

2019 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Limited Request for Proposals

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE 10.170

Released:
March 12, 2019

Proposals Due:
By 5:00 pm PDT on April 10, 2019
No late submissions accepted.



California Department of Food and Agriculture
Office of Grants Administration
1220 N Street, Room 120
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 657-3231
grants@cdfa.ca.gov

Table of Contents

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| About the Program | 1 |
| Application, Review and Notification | 2 |
| Funding Categories | 3 |
| Proposal Questions | 5 |
| Assistance and Questions..... | 6 |

About the Program

Purpose

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds projects that *solely* enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Specialty crops are fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). Visit <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop> for a list of eligible and ineligible commodities and a comprehensive definition of specialty crops.

The CDFA 2019 SCBGP Request for Concept Proposals set aside up to \$3 million for proposals submitted through a separate process. A portion of that funding is now available through this solicitation. Proposals must support beginning and socially disadvantaged specialty crop farmers¹, including urban farmers, and/or promote increased access or nutrition education in underserved communities throughout California.

This solicitation will utilize a simplified application process and proposals selected under this process will receive technical assistance from CDFA to develop a full proposal for submission to USDA. The intent of this solicitation is to provide a process through which organizations that have been historically underrepresented in the SCBGP can participate.

Funding and Duration

CDFA will award up to \$1 million for proposals through this solicitation. Grant amounts cannot exceed \$100,000. The maximum grant duration is two (2) years. Grant funds cannot be expended before November 1, 2019, or after October 31, 2021. CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

Eligibility and Exclusions

Non-profit organizations and Tribal governments with knowledge and experience in either supporting socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers or improving access and nutrition education in underserved communities are eligible to apply. Individuals; for-profit organizations; local, state, and Federal government entities; and public or private colleges and universities are not eligible to apply. Organizations that have submitted Grant Proposals currently under consideration for funding under the 2019 SCBGP are not eligible to apply. Due to the limited funding available, applicants may submit no more than one proposal.

Additional notes to help determine eligibility:

- Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. For example, the program will not fund a project to start or expand a farm or business venture.
- Recipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that offer equivalent products or services.
- Projects benefiting non-specialty crops will not be selected for funding.

¹ The United States Department of Agriculture defines beginning farmers as an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation. A socially disadvantaged farmer is a farmer or rancher who is a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Application, Review, and Notification

Proposal Application

Applicants are required to download, complete and submit their 2019 SCBGP proposal using the required template available on the SCBGP website: www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants. The application includes information about the applicant organization and the qualifications of the proposal personnel, proposed project objectives, outcomes, and a budget narrative.

Grant Proposals must be submitted by email to grants@cdfa.ca.gov by 5:00 p.m. PDT on April 10, 2019. Submitted proposals will only be considered if the required application template is complete.

Review Criteria

CDFA seeks to fund proposals under this solicitation that provide the greatest direct benefit to California's beginning and socially disadvantaged specialty crop farmers and underserved or underrepresented communities for each dollar spent. Additional consideration will be given to organizations that have not previously received funding under the SCBGP.

Review Process

CDFA will conduct an administrative review of proposals to ensure completeness and appropriateness for the SCBGP. The CDFA Farm Equity Advisor will review proposals for timeliness and relevance to the priorities of this solicitation.

Notification and Feedback

Applicants selected under this solicitation will be notified in early April 2019. All applicants will then be assigned a CDFA Grant Analyst who will provide technical assistance in developing a full proposal for inclusion in California's state plan application to USDA. Proposals not selected for funding will receive feedback to assist in future applications to the SCBGP.

Timeline

| Proposal | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Release Limited Request for Proposals | March 12, 2019 |
| Webinar | March 27, 2019 |
| Proposals Due | April 10, 2019 |
| Proposals Selected | April 2019 |
| Award | |
| Announce and Award Funding | Fall 2019 |

Funding Categories

CDFA has refined the funding categories in the 2019 SCBGP Request for Concept Proposals for this solicitation to emphasize proposals that support beginning and socially disadvantaged specialty crop farmers and/or promote increased access or nutrition education in underserved or underrepresented communities throughout California. All proposals in this solicitation must meet at least one of the program priorities below.

Funding Category 1: Supporting Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Specialty Crop Farmers

Program priorities:

- 1) Training beginning, urban, and socially disadvantaged specialty crop farmers in agronomic, economic, and environmental stewardship skills.
- 2) Introducing and recruiting members of socially disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, including female farmers, to the variety of specialty crop career opportunities.
- 3) Providing culturally competent and appropriate outreach and training on agronomic, economic (farm business and marketing skills), and environmental stewardship skills to diverse groups of California specialty crop producers.
- 4) Providing training on historical or cultural solutions to plant health and pest management concerns.
- 5) Highlighting and encouraging awareness of culturally significant specialty crops and cultivation practices for farmers and/or consumers.
- 6) Developing culturally appropriate networking and training opportunities for socially disadvantaged specialty crop farmers to develop business and technical skills to enhance their specialty crop business.

Funding Category 2: Increasing Access and Nutrition Education in Underserved Communities

Program priorities:

- 1) Increasing the availability of specialty crops in underserved urban and rural areas with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 2) Increasing capacity for specialty crop production and distribution in underserved urban and rural communities.
- 3) Providing outreach and educational opportunities in underserved communities about growing, purchasing, and/or consuming specialty crops.

Proposal Questions

Applicants must respond to the following questions using the template on the SCBGP website:

Funding Category:

Identify the funding category the proposal will address. If the proposal will address more than one funding category, identify the one that the proposal mostly closely addresses.

Project Title:

Concisely describe the project in 15 words or less.

Applicant Organization:

Provide the legal name of the organization that will serve as lead for the project and will receive grant funds. Describe the organization's background and capacity to undertake the work of the project.

Project Oversight:

Identify the key personnel that will be responsible for implementing the project, include a bio or brief summary of their qualifications, background, and experience that will contribute to the success of the project.

Project Description:

Summarize the need for the project, describe the project goals, and present a plan for evaluating and measuring the success of the project.

Project Objectives:

Utilizing the table in the template, describe the objectives the project will accomplish.

Outcome Measures:

- **Outcome:** Using the check boxes provided, select at least one of outcome measures.
- **Indicator:** Using the check boxes provided, identify at least one indicator for each selected outcome. Enter a number, only, in the fillable text fields for each indicator selected. If there are multiple sub-indicators under a selected indicator, enter a value for at least one.
- **Description:** Within the description section for each outcome selected, describe the data collection methods and activities that will be undertaken to monitor and report on the outcome(s) and indicator(s) selected.

External Project Support:

Identify at least one specialty crop stakeholder other than the applicant organization that supports the project.

Budget Narrative:

Provide a breakdown of project costs according to the instructions on the budget narrative section of the proposal template.

Assistance and Questions

For additional information on this solicitation, applicants are encouraged to submit questions via email to grants@cdfa.ca.gov. Questions may be submitted in English or Spanish and a response will be provided in the language submitted. In addition, CDFa will conduct a webinar in English and Spanish on this solicitation, including an overview of the proposal application on March 27, 2019 at 2:00pm PDT. The webinar will also include a Question and Answer session. To participate in the webinar, please email grants@cdfa.ca.gov. A replay of the webinar will be available online no later than March 29, 2019.