crops statewide?
A. Projects that emphasize local or regionally grown specialty crops are acceptable. A statewide California grown emphasis is not required and projects can be region-specific. Please ensure that the project addresses at least one of the program priorities listed for the funding category identified.
4. Q. The training and education category references introducing and recruiting young people to specialty crop careers. Would projects to fund positions be allowable under this category?
A. Apprenticeships and internships are allowable within the program, however, the purpose of SCBGP funding is not to subsidize the costs of staffing or fund positions in the specialty crop industry. Applicants may train interns or apprentices, but should only hire new staff using SCBGP funds when the position is necessary to successfully complete the activities of the project. Hiring new staff solely for the purpose of creating a new position in the specialty crop industry is not appropriate. Proposals submitted to the Equipping Current and Next Generation Specialty Crop Farmers funding category should include programs to introduce or prepare young people for specialty crop careers. Reference the [list of 2015 awarded projects](#) for examples of the types of training projects that have been funded.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

5. Q. What if a project addresses program priorities from multiple funding categories? Which category should the project be submitted to?
A. It is up to the applicant to determine the most appropriate funding category for their project.
6. Q. Do projects submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category have to incorporate the CA GROWN logo? Is it required?
A. No, use of the use of the CA GROWN logo is not required for projects that are submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category. Leveraging California grown messaging and promoting multiple commodities has proven to be an effective way to maximize return on projects. Projects submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category should focus on highlighting specialty crops grown in California.
7. Q. Are examples available of projects that would be eligible under each funding category?
A. Yes, there are examples of possible projects for each funding category provided in the [2016 RFCP](#). Please note that these examples are not intended to be all inclusive.
8. Q. Will proposals submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category be reviewed separately by Buy California Marketing Agreement (BCMA)? Does membership in BCMA impact whether proposals will be approved?
A. Proposals submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category will go through the same administrative and technical review process as proposals submitted to the other funding categories. However, BCMA will provide additional guidance on proposals submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category. Applicants do not have to be a member of BCMA and CDFA will work with BCMA to ensure this process is free from any conflicts of interest.
9. Q. Are all proposals concerning food safety issues required to be submitted as fixed amount awards?
A. No, proposals concerning food safety are not required be submitted as fixed amount awards - it depends on the nature of the project. Fixed amount awards include training and education projects that will assist California specialty crop farmers in meeting the standards developed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Highly technical projects on food safety research should be submitted to the [Center for Produce Safety](#) as part of a separate solicitation process.
10. Q. Does CDFA allocate a set amount of funding or number of projects per funding category?
A. No, CDFA does not allocate a set amount of funding or number of projects per funding category.
-

PROJECT PURPOSE

No questions posted at this time.

PRIOR YEAR SCBGP PROJECTS

1. Q. Is a preference given to proposals that build upon prior year SCBGP projects?
A. No. All proposals are reviewed on their individual merits.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

2. Q. Can an organization submit a proposal that builds on a prior year SCBGP project submitted by a different organization?
- A. There is no prohibition against submitting a proposal that builds upon a prior year project by another organization. However, the applicant must have sufficient access to the prior project to demonstrate how their proposal differs from and builds upon the prior project.
-

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Q. The RFCP states that proposals should demonstrate that the project will become self-sustaining beyond the grant duration and/or that the benefit of the project to California's specialty crop industry will continue beyond the grant duration. How can applicants determine the sustainability of their projects?
- A. It depends on the nature of the individual project. It is possible for projects to demonstrate either or both types of sustainability. For example, a project may generate income that will allow project activities to continue after the grant duration. Other projects may not need to become self-sustaining after the end of the grant duration, in which case applicants should outline a plan to ensure the results of the project will continue to benefit the industry after the grant is complete.
-

POTENTIAL IMPACT

1. Q. The RFCP states that applicants must include the estimated economic impact of their project. What is an example for how an education project could impact the economy?
- A. Discussion of potential economic impact may be less direct in projects involving training and education. In this situation, discuss the big picture impact to the industry over time as a result of your project. One possible example could be industry cost savings due to reduced food safety risk as a result of grower education.
2. Q. Are proposals required to benefit the entire specialty crop industry?
- A. All proposals must benefit the specialty crop industry by solely enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops, but it is not expected that any given proposal will benefit the entire industry. Applicants should estimate the number of specialty crop stakeholders that their project will benefit.
-

OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. Can applicants create their own outcome measures and indicators?
- A. No, applicants must select at least one outcome measure and associated indicator from the [Proposed Outcome Measures Supplement](#).
2. Q. What if there is no existing baseline for a proposal's identified indicator? Is it a requirement to establish a baseline as a part of the project?
- A. Establishing a baseline is only a requirement for proposals that seek to increase specialty crop sales as result of marketing and/or promotion activities. Projects must establish the current level of sales as a part of their project if it does not already exist. There is no baseline required for the other outcome measures. Refer to the [Proposed Outcome Measures Supplement](#) for more specific information on outcomes and indicators.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

3. Q. How many outcome measures and indicators are required? Are applicants allowed to choose more than one?
A. All projects must result in at least one outcome measure. Yes, applicants are allowed to identify more than one outcome measure. For each outcome measure identified, applicants must specify at least one associated indicator.
4. Q. Where can I access a copy of the Proposed Outcome Measures Supplement?
A. The Proposed Outcome Measures Supplement is available here:
http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/pdfs/2016SCBGP_OutcomeMeasuresSupplement.pdf
-

OUTREACH PLAN

1. Q. Can activities discussed in the outreach plan be included in the budget?
A. Yes, applicants may include costs for outreach activities in the budget template, provided the costs are allowable and comply with the federally required rates.
2. Q. If a project will create a website for project outreach, is it necessary to restrict access to the website to California only?
A. No, it would not be necessary to restrict access to the website as long as the project demonstrates that the primary focus and beneficiary is specialty crops in California.
-

PROJECT DURATION

1. Q. Are projects required to last for two years and six months?
A. No, projects are not required to last for two years and six months. As long as projects do not start before October 1, 2016 or end after March 31, 2019, any duration is allowed. However, please note that fixed amount awards must not exceed two years in duration.
-

WORK PLAN

No questions posted at this time.

BUDGET

1. Q. Is the budget template an Excel spreadsheet?
A. No, the budget template for 2016 is a fillable PDF form available here:
http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/pdfs/2016SCBGP_CP_BudgetTemplate_RE.pdf.
2. Q. In 2015, CDFA awarded one project more than \$1,000,000. Why is the maximum award amount \$450,000?
A. A significant majority of SCBGP funds are awarded through the competitive process described in the [RFCP](#). All applicants must request funding of no more than \$450,000. However, CDFA may award funds to projects outside of this process if it determines those projects address urgent priorities recognized by California's specialty crop industry.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

3. Q. Could a proposal be denied if the Technical Review Committee thought that the budget was too high?
A. Reasonableness of a project's budget may be a factor the Technical Review Committee considers in their evaluations. An unreasonably high budget may be a contributing factor in a proposal not moving forward to the grant proposal phase; however, it is not typically the sole issue to keep a proposal from advancing.
4. Q. The RFCP states that proposals will be disqualified for unallowable costs or activities. Should unallowable costs and activities be left out of the concept proposal entirely? Does that mean that proposals must be 100% funded by the SCBGP?
A. No, projects are not required to be 100% funded by the SCBGP. Applicants are allowed to use matching funds or in kind contributions to cover any costs and activities that are not allowable under the SCBGP. In the concept proposal, only describe costs and activities that will be paid for with SCBGP funds; do not include any unallowable costs or activities that will be paid for with matching funds or in-kind contributions. Proposals in which a substantial portion of costs or activities necessary to complete your project are unallowable will be disqualified. If your proposal advances to the grant proposal phase, you will be asked to provide additional detail about funding sources and activities that will be paid for with matching funds.
5. Q. Would renting booth space at a trade show that is not specific to specialty crops be considered an allowable cost?
A. The cost would only be allowable if the applicant's booth at the trade show is solely used to promote specialty crops.
6. Q. What is the General Schedule 15 (GS-15), Step 10?
A. The GS-15, Step 10 is the maximum pay allowed annually and hourly for contractors and consultants by the federal government. Applicants should use the GS-15, Step 10 rate for their area when developing contractual cost estimates to ensure rates are reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services. Contractor costs exceeding the GS-15, Step 10 rate must be paid from a source other than SCBGP funds unless a justification is provided and approved by CDFA and USDA. The 2015 General Schedule (GS) Locality Pay Tables are available here: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2015/general-schedule/>.
7. Q. If an applicant uses contractual rates that are within the federal guidelines, is it still necessary to conduct a competitive bid process?
A. Yes, applicants must conduct a competitive bid process even for contractual rates that are in compliance with GS-15, Step 10.
8. Q. Where should travel costs for contractors be included in the budget - under travel or under contractual?
A. All costs associated with a contractor should be listed under the contractual category. Proposals advanced to the grant proposal phase will be asked to provide a detailed breakdown of contractual costs.
9. Q. Can the total grant funds requested change if the project advances to the grant proposal phase?
A. Yes, the total grant funds requested can change if the project advances to the grant proposal phase. There are no requirements regarding the maximum amount that the budget may change; however, drastic changes (+/- 20%) may be questioned. Please note that CDFA cannot guarantee how the Technical Review Committee will view significant changes in budgeted costs.

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

10. Q. Is there a minimum or maximum cost for special purpose equipment?
A. To be considered special purpose equipment, an item must be scientific or technical in nature and have an acquisition cost greater than \$5,000 per item. The amount that can be charged for special purpose equipment cannot exceed the maximum award amount, \$450,000.
11. Q. If a project involves leasing general purpose equipment, is it allowable to continue leasing the equipment after the end of the grant period?
A. Yes, is it allowable to continue leasing the general purpose equipment. There is no restriction on continuing to lease general purpose equipment after the end of the grant period; however, another funding source must be secured for the equipment lease, as SCBGP funds cannot be expended after March 31, 2019.
12. Q. How can an applicant determine if a piece of equipment is considered special purpose equipment?
A. Special purpose equipment is defined as equipment which is used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. Applicants should utilize the [RFCP](#) and the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs Table](#) to determine whether equipment meets the definition of special purpose equipment.
13. Q. What does the RFCP mean by "Program income cannot be used as profit for an organization and must be reinvested back into the project?" Can you give an example of how program income could be reinvested back into the project and what specifically this means? What should program income be used for after the grant is complete?
A. Any program income generated as a result of project activities cannot be used as a net profit. The income must be spent on activities that support the goals and objectives of the project and must comply with restrictions on allowable and unallowable costs and activities. For example, if a project creates a training program that will generate income from registration fees, that income should be used to allow the training program to continue after the end of the grant period.
14. Q. Is there a guide available to help organizations determine reasonable rates for salary and wages?
A. Salary and wages should be based on your organization's established policy. The amounts listed under salary and wages in the budget template should only reflect the portion of time an employee will spend working on the grant. For example, if a full time employee with an annual salary of \$100,000 spends 5% of their time working on grant activities, only \$5,000 should be charged to the grant to cover their time spent on grant activities.
15. Q. What types of costs should be listed under supplies?
A. Supplies include items that cost less than \$5,000 per unit and are necessary to complete the objectives of your project. For example, a research project may include costs for lab supplies such as glassware, pipettes, reagents, etc. A project that will host a workshop may include supply costs to create folders for attendees. All supply costs must be tied directly and exclusively to the activities of the project. General use office supplies such as pens, paper, printers, and toner that may be used for general office activities are considered an indirect expense and should not be included under supplies.
16. Q. Where should mileage expenses be listed and what rate should be used?
A. List project-related mileage expenses under travel. Please use the IRS approved standard mileage reimbursement rate, currently at \$0.575 per mile for business travel (<https://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates>).

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

17. Q. Is promoting an organization's image, logo, or brand name allowable?
A. No, SCBGP funds must be used to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops rather than to promote an organization's image, logo, or brand name. Projects submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category should focus on promoting the specialty crop identified rather than promoting the CA GROWN logo.
-

GRANT PROPOSAL PHASE

1. Q. Will there be technical assistance for applicants before the grant proposal phase?
A. Yes, CDFA will host webinars and conduct Q&A for the grant proposal phase.
2. Q. How does the review process work between CDFA and USDA for projects that receive funding?
A. CDFA's administrative and technical review process helps to ensure that the projects recommended to USDA for funding are timely and important for California specialty crops and comply with all program rules and regulations. USDA has the final say regarding which projects receive funding. USDA may approach CDFA with questions on specific projects, in which case CDFA will work with the applicant to resolve any issues. In some cases, USDA may ultimately elect to decline a project.
3. Q. What division at USDA are proposals submitted to?
A. CDFA submits grant proposals to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.
4. Q. Does USDA decline proposals submitted to SCBGP?
A. Historically, USDA has not declined SCBGP proposals submitted by CDFA. However, USDA does have final decision making authority, so it is possible for a proposal submitted by CDFA to be declined.
5. Q. Is it possible to notify applicants whether or not they have been awarded funds in July when proposals are submitted to USDA?
A. No. Because USDA has final decision making authority for this program, CDFA cannot notify applicants of the results of their project until final approval is received and awards are announced by USDA.
6. Q. Does SCBGP award partial funding?
A. CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested. This occurs in situations where a project has budgeted unallowable costs.
7. Q. Can the applicant organization change from the concept proposal phase to the grant proposal phase?
A. Yes, if you are invited back to the grant proposal phase, it will be possible to change the applicant organization by contacting the FFAST help desk at (866) 434-1083 or faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov; however, CDFA cannot anticipate how this would be viewed by the Technical Review Committee.
8. Q. What is the process for reporting project outcomes?
A. If your project is awarded funding, you will be required to submit biannual progress reports to account for project activities as well as expenditures. The progress report is used to identify milestones, results achieved, success stories, potential concerns, and other pertinent information, such as program income. Recipients will receive a progress report template prior to the end of each

2016 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

reporting period. For more information, please view most recent [Grant Management Procedures Manual](#).

MATCHING FUNDS AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Q. What is the difference between matching funds and in-kind contributions?
A. Matching funds refers to a dollar amount committed to your project from a source other than the SCBGP. An in-kind contribution is time, property, or supplies donated to your project.
 2. Q. Are matching funds viewed more favorably than in-kind contributions?
A. No, there is no preference given to matching funds or in kind contributions. During the concept proposal phase, applicants are only asked to report a total amount.
 3. Q. Are matching funds or in-kind contributions required?
A. Matching funds and in-kind contributions are not a factor in scoring; however, the Technical Review Committee may view matching funds or in-kind contributions as an indicator of industry support.
 4. Q. Can funds from other state or federal grants be used as matching funds?
A. No, funds from other state or federal grant programs are not considered matching funds.
-

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Q. What is the Technical Review Committee and how does the review process work?
A. The Technical Review Committee is a group of 50-60 volunteers with knowledge and expertise regarding the California specialty crop industry. This committee is broken up by funding category and reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations to CDFA on proposals submitted for funding to California's SCBGP. The reviewers review and score proposals individually then meet to have an open discussion. The committee's recommendations are then presented to CDFA.
2. Q. How does CDFA handle the issue of interested parties serving on the Technical Review Committee and evaluating applications?
A. CDFA has a process in place to ensure that the review process is free from conflicts of interest. Technical Review Committee members are recused from reviewing any proposals for which they or their organization are listed as an applicant, submitter, or cooperator.
3. Q. Does the Technical Review Committee consider whether proposals are from economically disadvantaged communities or areas that have not received funding in the past when evaluating proposals?
A. No, economic status and geographic location are not a factor in the scoring process for proposals. However, in USDA's 2015 request for applications, improving food access in underserved communities is considered an issue affecting the specialty crop industry.