

California Agriculture Special Interest License Plate (CalAgPlate) Grant Program

Applicant Guide for the GOATS Online Application Platform

California Department of Food & Agriculture
Office of Grants Administration

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Introduction

About the CalAgPlate Grant Program

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) California Agriculture License Plate Grant Program (CalAgPlate) funds projects that support agricultural education, agricultural career awareness and development, agricultural career training, and agricultural leadership development to assist students at the kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12), post-secondary, and adult education levels. Supporting these educational and training areas will provide participants with further agricultural opportunities and experiences at the local and statewide levels.

Who Can Apply

Non-profit organizations, as well as state, local, and tribal government agencies within California that promote and administer agricultural education and leadership programs targeting K-12, post-secondary, and adult education. Individuals are not eligible to apply. Applicant organizations may only submit one grant proposal to the CalAgPlate program.

Application Process

Eligible organizations submit their Grant Proposal in GOATS in response to the current Request for Proposals (RFP). CDFA completes an administrative review, and the CalAgPlate Technical Review Committee (TRC) reviews eligible proposals and submits recommendations to CDFA for final determination of awards.

General Resources & Contact Information

- [GOATS Application Portal](https://applications.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/s/) (<https://applications.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/s/>) - Create an account, view funding opportunities, and submit an application.
- [CalAgPlate Grant Program Page](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/egov/calagplate/) (<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/egov/calagplate/>) - Review the current RFP, FAQ, deadlines, and applicant resources.
- Program Contact - CDFA Office of Grants Administration, (916) 657-3231, grants@cdfa.ca.gov.

Preparing to Apply

Please carefully read the information below and take the required actions to prepare for the application process.

Confirming Eligibility and Application Phase

Review the current CalAgPlate Request for Proposals before beginning. Confirm that the applicant organization and proposed project are eligible before creating a proposal.

Accessing CalAgPlate Application Resources

Before drafting, review the current [CalAgPlate Grant Program page](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/egov/calagplate/) and Request for Proposals (<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/egov/calagplate/>).

Use only the GOATS system to complete and submit the project proposal; do not reuse a prior grant template or guidance document.

The CalAgPlate webpage also provides FAQs, webinar information, allowable and unallowable cost guidance, and other applicant resources. For program questions, contact grants@cdfa.ca.gov.

The Application Process

Registering a GOATS Account

Applications are developed and submitted through CDFA's Grant Opportunity and Administration and Tracking System (GOATS). Open the [GOATS Application Portal](https://applications.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/s/) (<https://applications.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/s/>), select "Log in" in the upper-right corner, and select "Create a GOATS account" if you do not already have one.

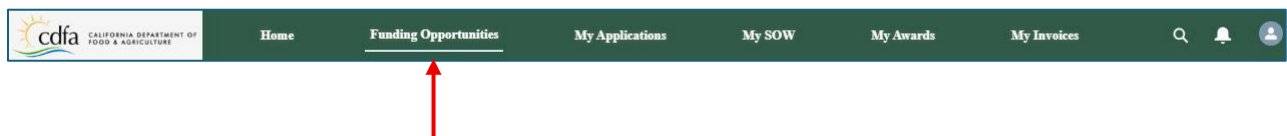


Note: Required fields are marked with a red asterisk. FEIN and SSN are not required account-registration fields and do not need to be entered.

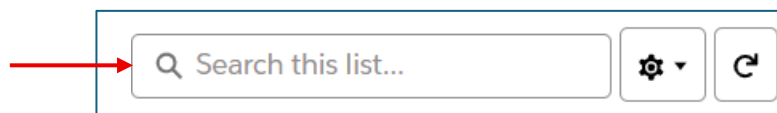
Navigating to the CalAgPlate Funding Opportunity

CDFA's online portal system hosts several grant program opportunities. Once you are logged in to your account, select the "Funding Opportunities" tab in the navigation bar at the top of the page.

On the Funding Opportunities tab, locate the 2026 CalAgPlate Grant Program opportunity.



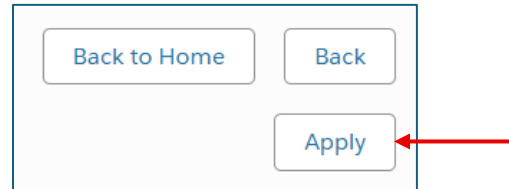
You may also use the search box in the upper-right corner.



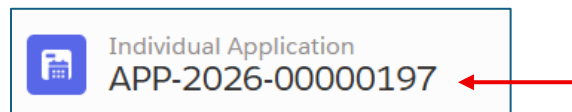
Selecting the opportunity opens a page with general information about the CalAgPlate Grant Program.

Beginning the Application

Select “Apply” in the upper-right corner to create a new application and begin the application process.



The application will automatically be assigned a unique Application Number or PIN, which can be viewed in the upper-left corner.



Navigating within the Application

The application includes four sections:

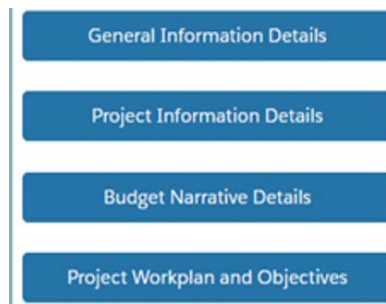
1. General Information Details
2. Project Information Details
3. Budget Narrative Details
4. Project Workplan and Objectives Details

Select one of the buttons on the right side of the page to open an application section.

CalAgPlate applicants must follow the current grant application and the help text displayed in GOATS. Open and save every section that GOATS identifies as required.

GOATS is a standardized platform used by multiple CDFA grant programs. The current CalAgPlate Request for Proposals defines the questions and scoring criteria. Read the Request for Proposals and all GOATS help text before entering information.

To toggle between application sections without losing progress, applicants must save the application section before entering a new one (see Saving the Application, below).



Do not select the “Back” or “Back to Home” buttons in the upper-right corner to toggle between application sections (unless no changes have been made). Applicants will be directed to a new page and without saving progress.

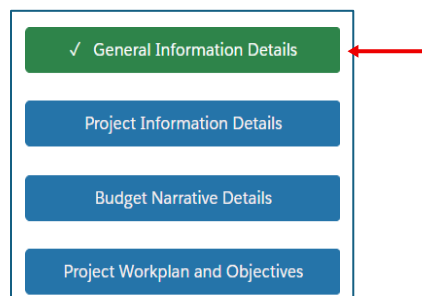


Saving the Application

CDFA encourages applicants to save their progress regularly. Navigate to the last page of any application section and select the "Save" button in the lower-right corner.



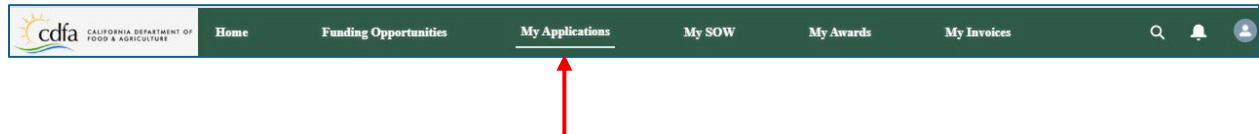
Once an application section has been saved, it will turn green with a check mark.



Important: this does not mean the section is complete. Applicants may return to the saved application section and make edits at any time.

Returning to the Application

Log in to the application portal and select the “My Applications” tab in the navigation bar at the top of the page.



Select the application using its unique Application ID and Application Number. Selecting the Application ID opens the application.

Reviewing the Solicitation and Preparing Materials

Draft narrative responses outside of GOATS before entering them into the system. Be sure to follow the character limits identified in the RFP and GOATS platform. Drafting responses in advance allows applicants to review their responses before entering them into GOATS.

GOATS provides templates for:

- Project Information Details
- Budget Narrative
- Project Workplan and Objective

Before Entering Information in GOATS:

- Confirm the applicant organization's legal name and primary contacts.
- Draft and review narrative responses outside GOATS.
- Gather organization and project identifiers requested by the system.

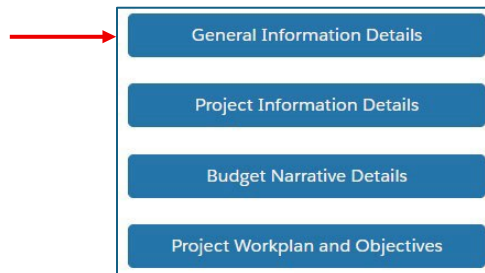
Entering Information in GOATS:

To begin, ensure that the “Details” tab in the upper-left corner is selected.



General Information Details

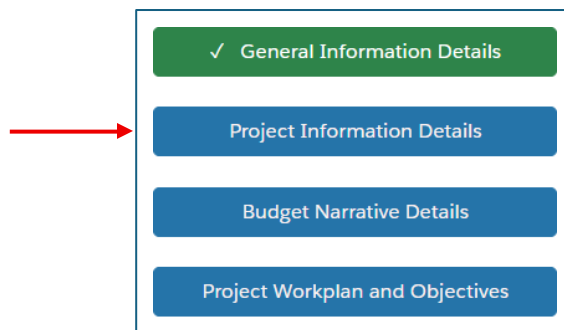
1. Select the "General Information Details" button on the right side of the page. This section collects information about the applicant organization, application contacts, and other standardized details.



2. Complete every required question. Use "Not Applicable" only when the current solicitation or GOATS help text permits it.
 - a. Select an Organization Type; do not leave the field set to "No Value."
 - b. Use the applicant organization's legal name consistently. If GOATS requests a Project Director, Project Manager, or Authorized Official, identify the individuals who will hold those responsibilities for the proposed project.
 - c. Identify a cooperating entity, collaborator, contractor, or subrecipient only when applicable and as defined by the current solicitation.
3. When the section is complete or if the applicant wishes to exit and return to the section, select the "Save" button in the bottom right corner of the second page.

Project Information Details

1. Select the "Project Information Details" button on the right side of the page.



2. Complete all questions displayed for the CalAgPlate Grant Proposal.

3. GOATS and the RFP identify the applicable character limit for each response. Draft responses outside the system and confirm the count before pasting them into GOATS. Common CalAgPlate topics include:
 - a. Project title and public project description
 - b. Project purpose, need, importance, and timeliness
 - c. Project beneficiaries and how the project will benefit
 - d. Prior CalAgPlate projects and lessons learned
 - e. Other federal or state support and avoidance of duplicate funding
 - f. Project objectives, activities, work plan, and timeline
 - g. Outreach, education, and dissemination of project results
 - h. Outcome measures and data-collection methods
 - i. Budget and funds requested
4. When the section is complete, or when you need to exit and return later, select the "Save" button in the lower-right corner of the page.

Budget Narrative Details and Project Workplan and Objectives

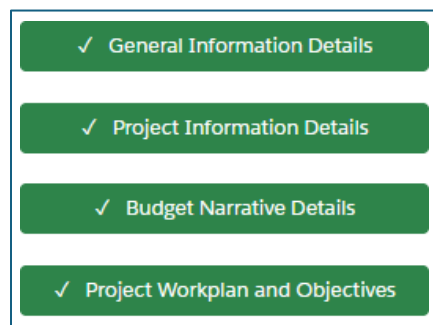
Follow the current CalAgPlate RFP and GOATS help text for these sections. Complete all required fields shown in GOATS.

Preparing to Submit

Please follow the steps below to complete, review, and submit the application.

Completing the Application

Review each application section and select "Save" at the end. A green section button with a check mark means the section was saved; it does not confirm that every required response is complete or correct.



Reviewing the Application

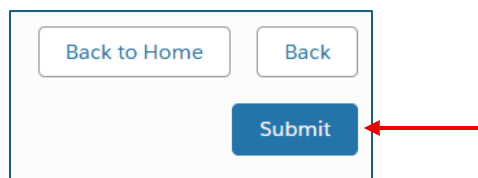
To review all of the application contents in a read-only form, select the “Preview” tab in the upper-left corner of the application’s main page (next to the “Details” tab).



Take a moment to ensure that all fields are complete and that the information provided is correct.

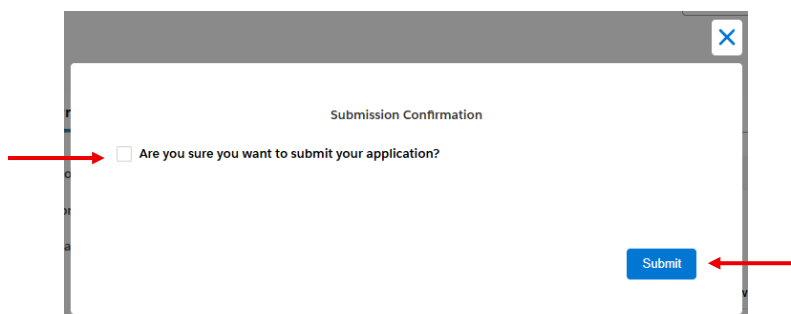
Submitting the Application

Select the “Submit” button in the upper-right corner.

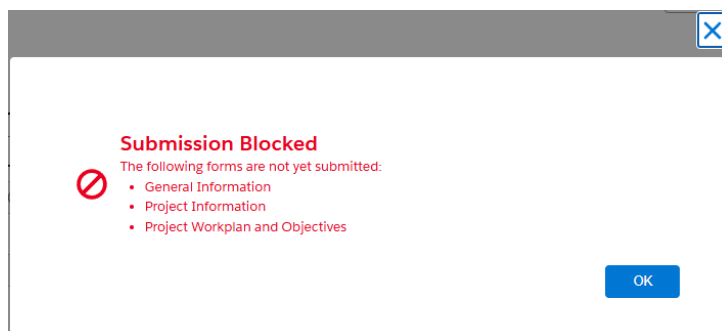


Applicants will be prompted to confirm submission. Check the box, then select “Submit” again.

Submit before the deadline stated in the CalAgPlate RFP and displayed in GOATS. GOATS may remain accessible after the application period closes, but the Submit function will no longer be available for that opportunity.



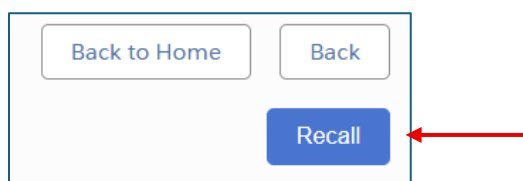
The application system considers an application incomplete if one or more of the required application sections are not saved. Attempting to submit an incomplete application will prompt a message that specifies which sections must be saved.



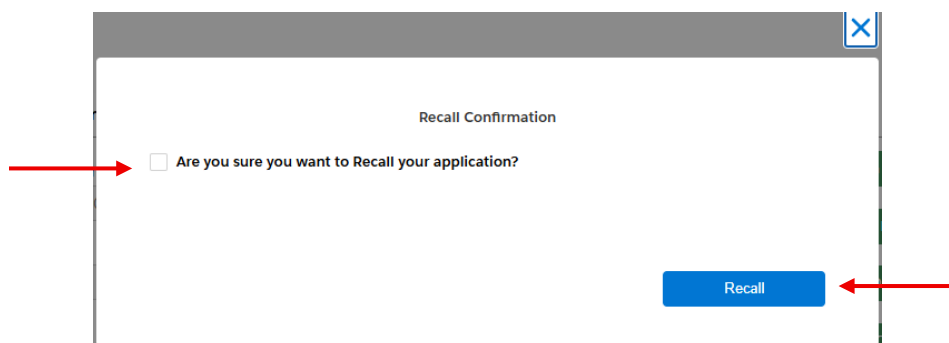
Once submission is successful, applicants will receive a confirmation email from the system. The “Application Status” for the application will also change from Draft to Submitted.

Recalling the Application

Applicants may recall their application at any time before the opportunity’s application period closes. Once submission is complete, applicants will be able to access the “Recall” button in the upper-right corner of the page until the submission deadline.



Applicants will be prompted to confirm the recall. Check the box and select “Recall” again to confirm and finalize the recall.



Once recalled, applicants may edit any section of the application. The “Application Status” will display as Recalled. **Any edits made must be saved, and the application must be re-submitted before the application period closes.** There is not a limit to the number of times an application can be recalled and re-submitted.

Help Text and Technical Assistance

Additional instruction and guidance may show up as smaller read-only text embedded within the application sections and questions. Help text for some questions may also appear in a pop-up information box. Where available, hover over the  icon next to the application question to view the text.

For assistance with a CalAgPlate application in GOATS, contact grants@cdfa.ca.gov. Include the applicant organization, funding opportunity, and Application ID when available. Never send passwords or sensitive personal information.

Next Steps

CDFA will notify applicants by email after the applicable review is complete. Recommendations will be submitted to CDFA Executive Office for final approval before awards are announced. Monitor the applicant email account and the CalAgPlate webpage for updates.