

2021 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Grant Proposal Instructions

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE 10.170

Released:

January 12, 2021

Grant Proposals Due:

By 5:00 p.m. PT on February 12, 2021

No late submissions accepted.



California Department of Food and Agriculture

Office of Grants Administration

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About the Program

Purpose

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is pleased to invite successful Concept Proposal applicants to participate in Phase II of the 2021 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) process, submittal of a Grant Proposal.

Grant Proposals must enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets by leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops, assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops, expanding availability and access to specialty crops, and addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers. Specialty crops are fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). Visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [What is a Specialty Crop website](https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgrp/specialty-crop) (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgrp/specialty-crop>) for a list of eligible and ineligible commodities and a comprehensive definition of specialty crops.

Funding and Duration

CDFA anticipates that up to \$22 million will be awarded to projects enhancing the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Grant amounts range from \$50,000 to \$450,000. The maximum grant duration is two (2) years, six (6) months. Grant funds cannot be expended before November 1, 2021 or after April 30, 2024. CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount different than the amount requested.

Eligibility

Only applicants invited to submit a Grant Proposal are eligible to participate in this phase of the solicitation process. Non-profit and for-profit organizations; local, state, and federal government entities including tribal governments; and public or private colleges and universities are eligible to receive funding. Individuals are not eligible to receive funding.

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 must enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Projects primarily or substantially benefitting non-specialty crops will not be selected for funding.
- Grant funds will not be awarded to applicants with an active exclusion or delinquent federal debt according to the federal System for Award Management (SAM). Reference the [Requirements and Limitations section](#) on page 13 and visit sam.gov (<https://sam.gov/SAM/>) for additional information and to verify the status of your organization.
- Grant funds cannot be used to duplicate activities funded by other federal or state grant programs.

Timeline

Schedule for Phase II: Grant Proposal (by invitation only)

Phase II	Date
Invitation to submit Grant Proposals	January 12, 2021
Webinars	January 20, 2021 and January 27, 2021
Grant Proposals due	February 12, 2021, 5:00 p.m. PT
Grant Proposals to USDA for approval	May 2021

Schedule for Awards

Awards	Date
Announce and award funding	Fall 2021

How to Apply

Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST)

Grant Proposals must be submitted electronically using the [FAAST system](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/>) hosted by the State Water Resources Control Board.

The FAAST system is organized into various tabs and utilizes a question and answer format. Questions are answered in either a text box or as a document attachment.

Responses to all questions must be submitted in the manner and format required by the Grant Proposal application in the Questionnaire tab in FAAST without exception. Applications that do not follow the required format and/or incomplete submissions will be deemed ineligible.

The FAAST website contains a Frequently Asked Questions section and a User Manual for the FAAST system. For questions about the FAAST System, please contact FAAST customer service at (866) 434-1083, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or via email, faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov.

Computer System Recommendations

To ensure Grant Proposals and attachments are submitted successfully, CDFA strongly encourages all applicants to comply with the computer system recommendations provided by FAAST. CDFA cannot guarantee that the FAAST system or the required templates will be compatible with other browsers or operating systems. Use of other browsers or operating systems will limit the ability of CDFA and FAAST staff to provide applicants with technical assistance, should any issues arise.

CDFA and FAAST recommend that applicants:

- Use a Windows PC with Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher.
- Disable pop-up blocking software while using FAAST.
- Save work often – the system will time out after 90 minutes and any unsaved work will be lost.

Grant Proposal Questions and Scoring

Applicants are encouraged to review and update the General Information, Project Management, and Cooperating Entities sections in FFAST to ensure the information is current and reflects the Grant Proposal.

Project Description (abstract) summarizes the need for the project, describes the goals and outcomes, and presents a plan for evaluating and measuring the success of the project. This section should be updated as needed. The Project Description should be appropriate for dissemination to the public.

Project Budget amount listed in FFAST should be updated to reflect the Grant Proposal budget amount. Under "funds requested," enter the total amount of SCBGP funds requested for this project; this number must match the amount listed in the Grant Proposal's budget narrative. Under "local cost match," enter the total amount of cost sharing committed to this project from other sources, if applicable. Under "total budget," enter the sum of funds requested plus local cost match.

Applicants must respond to all of the following Grant Proposal questions in the Questionnaire tab as well as upload the required attachments on the Attachments tab in FFAST. For questions that carry over from the Concept Proposal, responses should be expanded to reflect the fully developed Grant Proposal. Failure to answer one or more questions, including both scored and unscored questions, will result in disqualification:

1. Project Purpose (10 Points):

All of the following must be addressed within the text boxes provided:

- Identify the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address.
- Explain why the proposal is important and timely for the specialty crop industry.
- Identify at least one of the 2021 SCBGP program priorities for the chosen funding category as described in the [Request for Concept Proposals](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCBGP_RequestForConceptProposals.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCBGP_RequestForConceptProposals.pdf) and explain how the project addresses this priority.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on how clearly the proposal explains the specific issue, problem, or need the project will address, the timeliness and relevance to the California specialty crop industry, and the demonstrated link to the 2021 SCBGP program priorities.

2. Project Objectives and Work Plan (20 Points):

Download the required [Project Objectives and Work Plan template](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCBGP_ProjectObjectivesandWorkPlan.docx) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCBGP_ProjectObjectivesandWorkPlan.docx), complete it, and upload it to the application using the Attachments tab in FFAST. The Project Objectives and Work Plan attachment must be submitted as a Microsoft Word Document (do not submit a PDF), must use the required Microsoft Word Document template (do not alter the template in any way, except to add or remove project objectives as needed), and must not exceed five pages. For a completed example of the Project Objectives and Work Plan template, reference [Appendix A](#) on page 20.

All of the following must be addressed in the Project Objectives and Work Plan template:

- **PIN:** Provide the five-digit number assigned to the proposal in FFAST.
- **Project Start Date and Project End Date:** Enter the date project activities will begin and the date project activities will end. Projects may not start before November 1, 2021 or end after April 30, 2024.
- **Objective:** Identify the main goals the project is seeking to accomplish. All projects must have at least one objective. If more than six objectives will be achieved, copy and paste additional sections as needed.
- **Objective Activities:** In the tables provided, describe the tasks necessary to accomplish each of the identified project objective(s). If more than six activities will be required for any of the objectives, add additional rows as needed.
- **Performed by:** In the tables provided, identify which members of the project team will do the work for each activity listed (e.g., personnel, project participants, contractors and/or subrecipients, etc.). List individuals by their titles. All individuals for whom SCBGP funding is requested in the Budget Narrative attachment must be responsible for activities listed in the Project Objectives and Work Plan attachment.
- **Timeline:** In the tables provided, indicate the estimated beginning and end dates for when each activity will be accomplished using the three-letter abbreviated month and the four-digit numerical year (e.g., May 2022 – Oct 2022, Jun 2022, etc.). Only include activities occurring within the grant period (November 1, 2021 through April 30, 2024).

Scoring Criteria: 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.

3. Project Beneficiaries (10 points):

All of the following must be addressed within the text boxes provided:

- Estimate the number of project beneficiaries directly impacted by the project. The number cited should be a reasonable estimate of the number of individuals that could realistically be directly impacted by the results of the project. All estimates should be trackable and reportable within the duration of the grant.
- Identify and quantify the project beneficiaries and describe how they will benefit from the project objectives (list the specific specialty crops that will be affected, if possible).
- Address how the proposal benefits the specialty crop industry, rather than directly benefiting a single individual or organization, such as the applicant.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on how clearly the proposal identifies and quantifies the beneficiaries and explains how they will benefit, as well as the relevance and significance of the anticipated project benefit(s) to the specialty crop industry.

4. Specialty Crop Enhancement (unscored):

SCBGP funds must enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops as [defined by USDA](#)

(https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/USDA_Specialty_Crop_Definition.pdf). Therefore, projects that may have the potential to benefit ineligible products or commodities (e.g., farmers' markets, 'buy local' campaigns, general nutrition projects such as those related to MyPlate, etc.) must address how SCBGP funding will be used to enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.

- If the project has the potential to enhance the competitiveness of non-specialty crops, describe in detail what tracking mechanisms and processes are in place or will be implemented to verify all SCBGP funds are expended on activities and costs that enhance the competitiveness of eligible California specialty crops. If cost sharing will be used to cover activities and/or costs that are unallowable under the program, describe the specific funds or contributions that will be used (including their source) and detail the activities and costs they will cover.
- If the project does not have the potential to enhance the competitiveness of non-specialty crops, indicate "This project does not enhance the competitiveness of non-specialty crops."

5. Prior Year SCBGP Projects (unscored):

If the Grant Proposal project will build upon a previous SCBGP funded project, all of the following must be addressed within the text boxes provided:

- Provide the grant agreement number (e.g., 17-0275-001-SC, or SCB16001) for the previous SCBGP project(s) and a summary (three to five sentences) of the outcomes of the previous efforts.
- Describe how this project will differ from and build upon the previous project(s).
- Provide lessons learned from the previous project(s), including potential improvements and how they will be incorporated into the project so that it is more effective and successful at meeting goals and outcomes.

If the project does not build on a previously funded SCBGP project, indicate “This project does not build upon a previously funded SCBGP project.”

6. Project Sustainability (10 Points):

SCBGP projects should have a long-term impact without relying indefinitely on grant funding. In this section, describe:

- The likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on SCBGP funds, and/or;
- The benefit(s) to California’s specialty crop industry resulting from the project that will continue beyond the grant duration.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the extent to which the proposal demonstrates the project will become self-sustaining and/or that the benefit of the project will continue beyond the grant duration without relying indefinitely on SCBGP funding.

7. Other Support from Federal or State Grant Programs (unscored):

Activities funded under the SCBGP cannot duplicate activities funded by another federal or state grant program. If the proposal has been or will be submitted to or funded by another federal or state grant program other than the SCBGP, all of the following must be addressed:

- Identify the federal or state grant program and the agency administering the program.
- List the amount of grant funds requested or awarded by the program.
- Describe how the proposed SCBGP project supplements rather than duplicates efforts funded by the other federal or state grant program.

If the proposal has not been submitted to or funded by another federal or state grant program, indicate “This project has not been submitted to or funded by another federal or state grant program.”

Note: SCBGP will not fund duplicative projects. Failure to disclose other support from federal or state grant programs, whether applied for or received, will result in a proposal not receiving funding, or having an award reduced or terminated. If at any time an applicant is awarded funds from another federal or state grant program, it is the responsibility of the applicant to notify CDFG immediately.

8. External Project Support (10 Points):

Proposals must demonstrate that the specialty crop industry approves of/endorsees the project objectives. In this section, identify at least one specific specialty crop stakeholder and explain why they believe the project is important and timely.

Stakeholders included in the external project support section should:

- Be individuals or organizations involved in the specialty crop industry (e.g., specific growers, companies, certified crop advisors (CCAs) and pest control advisors (PCAs), commodity boards or commissions, trade associations, etc.). Do not include members of the general public, legislators, or any organizations that are not affiliated with the specialty crop industry.
- Be supportive of what the project will accomplish.
- Not be directly involved in the project. The applicant, employees of the applicant, contractors, or any other entity that will receive project funding should not be included. Similarly, organizations that will contribute cost share to the project should not be included under the external project support section, as their participation in the form of project support is apparent and addressed directly in the Cost Sharing summary; reference [Grant Proposal question 11](#) on page 10.

In addition to the narrative response provided in FFAST, applicants may choose to attach optional letters of support (LOS) to their Grant Proposals. LOS should be written on official letterhead and should explain why the stakeholder supports the project. Applicants should attach LOS in PDF format using the following file naming convention: LOS1, LOS2, LOS3, etc. All letters of support must be attached to the Grant Proposal application in FFAST; letters received via mail or email will not be considered.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the relevance and timeliness of the project as demonstrated by the support for and commitment to the project from California’s specialty crop industry.

9. Outcome Measures (20 Points):

Download the required [Outcome Measures template](#) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCBGP_OutcomeMeasuresTemplate.docx), complete it, and upload it to the application using the Attachments tab in FFAST. The Outcome Measures attachment must be submitted as a Microsoft Word Document (do not submit a PDF) and must use the required Microsoft Word Document template (do not alter the template in any way, except to add numbers and descriptions for the outcomes and indicators selected). For a completed example of the Outcome Measures template, reference [Appendix B](#) on page 21.

All of the following must be addressed in the Outcome Measures template:

- **Outcome:** Using the check boxes provided, select at least one of the eight 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 that will be used to monitor and report on the outcome(s) and indicator(s) selected.

Outcome measures and the associated indicators were developed by USDA and the Office of Management and Budget. All selected outcome measures and indicators/subindicators must be achievable within the grant duration. Outcome measures cannot be altered or amended in any way. Altering the language of the outcomes or indicators or providing responses in a format other than that described in the document, will result in disqualification of a proposal. Reference the [Outcome Measures supplement](#)

(https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_OutcomeMeasuresSupplement.pdf), for additional information on the required outcomes and indicators.

Note: Applicants should only select outcome(s) and indicator(s) that can reasonably be achieved within the grant duration. Additionally, all proposals submitted to the Grown In California funding category as well as any other marketing and promotion projects must select Outcome 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the significance of the anticipated project outcome, the relevance to the project activities, soundness of methodology, and likelihood of success. The number of outcomes selected is not a factor in scoring criteria. Applicants should not overstate outcomes or select outcomes and indicators that cannot reasonably be achieved within the grant duration in an effort to improve the likelihood of funding. Failure to successfully achieve outcome measures may adversely affect an applicant's ability to receive funding in the future.

10. Budget Narrative (20 Points):

Download the required [Budget Narrative template](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCB_GP_BudgetNarrative.docx) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCB_GP_BudgetNarrative.docx), complete it, and upload it to the application using the Attachments tab in FFAST. The Budget Narrative attachment must be submitted as a Microsoft Word Document (do not submit a PDF) and must use the required Microsoft Word Document template (do not alter the template in any way, except to add or remove rows in the tables as needed). For a completed example, reference [Appendix C](#) on page 22.

Instructions on required information for each budget section are provided in the Budget Narrative template. Reference the [Supplemental Guidance section](#) on page 12 and the [Requirements and Limitations section](#) on page 12 to ensure all costs requested comply with program requirements.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the reasonableness of the budget and relevance to the project activities and goals.

11. Cost Sharing (unscored):

If matching funds and/or in-kind contributions have been secured, download the required [Cost Sharing template](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCB_GP_Cost_Sharing.docx), (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCB_GP_Cost_Sharing.docx), complete it, and upload it to your application using the Attachments tab in FFAST. The Cost Sharing attachment must be submitted as a Microsoft Word Document (do not submit a PDF) and must use the required Microsoft Word Document template (do not alter the template in any way, except to add or remove rows in the table as needed). For a completed example of the Cost Sharing template, reference [Appendix D](#) on page 31.

If cost sharing has not been secured, indicate “This project will not utilize cost sharing” within the text box provided.

If cost sharing has been secured, all of the following must be addressed in the Cost Sharing template:

- **PIN:** Provide the five-digit number assigned to the proposal in FFAST.
- **Total Amount of Cost Share Committed to the Project:** Enter the grand total of all matching funds and in-kind contributions committed to the project.
- **Amount:** In each row of the table, list the amount of cost share committed from a contributing organization. Add or remove rows in the table, as needed.
- **Type of Cost Share:** Specify whether the cost share is in the form of matching funds or an in-kind contribution. Matching funds refers to a dollar amount committed to a project from a source other than the SCBGP. An in-kind contribution is the estimated dollar value of any time, property, or supplies donated to a project.
- **Source:** Specify the name of the organization that will be contributing the cost share.
- **Summary of Activities or Costs Covered with Matching Funds or In-kind Contributions:** Describe what costs or activities the cost share will cover.

Note: The Cost Sharing template is the only document necessary to evidence matching funds and/or in-kind contributions to a project. Letters of commitment or other evidence of cost sharing are not required.

12. Project Oversight (unscored):

Attach a current resume or curriculum vitae (CV) for the Project Director(s), Project Manager(s), Principal Investigator(s), and any collaborators who will receive a portion of the project funds. Attach resumes or CVs in PDF format and name each document: R1, R2, R3 or CV1, CV2, CV3, etc.

Supplemental Guidance

Outcome Measures

USDA and the Office of Management and Budget have developed SCBGP national outcomes measures mandatory to the program beginning in Federal Fiscal Year 2016. CDFA has developed an [Outcome Measures supplement](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_OutcomeMeasuresSupplement.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_OutcomeMeasuresSupplement.pdf) with additional information on these requirements and to assist applicants in complying with the SCBGP outcome measures.

Enhancing the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops

SCBGP funds must be used to enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory-grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets.

Procuring Goods and Services Using Federal Funds

Federal regulations require that all procurement transactions, including contracting for services, must be conducted in a manner that provides full and open competition and is consistent with the standards described in [2 CFR 200.317 – 200.326](#).

Guidance for Developing the Budget Narrative

In developing the Grant Proposal Budget Narrative, applicants should ensure that all costs are reasonable, necessary to meet the objectives of the project, allowable, and incurred in a manner consistent with the applicant organization's established practices. Both the Budget Narrative and the activities that the requested funds will support must conform to the appropriate cost principles for the applicant organization, USDA program requirements, and the requirements established by CDFA in the [Request for Concept Proposals](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_RequestForConceptProposals.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_RequestForConceptProposals.pdf). Unallowable costs and activities will be removed from a project as a condition of receiving an award. Excessive unallowable costs or activities will result in the disqualification of a Grant Proposal during the administrative review process.

Requirements and Limitations

2021 USDA Guidance

As of the date of this publication, USDA has not provided CDFA or any other state department of agriculture with a Request for Applications or Terms and Conditions for the 2021 SCBGP. If necessary, CDFA will attempt to prepare, and make available, a

supplement to this document to advise applicants of any changes to the program upon receipt of USDA's Request for Applications. CDFA and all proposals will be subject to the terms of USDA's Request for Applications and Terms and Conditions and substantial changes could potentially affect the feasibility of proposals.

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act

If selected for an award, recipients of 2021 SCBGP funds must comply with the [Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 \(FFATA\)](#)

(https://www.fsr.gov/documents/ffata_legislation_110_252.pdf). This includes disclosing the names and total compensation of the five most highly compensated officers of the entity if:

- 1) The entity in the preceding fiscal year received 80 percent or more of its annual gross revenues in Federal awards; and
- 2) \$25,000,000 or more in annual revenues from federal awards; and
- 3) The public does not have access to information about the compensation of the senior executives of the entity through periodic reports filed under section 13(a) or 15 (d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

System for Award Management

All entities applying for funding, including past recipients, must have a [Dun and Bradstreet \(D&B\) Data Universal Numbering System \(DUNS\) Number](#)

(<https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/>). A DUNS Number is a unique, non-indicative, nine-digit identifier issued and maintained by D&B that verifies the existence of a business entity globally. In addition to having a DUNS number, all entities must be registered in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) (<https://sam.gov/SAM/>). Failure to register and maintain an active SAM account will prevent your organization from receiving federal funds. SAM accounts must be renewed annually.

Entities will be required to provide their organization's DUNS number, be registered in SAM, and have no active exclusions before CDFA can enter into an agreement. The registration process can take several months; therefore, applicants are highly encouraged to begin the registration process now.

Federal Cost Principles

Federal cost principles are regulations, based on organization type, used to determine allowable costs and ensure consistent treatment of costs. In addition to CDFA and USDA program requirements, applicants are responsible for identifying the federal cost

principles appropriate to their organization, ensuring the consistent application of cost principles to the SCBGP grant funds, and ensuring contractors or consultants comply with federal cost principle requirements.

- State, local or Indian tribal governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities will be subject to [2 CFR 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=898fdaa0b947dd0bf8c962a137d230dd&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5) (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=898fdaa0b947dd0bf8c962a137d230dd&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5).
- For-profit organizations will be subject to [48 CFR Subpart 31.2](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=9b6facc60293cad8d7dd87f703f5f2fe&rgn=div6&view=text&node=48:1.0.1.5.30.2&idno=48) (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=9b6facc60293cad8d7dd87f703f5f2fe&rgn=div6&view=text&node=48:1.0.1.5.30.2&idno=48).

Unallowable Costs

CDFA has developed an [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_AllowableandUnallowableCostsTable.pdf) to assist applicants in preparing their proposal budget. The table provides overall guidance for handling of common costs and includes USDA and CDFA requirements specific to this program. Proposals with unallowable costs may be subject to disqualification. Reference the [Review and Notification section](#) on page 18.

Indirect Costs

The maximum indirect cost rate is eight (8) percent of total personnel costs (budget category A. Salary and Wages plus category B. Fringe Benefits).

Applicants are responsible for presenting costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances consistently and must not include costs associated with an established indirect cost rate agreement as direct costs. In addition, applicants cannot allocate a cost as a direct cost if it is also incurred as an indirect cost for the same purpose and vice versa.

Direct costs are costs that can be identified specifically with a particular award, project, program, service, or other organizational activity or that can be directly assigned to such an activity relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Typically, direct costs include, but are not limited to, compensation of employees who work directly on the award to include salaries and fringe benefits, travel that is necessary for the project, and equipment and supplies used solely for the project to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”) are costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. The salaries of administrative and clerical staff should normally be treated as indirect costs. Direct charging of these costs may be appropriate where all of the following conditions are met:

- administrative or clerical services are integral to a project or activity;
- individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity;
- such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have the prior written approval of the federal awarding agency; and
- the costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

The following are considered indirect costs and should not be included in the Budget Narrative template as direct costs:

- Information technology services
- Rent
- Utilities and internet service
- Telephone service (mobile and land-line)
- General office supplies
- Insurance
- Maintenance

*Note: The indirect cost rate for SCBGP is limited by federal statute. The rate published in this solicitation document ensures conformity to the federal statute. Applicants that might ordinarily be eligible to receive a higher indirect rate from other state or federal programs are responsible for ensuring that their organization/institution will allow an exception for this program **before** submitting an application.*

Travel

The maximum travel rates allowable are the lesser of the rates in effect at the time of travel as established by the [U.S. General Services Administration \(GSA\)](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates) (<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>), or the Recipient’s established travel policy. Applicants should apply the [current government mileage rate](https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates) (<https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>) for personally owned vehicles used for travel related to the project.

Note: International travel must comply with the [Fly America Act, 49 U.S.C. 40118](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title49/pdf/USCODE-2011-title49-subtitleVII-partA-subpartI-chap401-sec40118.pdf) (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title49/pdf/USCODE-2011-title49-subtitleVII-partA-subpartI-chap401-sec40118.pdf>) and the [Department of State Standardized Regulations](https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=282&menu_id=101) (https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=282&menu_id=101). Also,

consideration should be given to the use of alternative technologies such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing if they are available, appropriate for the project, and less costly.

In accordance with [California Assembly Bill 1887](https://oag.ca.gov/ab1887) (https://oag.ca.gov/ab1887), state funded and state sponsored travel to states with discriminatory laws is prohibited. SCBGP funds cannot be used to support costs for travel to or from states with active discriminatory laws. As of the issuance of this document the following states are subject to California's ban on state funded and state sponsored travel: Alabama, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas.

Review and Notification

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. CDFA also seeks to ensure that funded projects represent all Californians and the entirety of California's diverse specialty crop industry. Applicants' Grant Proposals will be evaluated on the criteria set forth in the [Grant Proposal Questions and Scoring section](#) on page 4.

Review Process

CDFA will conduct two levels of review during the Grant Proposal process. The first level is an administrative review to determine whether Grant Proposal requirements are met, the project activities and costs are allowable, and, if applicable, assess the applicant's past CDFA grant performance.

The second level is a technical review to evaluate the merits of the Grant Proposals. The CDFA SCBGP Technical Review Committee (TRC) will perform the technical review. The TRC is comprised of growers and representatives from industry, universities, public agencies, and non-profits with an interest and expertise in specialty crops and agricultural systems. The scores and feedback of the TRC will be the basis of a funding recommendation subject to the approval of the Secretary of CDFA and final approval by USDA. In determining which proposals will be included in CDFA's state plan application to USDA, CDFA may consider several factors beyond the final scores of the TRC. These factors may include, but are not limited to:

- Developing an overall application with the highest likelihood of USDA approval.
- Ensuring a representative distribution of funding across California's specialty crop industry, including by region and commodity.
- Ensuring a representative distribution of funds across funding areas and funding categories.
- Providing adequate representation of California's socially disadvantaged farmers as defined by the [Farmer Equity Act of 2017](#) (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB1348).
- Providing adequate support for nutrition education and improved access in California's underserved communities.
- Prioritizing projects that address impacts of COVID-19 on California's specialty crop industry.

Notification and Feedback

Projects that are disqualified utilizing the criteria below will be notified within three weeks of the Grant Proposal due date. All other applicants will be notified regarding the status of their Grant Proposals in Fall 2021. Successful applicants will receive an award letter with further instructions on the grant agreement process. Applicants not awarded funds will receive administrative and technical review feedback on their Grant Proposals on the Feedback tab in the FFAST system.

Disqualifications

The following will result in the disqualification of a project proposal:

- Incomplete proposals including proposals with one or more unanswered questions necessary to administrative or technical review.
- Incomplete proposals including proposals with missing, blank, unreadable, corrupt, or otherwise unusable attachments.
- Proposals that include activities outside the grant duration.
- Proposals that include additional content or documentation of any kind to circumvent the character limitations within the FFAST system.
- Proposals for less than the minimum award amount or more than the maximum award amount.
- Proposals with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project objectives, including indirect costs that exceed the limit set forth in this document.
- Proposals in which the outcome measures and/or indicators and/or sub-indicators are altered.

APPEAL RIGHTS: Any discretionary action taken by the Office of Grants Administration (OGA) may be appealed to CDFA's Office of Hearings and Appeals within ten (10) days of receiving a notice of disqualification from CDFA. The appeal must be in writing and signed by the responsible party named on the grant application or their authorized agent. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the OGA decision being challenged. The submission must be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Hearings and Appeals, 1220 N Street, Suite 315, Sacramento CA 95814 or emailed to CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov. If submissions are not received within the time frame provided above, the appeal will be denied.

Assistance and Questions

Grant Proposal Webinars

CDFA will conduct two webinars for applicants invited to the Grant Proposal phase, as noted in the [Timeline](#) on page 2. The webinars will provide additional information on developing a Grant Proposal, allowable and unallowable costs, and participant questions will be addressed. All applicants are encouraged to participate in one of the two webinars. Please visit the [CDFA SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) for links to register.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

CDFA will conduct three rounds of Q&A to address general questions about the Grant Proposal phase. Email all questions about the solicitation process to: grants@cdfa.ca.gov. Responses to all questions received during the webinars or by email will be posted to the [CDFA SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) according to the following schedule:

Schedule for Q&A

Questions Received by:	Responses Posted by:
January 25, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. PT	January 29, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. PT
February 1, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. PT	February 5, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. PT
February 8, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. PT	February 10, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. PT

February 8, 2021 at 8:00 am PT is the final deadline to submit questions for the Grant 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.

Appendix A: Project Objectives and Work Plan Example

Proposal Identification Number (PIN)	12345
Project Start Date	11/01/2021
Project End Date	04/30/2024

Objective 1: Develop a California specialty crop nutrition campaign, “Cooking With Parents,” aimed at encouraging children to try one new California specialty crop each month and cook with their parents.

Objective 1 Activities	Performed by	Timeline
Develop overall campaign goals and objectives.	Project Director	Nov 2021 – Dec 2021
Create educational poster to be distributed to local schools.	Designer	Jan 2022 – Mar 2022
Prepare take home kits for children to use with their parents.	Project Manager	Mar 2022 – May 2022

Objective 2: Identify local partnerships.

Objective 2 Activities	Performed by	Timeline
Identify local schools that want to participate in the campaign.	Education Manager	May 2022 – Jul 2022
Identify a local chef willing to conduct cooking demonstrations.	Project Manager	May 2022 – Jul 2022
Schedule classroom instruction time.	Project Manager	Jul 2022 – Aug 2022
Conduct a pre-survey to determine children’s knowledge and interest in consuming fruits and vegetables.	Project Evaluator	Aug 2022 – Oct 2022

Objective 3: Conduct, “Cooking With Parents,” in local schools.

Objective 3 Activities	Performed by	Timeline
Conduct, “Cooking With Parents,” demonstrations in local schools, once a month.	Chef, Nutrition Coordinator	Oct 2022 – Oct 2023
Distribute take home kits and encourage students to cook with their parents.	Nutrition Coordinator	Oct 2022 – Oct 2023

Objective 4: Track and publish project results.

Objective 4 Activities	Performed by	Timeline
Conduct a post-project survey and track project results.	Project Evaluator	Oct 2023 – Dec 2023
Publish project results on the company website and social media.	Web Designer	Dec 2023 – Apr 2024

Appendix B: Outcome Measures Example

Proposal Identification Number (PIN)	12345
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Select at least one of the eight outcome measures and at least one indicator for each selected outcome. Complete the fillable text fields for the indicator(s) selected. (Note: If there are multiple sub-indicators under the selected indicator, applicants must enter a value for at least one.) Within the Description section, describe the data collection methods for the outcome(s) and indicator(s) selected. Applicants may delete or leave blank any outcomes not applicable to their proposal. Outcome measures and the associated indicators were developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Office of Management and Budget and cannot be altered or amended in any way. Altering the language of the outcomes or indicators, or providing responses in a format other than that described in the document will result in disqualification of a proposal.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indicator 1: Sales increased from \$40 million to \$60 million and by 50 percent as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities.
Description of data collection methods: Sales data will be collected using a series of surveys provided to all Sacramento County winegrape growers. An initial survey to be distributed in November 2021 will establish the baseline price that growers received for winegrapes. This survey will be repeated in 2022 and 2023 to monitor the increase in winegrape sales that has occurred during the grant duration. Survey questions will include the price of winegrapes per ton, volume of cases sold, and number of jobs created since the beginning of promotional efforts. Data collected will be used to monitor the increase in sales due to project activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Outcome 2: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption.
<input type="checkbox"/> Indicator 1: Of the <u>Enter number</u> children and youth reached, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Enter number</u> gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops. <u>Enter number</u> reported an intention to eat more specialty crops. <u>Enter number</u> reported eating more specialty crops.
<input type="checkbox"/> Indicator 2: Of the <u>Enter number</u> adults reached, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Enter number</u> gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops. <u>Enter number</u> reported an intention to eat more specialty crops. <u>Enter number</u> reported eating more specialty crops.
<input type="checkbox"/> Indicator 3: <u>Enter number</u> new and improved technologies and processes to enhance the nutritional value and consumer acceptance of specialty crops (excluding patents).
<input type="checkbox"/> Indicator 4: <u>Enter number</u> new specialty crops and/or specialty crop products introduced to consumers.
Description of data collection methods: <u>Enter a description of the data collection methods that will be used to demonstrate progress toward achieving the selected Indicator(s) and Subindicator(s).</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Outcome 3: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access and awareness.

Appendix C: Budget Narrative Example

Proposal Identification Number (PIN)	12345
Total Amount of SCBGP Funds Requested	\$175,659

Applicants should review the Grant Proposal Instructions and Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities Table available on the [SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/specialty_crop_competitiveness_grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/specialty_crop_competitiveness_grants/) prior to developing their budget narrative.

All expenses described in this budget narrative must be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Only include costs that will be covered by the SCBGP. Do not include any costs/activities that will be covered by cost sharing.

For categories A through H, complete the tables provided below by filling in the requested information; applicants may add or remove rows as needed. In addition, provide a written justification of the costs listed for categories A, C, D, E, F, and G, ensuring justifications address all the specified criteria.

A. SALARY AND WAGES

Salary and Wages Table:

List the employees of the applicant organization whose time and effort will be covered by SCBGP funds.

For each employee, provide:

- The title (e.g., Graduate Student Researcher) or role on the project (e.g., Principal Investigator, Project Manager, etc.).
- The individual's name. If not yet identified, enter "To Be Determined."
- The level of effort on the project. For hourly employees, provide the total number of hours to be worked over the entire grant duration. For salaried employees, provide the percent full time equivalent (% FTE).
- The total amount of funds requested for the individual.

IMPORTANT: All individuals listed under category A. Salary and Wages must be listed in the Project Objectives and Work Plan.

#	Title, Name	Level of Effort (# of hours or % FTE)	Funds Requested
1	Postdoctoral Researcher, Jane Scientist	50% FTE	\$55,000
2	Graduate Student Researcher, To Be Determined,	25% FTE	\$16,750
3	Undergraduate Student Assistant, To Be Determined	500 hours	\$6,500
Salary and Wages Subtotal			\$78,250

Salary and Wages Justification:

For each individual listed in the table above, provide a brief summary of their duties and identify the project objective number(s) from the Project Objectives and Work Plan that they will be responsible for completing.

Employee 1: Postdoctoral Researcher, Jane Scientist. The Postdoctoral Researcher will finalize development of the field monitoring design and coordinate with growers, oversee field work, manage curation and identification of specimens, analyze data and integrate data into the decision model, implement grower field days, prepare the grower newsletter, and conduct project outreach. (Objectives 1–7).

Employee 2: Graduate Student Researcher, To Be Determined. The Graduate Student Researcher will help collect field data, curate and help to identify specimens and enter data, maintain test plots, and participate in project outreach. (Objectives 3, 4, and 7).

Employee 3: Undergraduate Student Assistant, To Be Determined. The Undergraduate Student Assistant will help with specimen curation and data entry and will work closely with the Postdoctoral Researcher and the Graduate Student Researcher and perform tasks as needed. (Objective 3).

B. FRINGE BENEFITS

Fringe benefits are calculated as a percentage of an individual's salary or wages and should be determined according to the applicant organization's established fringe benefits policy.

For each employee, provide:

- The title (e.g., Graduate Student Researcher) or role on the project (e.g., Principal Investigator, Project Manager, etc.).
- The individual's name. If not yet identified, enter "To Be Determined."
- The fringe benefit rate.
- The total amount of funds requested for the individual.

#	Title, Name	Fringe Benefit Rate (% of salary or wages)	Funds Requested
1	Postdoctoral Researcher, Jane Scientist	19%	\$10,450
2	Graduate Student Researcher, To Be Determined	36%	\$6,030
3	Undergraduate Student Assistant, To Be Determined	2%	\$130
Fringe Benefits Subtotal			\$16,610

FRINGE BENEFITS POLICY: The applicant confirms that the organization's established fringe benefits policy was used in determining the fringe benefits costs listed above.

C. TRAVEL

Travel Table:

Provide a description of all travel in support of project activities that will be covered by SCBGP funds.

Project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. Allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the

maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

For each project related trip, provide:

- The trip destination (city and state). (Do not list a county or general area.)
- The type of travel expense incurred (e.g., lodging, airfare, mileage, etc.). Add additional rows as needed.
- The unit of measure for each expense (e.g., nights, roundtrip flights, miles, gallons, etc.).
- The number of units for each expense (e.g., 1 night, 1 roundtrip flight, 250 miles, etc.).
- The cost per unit for each expense (e.g., \$95 per night, \$500 per roundtrip flight, \$0.56 per mile, etc.).
- The number of individuals claiming each expense.
- The total funds requested.

#	Trip Destination	Type of Expense	Unit of Measure	Number of Units	Cost per Unit	Number Claiming Expense	Funds Requested
1	Monterey, CA	Mileage	Miles	360	\$0.56	1	\$202
		Lodging	Nights	3	\$154.00	2	\$924
		Per Diem (First and Last)	Days	2	\$57.00	2	\$228
		Per Diem	Days	2	\$76.00	2	\$304
2	Madera, CA	Rental Car	Days	1	\$50.00	1	\$50
		Parking	Days	1	\$16.00	1	\$16
		Fuel	Gallons	10	\$3.00	1	\$30
		Train	Days	1	\$32.00	1	\$32
		Per Diem (First and Last)	Days	1	\$53.25	2	\$107
3	Los Banos, CA	Mileage	Miles	240	\$0.56	1	\$134
		Lodging	Nights	1	\$94.00	2	\$188
		Per Diem (First and Last)	Days	1	\$41.25	2	\$83
4	Philadelphia, PA	Airfare	Round Trip	1	\$344.00	1	\$344
		Lodging	Nights	3	\$164.65	1	\$494
		Per Diem (First and Last)	Days	2	\$45.75	1	\$92
		Per Diem	Days	1	\$61.00	1	\$61
						Travel Subtotal	\$3,289

Travel Justification:

For each trip listed in the table above, provide the approximate dates of travel, the purpose of the trip, and a justification for how the trip will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. All trips must correlate with the activities outlined in the Project Objectives and Work Plan. List the project objective number(s) associated with each trip at the end of the justification. Multiple trips for the same purpose may be grouped together rather than providing separate, duplicative justifications. If a

location for a trip is not known (e.g., the location of a future conference) use the location of a previous year's conference or best, educated estimate.

Trip 1 (11/2021): The Postdoctoral Researcher and the Graduate Student Researcher will travel from Sacramento, CA to Monterey, CA to conduct a focus group. (Objective 1).

Trip 2 (12/2021): The Postdoctoral Researcher and the Graduate Student Researcher will travel from Sacramento, CA to Madera, CA for sample collection. (Objectives 1, 3-4).

Trip 3 (01/2023 – 03/2023): The Postdoctoral Researcher and the Graduate Student Researcher will travel from Sacramento, CA to Los Banos, CA to conduct a workshop. (Objective 7).

Trip 4 (03/2024): The Postdoctoral Researcher will travel from Sacramento, CA to Philadelphia, PA to present the project results at the Specialty Crop Research Conference. The conference cost does not include meals. (Objective 7).

SCBGP TRAVEL POLICY: The applicant confirms that the organization will adhere to the travel costs established by the Federal Travel Regulation issued by GSA when completing the above-mentioned trips, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

D. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH EQUIPMENT

Scientific Research Equipment Table:

List any scientific research equipment to be purchased with SCBGP funds. Scientific research equipment is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property that is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities; has a useful life of more than one year; and has an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit.

For each individual unit of scientific research equipment, provide:

- The name of the item and manufacturer.
- The grant year in which the scientific research equipment will be purchased (e.g., Year 1, Years 2-3).
- The total funds requested per unit (must equal or exceed \$5,000 per unit).

#	Item Name	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1	Thermo Scientific 8000 AquaMate UV-Vis Spectrometer	Year 1	\$5,995
Equipment Subtotal			\$5,995

Scientific Research Equipment Justification:

For each piece of scientific research equipment listed in the table above, provide a description of the item and a justification for how it will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. List the project objective number(s) from the Project Objectives and Work Plan associated with each piece of scientific research equipment at the end of the justification.

Item 1: A Thermo Scientific 8000 AquaMate UV-Vis Spectrometer is required for processing the water samples needed to achieve Objective 3. This project team does not own or have access to this equipment. (Objective 3).

E. SUPPLIES

Supplies Table:

List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts to be purchased with SCBGP funds. Supplies are items costing less than \$5,000 per unit. This does not include general use office supplies.

For each supply, provide:

- The type of supply.
- The cost per unit.
- The number of units to be purchased.
- The grant year in which the supply will be purchased (e.g., Year 1, Years 2-3).
- The total funds requested for the supply (must be less than \$5,000 per unit).

#	Item Type	Cost per Unit	Number of Units	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1	Sample containers (20/pack)	\$5.00	4	Year 1-2	\$20
2	Pipettes (100/unit)	\$4.00	1	Year 1	\$4
3	Gloves (100/box)	\$15.00	2	Year 1	\$30
4	Glassware	\$100.00	1	Year 1	\$100
5	Petri dishes (500/pack)	\$167.00	1	Year 1	\$167
6	Notebooks	\$2.00	10	Year 1-3	\$20
7	Binders	\$5.00	100	Year 3	\$500
Supplies Subtotal					\$841

Supplies Justification:

For each supply listed in the table above, provide a description of the item(s) and a justification for how it will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. List the project objective number(s) from the Project Objectives and Work Plan associated with each expense at the end of the justification.

Supplies 1-6: Supplies needed for collecting and processing samples. (Objective 3).

Supply 7: Binders are needed to provide handouts, worksheets, and other materials to workshop attendees. (Objective 7).

F. CONTRACTUAL

Contractual Table:

Provide an overview of the contractual costs to be covered with SCBGP funds. Contractual costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship.

For each contractor that will conduct project activities and receive grant funds, provide:

- The contractor name/organization.
- The fee structure of the contractor (e.g., Salary and Wages, Fees for Professional Services, Flat-Rate). Additional information on fee structures is available on the Procuring Goods and Services Using Federal Funds supplement available on the [SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/specialty_crop_competitiveness_grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/specialty_crop_competitiveness_grants/).
- The total funds requested for the contractor.

IMPORTANT: All organizations listed under category F. Contractual must be listed in the Project Objectives and Work Plan.

#	Contractor Name/Organization	Fee Structure	Funds Requested
1	Information Management, Inc.	Salary and Wages	\$27,485
2	Agricultural Imaging Services	Flat Rate	\$30,000
Contractual Subtotal			\$57,485

Contractual Justification:

For each contractor listed in the table above, provide a description of the project activities the contractor will accomplish to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project.

Provide a justification for any of the following circumstances:

- If the contractor's salary/hourly wages or fee for professional services exceeds the General Schedule Grade 15 Step 10 (GS 15 Step 10) for the locality in which work will occur.
- If the contractor will utilize a flat-rate structure, describe the steps taken to determine the rate is reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services.

All activities must correlate with the activities outlined in the Project Objectives and Work Plan. List the project objective number(s) associated with each contractor at the end of the description and justification.

Complete the appropriate budget subcategories for each contractor (except for contractor's using a flat-rate fee structure). Copy additional rows if needed.

Contractor 1: Information Management, Inc. Information Management, Inc. will update the interactive web-based specialty crop decision support system. The hourly rate for the Systems Analyst exceeds the GS 15 Step 10 rate for the Sacramento, CA area. This expense is justified due to the highly specialized nature of the work to be performed and the fact that rates for three Systems

Analysts with similar skill sets were obtained showing that this rate is reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services. (Objective 3).

Contractor 1: A. Salary and Wages / Fees for Professional Services

#	Title, Name	Level of Effort (# of hours or % FTE)	Funds Requested
1	Systems Analyst, Jane Programmer	200 hours	\$18,000
Salary and Wages Subtotal			\$18,000

Salary and Wages/Fees for Professional Services Justification:

Employee 1: Systems Analyst, Jane Programmer. The Systems Analyst will charge \$90/hour for a total of 200 hours to update the interactive web-based specialty crop decision support system. (Objective 3).

Contractor 1: B. Fringe Benefits

#	Title, Name	Fringe Benefit Rate (% of salary or wages)	Funds Requested
1	Systems Analyst, Jane Programmer	40%	\$7,200
Fringe Benefits Subtotal			\$7,200

Contractor 1: C. Travel

#	Trip Destination	Type of Expense	Unit of Measure	Number of Units	Cost per Unit	Number Claiming Expense	Funds Requested
1	Los Banos, CA	Mileage	Miles	240	\$0.56	1	\$134
		Lodging	Nights	1	\$94.00	1	\$94
		Per Diem (First and Last)	Days	1	\$41.25	1	\$41
Travel Subtotal							\$269

Travel Justification:

Trip 1 (01/2023): The Systems Analyst will travel from Sacramento, CA to Los Banos, CA to conduct a workshop. (Objective 7).

Contractor 1: D. Scientific Research Equipment

No costs requested

Contractor 1: E. Supplies

No costs requested

Contractor 1: F. Contractual

No costs requested

Contractor 1: G. Other

No costs requested

Contractor 1: H. Indirect Costs

Total Personnel Costs (A. Salary and Wages + B. Fringe Benefits)	Indirect Cost Rate (8% maximum)	Total Indirect Funds Requested
\$25,200	8%	\$2,016

Contractor 2: Agricultural Imaging Services. Agricultural Imaging Services will obtain airborne multispectral and thermal imagery over selected orchards during the first two growing seasons of the project duration. The purpose is to derive the orchard characteristics including tree density, leaf area index, flowering intensity and duration, and cultivar overlap to be coupled with bee activity and weather data for yield prediction. The intensive flight will be conducted to collect daily bloom imagery over two weeks in February over selected orchards to cover the right mix of factors from south to north. Given the complexity of the task, the contractor could not provide the cost of service on the basis of hourly rate and estimated number of hours. Instead, the cost was calculated based on 75,000 acres of aerial imagery with a flat rate of \$15,000 per year for Years 1 and 2. Quotes were obtained from three vendors. This rate is reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services. The project team has conducted similar work previously at a comparable cost. (Objectives 1-3).

PROCUREMENT STANDARDS: The applicant confirms that the organization followed the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations and conform to the federal laws and standards identified in [2 CFR Part 200.317 through 326](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=313c76bda61d220f0d91e48c3906d090&mc=true&n=sp2.1.200.d&r=SUBPART&ty=HTML#se2.1.200_1317) (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=313c76bda61d220f0d91e48c3906d090&mc=true&n=sp2.1.200.d&r=SUBPART&ty=HTML#se2.1.200_1317), as applicable. If the contractors are not already selected, the organization will follow the same requirements.

G. OTHER

Other Table:

List any expenses to be covered with SCBGP funds that are not covered in the previous budget categories. Expenses in this category may include, but are not limited to, fees for meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, stipends, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection.

For each expense listed under other, provide:

- The type of expense.
- The cost per unit.
- The number of units to be purchased.
- The grant year in which the supply will be purchased (e.g., Year 1, Years 2-3).
- The total funds requested.

#	Expense Description	Cost per Unit	Number of Units	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1	Conference registration fee	\$500.00	1	Year 3	\$500
2	Graduate Student Researcher tuition	\$1,700.00	3	Years 1-3	\$5,100
Other Subtotal					\$5,600

Other Justification:

For each expense listed above, provide a description of the expense and a justification for how it will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. List the project objective number(s) from the Project Objectives and Work Plan associated with each expense at the end of the justification.

Non-travel related meal costs must include an adequate justification to support that these expenses are not entertainment costs.

Expense 1: Conference registration fees are requested for the Postdoctoral Researcher to present the project results at the Specialty Crop Research Conference. (Objective 7).

Expense 2: A mandatory fee remission for the Graduate Student Researcher (to be hired) is a benefit of employment and is in accordance with University policy. (Objective 1-7).

H. INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect Table:

The indirect cost rate must not exceed 8 percent of total personnel costs (category A. Salary and Wages plus category B. Fringe Benefits).

Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be readily identified with an individual project, program, or organizational activity. These costs generally include facilities operation and maintenance costs (such as rent, internet, electric, gas, etc.), depreciation, and administrative expenses.

In the table below, provide:

- The total of applicant personnel costs (A. Salary and Wages + B. Fringe Benefits).
- The indirect cost rate to be charged (8 percent maximum).
- The total indirect funds requested.

Total Personnel Costs (A. Salary and Wages + B. Fringe Benefits)	Indirect Cost Rate (8% maximum)	Total Indirect Funds Requested
\$94,860	8%	\$7,589

Appendix D: Cost Sharing Example

Proposal Identification Number (PIN)	12345
Total Amount of Cost Share	\$75,000

Amount	Type of Cost Share <i>*(Matching Funds or In-Kind Contribution)</i>	Source	Summary of Activities or Costs Covered with Cost Share
\$15,000	In-Kind Contribution	California University	Lab Manager Jane Doe will donate 15 percent of her time for two years to supervise plant storage conditions and oversee plant analysis by the Student Assistants.
\$15,000	Matching Funds	California University	California University will pay for travel costs incurred to carry out Objectives 2-3.
\$20,000	In-Kind Contribution	Sprouts Nursery	Sprouts Nursery will donate greenhouse space to be utilized by the Lab Manager Jane Doe to conduct plant analyses. Rental costs of greenhouse space are valued at \$20,000.
\$5,000	Matching Funds	Sprouts Nursery	Sprouts Nursery will pay for 10 percent of salary for a nursery assistant to help with Objectives 1-2.
\$20,000	Matching Funds	Plant Commission	The Plant Commission will purchase field equipment needed for Objectives 1-2 and will pay the publication costs for outreach materials.

** Matching funds refers to a dollar amount committed to your project from a source other than the SCBGP. An in-kind contribution is the estimated dollar value of any time, property, or supplies donated to your project.*

Appendix E: Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. **Q. When are Grant Proposals due?**

A. Grant Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. PT on February 12, 2021 using the [Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool \(FAAST\)](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/>). Late submissions will not be accepted.

2. **Q. The phrase “solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops” was removed from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) under the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill). How does this change the program and can funds now benefit non-specialty crops?**

A. The removal of this phrase does not substantially change the SCBGP, rather, this amendment and the additional Farm Bill language that replaced this phrase, clarifies methods through which specialty crop competitiveness may be enhanced. These methods were largely already present in the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s (CDFA) program priorities. This language also supports that some projects may have an ancillary benefit to non-specialty crops while primarily benefiting specialty crops. SCBGP funds still cannot directly benefit an ineligible commodity or provide a benefit or profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

3. **Q. Is a recording or PowerPoint of the 2021 SCBGP Grant Proposal webinar available?**

A. Links to a recording of the 2021 Grant Proposal webinar will be posted to the [CDFA SCBGP website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/) following the final webinar. PDF copies of the PowerPoint presentations will be available for download during the webinar or upon request via email to grants@cdfa.ca.gov. In addition, answers to questions received during both webinars will be incorporated into the weekly Questions & Answers (Q&A) posted to CDFA’s website.

4. **Q. Do any of the Grant Proposal attachments have a page limit?**
- A. The only Grant Proposal attachment with a page limit is the Project Objectives and Work Plan, which cannot exceed five pages. The Outcome Measures, Budget Narrative, and Cost Sharing attachments do not have a maximum number of pages. While these documents do not have a maximum number of pages, content contained therein should be appropriate, necessary, and responsive to the intended purpose of the form. Providing additional content in an attachment to circumvent the character limitation for a question in FFAST (e.g., providing additional information on project purpose within the Outcome Measures template) may result in disqualification.
5. **Q. How can applicants access the Technical Review Committee (TRC) and CDFA Administrative Review Feedback for their Concept Proposals in FFAST?**
- A. To view feedback for a Concept Proposal, log on to the [FAAST system](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/>) with the username and password used to submit the Concept Proposal. Click on Processed Applications, select the project's title and click on the Feedback tab. If the Concept Proposal feedback is not viewable in FFAST for any reason, please contact CDFA via grants@cdfa.ca.gov for assistance. To maintain the integrity of the competitive process, CDFA is unable to provide applicants with clarification on feedback provided in FFAST.
6. **Q. Can applicants include other attachments outside of the required or optional attachments mentioned in the 2021 Grant Proposal Instructions?**
- A. Attachments other than the required or optional attachments detailed in the Grant Proposal Instructions, including links embedded in the FFAST application or required attachments, are highly discouraged. TRC members are not required to review extraneous attachments. Proposals that include additional documentation of any kind to circumvent the character limitations within the FFAST system may be disqualified.
7. **Q. Can project activities occur before November 1, 2021 or after April 30, 2024? If so, can the costs of those activities be charged to the grant?**
- A. Expenses for activities occurring before November 1, 2021 or after April 30, 2024 cannot be charged to the grant. Applicants may use cost sharing to fund activities prior to the start of the grant duration; however, activities occurring before grant awards are announced and grant agreements are executed would be subject to

the risk that grant funding is not subsequently received. Additionally, recipients may request a one-time extension of up to 60 calendar days when it can be demonstrated that a project has been delayed due to extraordinary circumstances. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Reference the Project Management section of the Grant Management Procedures Manual available on the [CDFA SCBGP Grant Recipient Resources website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/RecipientResources.html) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/RecipientResources.html) for more information.

8. **Q. Can substantial changes be made to the project described in the Concept Proposal?**
 - A. Applicants may revise and refine their project during the Grant Proposal phase. Some degree of change is anticipated in response to Grant Proposal requirements and feedback provided; however, substantial changes are discouraged. CDFA cannot anticipate how changes to the scope of a project will be viewed by the TRC.

9. **Q. Can applicants be awarded funding for more than one SCBGP project?**
 - A. Applicants may be awarded funding for more than one SCBGP project; however, duplication of costs or activities is not permitted. In addition, applicants should ensure they have adequate capacity to effectively manage multiple SCBGP awards.

10. **Q. Are applicants required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting a Grant Proposal?**
 - A. A DUNS number and registration in SAM are not required prior to submitting a Grant Proposal. However, successful 2021 applicants will be required to provide the applicant organization's DUNS number and be registered with SAM before SCBGP funds are awarded. Applicants are highly encouraged to begin the registration process now as the process can be lengthy. Note that failure to register and maintain an active SAM account will prevent an organization from receiving federal funds. SAM accounts must be renewed annually.

12. **Q. When are the 2021 SCBGP awards announced and can CDFA inform applicants of the status of their application(s) prior to the announcement?**
- A. 2021 SCBGP awards will be announced in Fall 2021. USDA has final approval of all proposals awarded funding; therefore, CDFA cannot advise applicants of their project status before awards are announced.
13. **Q. The Review Process section of the Grant Proposal Instructions states that there are other factors beyond the TRC scores and feedback that will determine which proposals will be submitted to USDA. Does this mean that a proposal that receives a lower overall score could be funded over a proposal with a higher overall score?**
- A. While scoring by the TRC is the most substantial factor in selecting proposals, it is possible for a lower scoring proposal to receive funding over a proposal with a higher score.

FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

1. **Q. Can a Grant Proposal be submitted under a different funding category than the Concept Proposal?**
- A. A Grant Proposal cannot be submitted under a different funding category than the Concept Proposal.

FAAST APPLICATION

1. **Q. How can applicants access the Grant Proposal application in FAAST?**
- A. To view the Grant Proposal application, log onto the [FAAST system](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov) (<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>) with the username and password used to submit the Concept Proposal. Click on Active Applications, select the project's title and click on the Questionnaire tab.

2. **Q. Are there character limits for each section of the Grant Proposal application in FFAST?**

A. FFAST imposes text box character limits, clearly marked in red text at the bottom of each text box. The character limits range from 100 to 1,500 characters including letters, numbers, spaces, punctuation, and hidden formatting code. Figures, images, tables, and hyperlinks are not allowed.

3. **Q. Can figures, pictures, or tables be included in the proposal?**

A. The FFAST system is text based and not designed to facilitate figures, pictures, or tables. Additionally, projects selected for funding must conform with the application formatting requirements developed by USDA for this program so attachments should not be altered to include figures, pictures, or additional tables.

OTHER SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

1. **Q. Should an applicant inform CDFA if they applied to another agency to fund a project submitted to the 2021 SCBGP? What if both agencies agree to fund the project?**

A. An applicant must inform CDFA if they apply and/or receive funding for a project that has been submitted to the 2021 SCBGP. SCBGP funds cannot duplicate activities supported by other state or federal programs. If awarded funding from another source, applicants must either demonstrate that funds from each program will go towards different activities or decline funding from one program or the other.

EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

1. **Q. Who should be listed in the External Project Support response?**

A. The External Project Support response should identify at least one specific specialty crop stakeholder and explain why they believe the project is important and timely for the specialty crop industry. Specialty crop stakeholders include individuals/organizations involved in the specialty crop industry such as growers, companies, certified crop advisors (CCAs) and pest control advisors (PCAs), commodity boards or commissions, trade associations, etc. The External Project Support response should not reference the applicant. In addition, members of the general public, legislators, or any organizations that are not affiliated with the

specialty crop industry should not be included in the External Project Support response.

2. Q. Are letters of support required?

A. Letters of support are not a requirement of the SCBGP but are strongly encouraged to demonstrate industry support for a project. Letters of support should not be provided in lieu of a narrative response to the External Project Support question.

3. Q. Who should submit letters of support?

A. Letters of support may come from specialty crop stakeholders, individuals, and organizations that are supportive of what the project will accomplish but who are not directly involved in project activities. Do not include letters of support from the applicant, contractors, or any other entity that will participate, receive project funding, or contribute cost share. Letters of support from project beneficiaries are appropriate, so long as the benefit received is not in the form of grant funding. For example, letters of support from specialty crop farmers who will receive training through the grant are appropriate; letters of support from the employees of the applicant or a contractor are not. In addition, do not include letters of support from members of the general public, legislators, elected officials, or any organizations that are not affiliated with the specialty crop industry.

4. Q. How should letters of support be submitted?

A. Letters of support should be written on the stakeholder's official letterhead, be addressed to CDFA Office of Grants Administration, and explain why the stakeholder supports the project. All letters of support must be attached to the Grant Proposal application in FFAST; letters sent directly to CDFA via mail or email will not be considered. Applicants should attach LOS in PDF format using the following file naming convention: LOS1, LOS2, LOS3, etc.

OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. Can the Outcome Measures template that was submitted for the Concept Proposal be submitted for the Grant Proposal?

A. The Outcome Measures template that was submitted for the Concept Proposal may be submitted for the Grant Proposal. However, applicants should review and consider any Concept Proposal feedback that was provided by CDFA and/or the TRC regarding the Outcome Measures. In addition, if the project has changed

from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal, this may need to be reflected in the Outcome Measures template.

2. **Q. Can the Grant Proposal identify different outcome measures and indicators than those listed in the Concept Proposal?**
 - A. Applicants may select different outcome measures and indicators from the Concept Proposal to the Grant Proposal phase. Additionally, marketing and promotion proposals must retain and achieve Outcome Measure 1, even if other changes are made during the Grant Proposal phase.

3. **Q. Do all Outcome Measures have to be achievable within the grant duration?**
 - A. All outcome measures must be achievable within the grant duration. The number of outcomes selected is not a factor in scoring criteria. Applicants should not overstate outcomes or select outcomes and indicators that cannot reasonably be achieved within the grant duration in an effort to improve the likelihood of funding. Failure to successfully achieve outcome measures may adversely affect an applicant's ability to receive funding in the future.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. **Q. Can the amount of SCBGP funding requested change from the Concept Proposal phase to the Grant Proposal phase?**
 - A. The amount of SCBGP funding requested in the Grant Proposal phase may increase or decrease from the Concept Proposal phase. Although there is no limit on the amount that the budget may change, CDFA cannot anticipate how changes will be viewed by the TRC and substantial changes (plus or minus 20 percent) may be questioned. If the budget changes, ensure the revised amount is between \$50,000 and \$450,000 and update the amount listed under Funds Requested on the Project Budget tab in FAAST.

2. **Q. What is the limit for compensation for individual contractors/consultants?**
 - A. Individual contractual fees should be reasonable and consistent with fees in the marketplace for similar services. Salary and wages or fees for professional services for contractors/consultants cannot exceed the [GS-15 step 10](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/) (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>) for the applicant's locality/area without justification. A justification for an individual contractor/consultant may include but is not limited to: a cost/price analysis; an explanation of unique qualifications, special expertise due to the complexity of

the project/task or limited pool of available or qualified contractors/consultants; or historical data supporting the rate charged by contractors/consultants. Reference the Procuring Goods and Services Using Federal Funds supplement (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021_SCBGP_Procuring_Goods_and_Services.pdf) for additional guidance on contractual restrictions.

3. Q. Can institutions charge an indirect cost rate greater than eight (8) percent of the total personnel costs?

A. The indirect cost rate for the SCBGP is established in federal statute. The statutory limitation of eight (8) percent of total direct costs is the maximum which State Departments of Agriculture may claim in their applications to USDA, including the state's administration and any indirect passed through to subrecipients. The USDA gives State Departments of Agriculture broad discretion whether and how much, if any, indirect will pass through to subrecipients with many states not allowing applicants to collect any indirect. While it is CDFA's intent to allow applicants to receive the maximum amount of available funding, CDFA must retain a portion of the allowed indirect in order to carry out the activities needed to administer the program. Accordingly, CDFA will not accept requests for indirect costs greater than eight (8) percent of total personnel costs and excessive indirect costs may result in disqualification.

4. Q. Can applicants use grant funds to give away specialty crop commodities?

A. The cost to purchase or grow specialty crop commodities and any other costs associated with facilitating a donation of those specialty crops are unallowable costs. Projects that focus primarily on donating or distributing donated food may want to consider the alternative funding opportunities described in the Request for Concept Proposals (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/docs/2021SCBGP_RequestForConceptProposals.pdf) and on the CDFA grants website (<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/>), or consider securing cost share to cover unallowable costs and activities.

COST SHARING

1. **Q. What is the difference between matching funds and/or in-kind contributions?**
 - A. Matching funds refers to real dollar contributions to a project from sources other than the SCBGP. In-kind contributions refer to the determined values of assets donated to the project (e.g., equipment, use of land, volunteered staff time, etc.). If matching funds and/or in-kind contributions have been secured for the project, applicants must complete and attach the Cost Sharing template.

PROJECT OVERSIGHT

1. **Q. Who should provide resumes or curriculum vitae (CV)s?**
 - A. Curriculum vitae or resumes (whichever is most applicable) should be provided for the Project Director, Project Manager, Project Investigator, and/or collaborators who will receive a portion of the grant funds. The preferred format for resumes or curriculum vitae is PDF.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

1. **Q. How will an applicant be reimbursed for allowable costs incurred throughout the grant?**
 - A. Generally, recipients submit invoices to CDFA for reimbursement of actual expenses. Invoices must be submitted at least quarterly, but no more frequently than monthly. In some circumstances, recipients may also request advance payments. Reference the Invoicing section of the Grant Management Procedures Manual available on the [CDFA SCBGP Grant Recipient Resources website](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/RecipientResources.html) (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Specialty_Crop_Competitiveness_Grants/RecipientResources.html) for more information regarding payment of grant awards.