



2026 Dairy Plus Program Applicant Guide for Online Application Platform

California Department of Food & Agriculture
Office of Agricultural Resilience and Sustainability

2026

Contents

Contents.....	2
Introduction.....	3
About the Dairy Plus Program	3
Application Process.....	3
General Resources & Contact Information	4
Preparing to Apply	5
Determining Eligibility	5
Registering an Account	6
Navigating to the Application	6
Beginning the Application	6
Navigating within the Application.....	7
Saving the Application.....	8
Returning to the Application	9
Help Text	9
Developing an Application	10
Application Summary Form and Required Attachments.....	10
General Information Details.....	10
Project Information Details.....	11
Budget Narrative Details.....	12
Project Workplan and Objectives.....	13
Attachments Details.....	14
Preparing to Submit	17
Completing the application.....	17
Reviewing the application.....	17
Submitting the application	17
Recalling the application.....	19
Next Steps	19

Introduction

About the Dairy Plus Program

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) [2026 Dairy Plus Program](#) will award competitive grants to California dairy farms for the implementation of advanced manure management practices that address both methane emissions and nitrogen and salt surpluses.

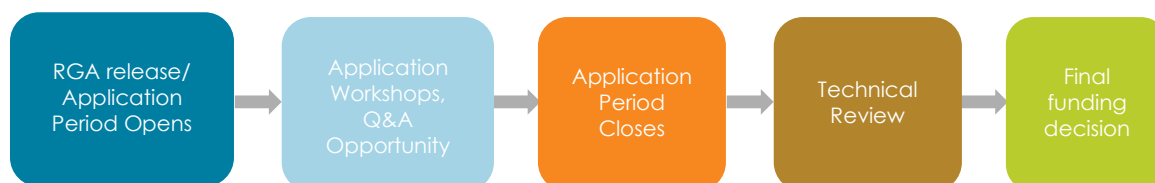
The [California Dairy Research Foundation \(CDRF\)](#), in collaboration with CDFA and several other organizations, was awarded \$85 million in funding by the [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) under the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative. Through the year 2028, this project will provide incentives for dairy producers to adopt advanced manure management practices, measure current and estimate future greenhouse gas (GHG) and nutrient benefits associated with implemented practices, provide outreach and technical assistance, and develop sustainable product markets for milk. Approximately \$75 million of the total awarded amount will support the implementation of advanced manure management practices through the Dairy Plus Program. The 2026 Dairy Plus Program will make approximately \$34 million available to support the implementation of advanced manure management practices.

This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under agreement number NR233A750004G048.

Application Process

For this application cycle, CDFA is launching a new online application system. During this transition, applicants may experience technical issues and confusing processes. If you encounter issues while using the new system, please contact the CDFA Dairy Plus Program team at CDFA.OEFI_DairyPlus@cdfa.ca.gov.

Stages of the Dairy Plus Program application process:





General Resources & Contact Information

- [Application Portal](#) – To access the online application system.
- [Request for Grant Applications](#) – To access the guidelines for the Dairy Plus Program and application
- [FAQs and Applicant Questions](#) – Responses to frequently asked questions and general program and application process questions submitted by applicants during the application period are available on the program webpage.
- [Contact](#) – For all inquiries regarding the Dairy Plus Program, email CDFA.OEFI_DairyPlus@cdfa.ca.gov.

Preparing to Apply

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

Determining Eligibility

Review the Dairy Plus Program eligibility criteria before beginning the application process. Additional details are found in the [Request for Grant Applications](#).

- The project site must be in a commercial California dairy operation.
 - A dairy operation is defined as an entity that operates a dairy herd, which produces milk or cream commercially, and whose bulk milk or bulk cream is received or handled by any distributor, manufacturer, or any nonprofit cooperative association of dairy producers.
- California farmers, ranchers, and California Native American Tribes are eligible to apply. Producers receiving grant award funds must be located in California with a physical California business address.
- Producers receiving grant award funds must be registered with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) for the specific farm/tract information for all tracts. Note: One farm per tract is eligible for award.
- Only one FSA-registered entity/producer name is eligible for an award in each solicitation round. If multiple dairy operations under one FSA-registered entity/producer name are selected, only one dairy operation will be awarded.
- Eligible project types can be categorized as:
 - In-progress or previous AMMP recipient proposing a Dairy Plus Program project.
 - In-progress or previous DDRDP recipient proposing a Dairy Plus Program project.
 - In-progress or already operational “AMMP approved practice/AMMP-like” system proposing a Dairy Plus Program project.
 - In-progress or already operational “DDRDP approved practice/DDRDP-like” system proposing a Dairy Plus Program project.
- The recipient and project must adhere to all “Requirements and Limitations,” which include federal requirements specific to the USDA Advancing Markets for Producers program. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Registering an Account

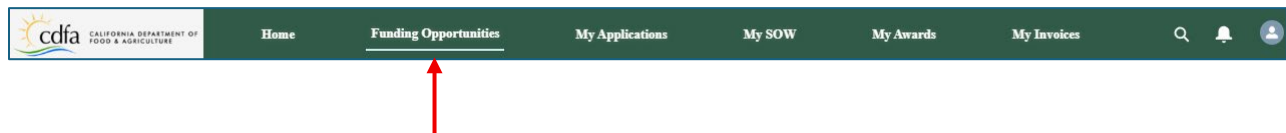
Dairy Plus Program applications are to be developed and submitted via CDFA's online portal system. Register for an account [here](#), and click on "Create a GOATS account".



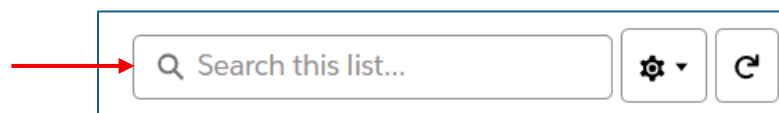
Note: required fields are marked with a red asterisk. FEIN and SSN are **not** required fields and do not need to be filled in.

Navigating to the Application

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

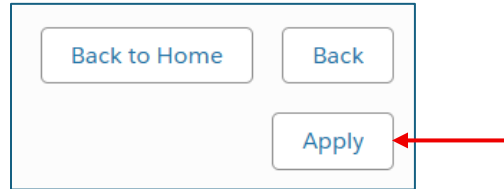


Once in the Funding Opportunities tab, scroll to the opportunity named "2026 Dairy Plus Program" or use the search bar in the upper right corner. Clicking on the opportunity will take you to a page with general information about the grant solicitation.

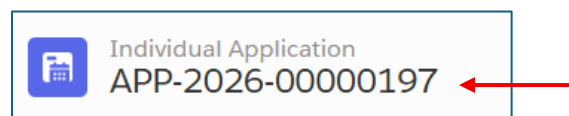


Beginning the Application

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, which can be viewed in the upper left corner.



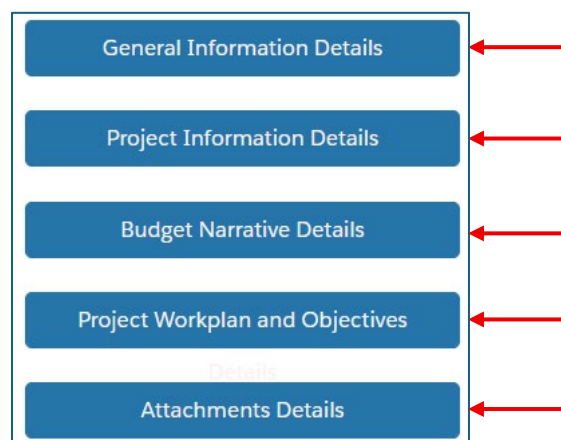
Navigating within the Application

The Dairy Plus Program application includes five sections:

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

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

Dairy Plus Program applicants should complete all presented sections.



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

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 without saving progress.

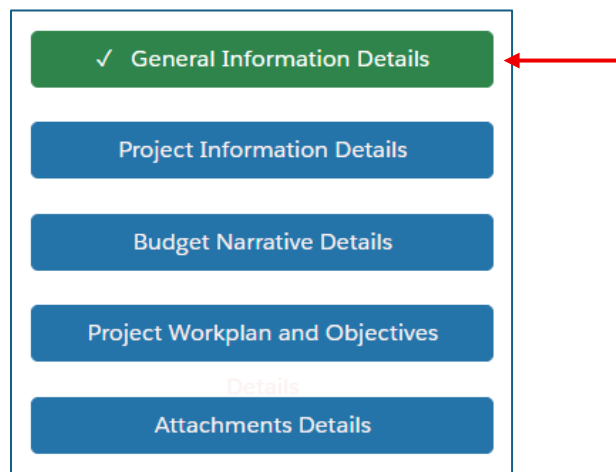


Saving the Application

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



Once an application section has been saved, the section 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, referenced by the unique Application ID and Application Number.

Individual Applications	
My Individual Applications ▾	
3 items • Sorted by Application ID • Filtered by All individual applications • Updated a minute ago	
Application ID ↑	Application Number
1 IA-0000000167	APP-2026-00000167
2 IA-0000000173	APP-2026-00000173
3 IA-0000000197	APP-2026-00000197

Help Text

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 be present as a pop-up information box – where available, hover over the **i** icon next to each application question to view the text.

Developing an Application

Please carefully follow the steps below to develop an application. We are using a new application system that was intended for use by all of CDFA's grant programs, and parts of the standardized application components can be confusing.

Application Summary Form and Required Attachments

It is highly recommended that applicants complete the following attachments prior to filling out and submitting their online application. This will allow a smoother and quicker entry process, and consistency of information between the two.

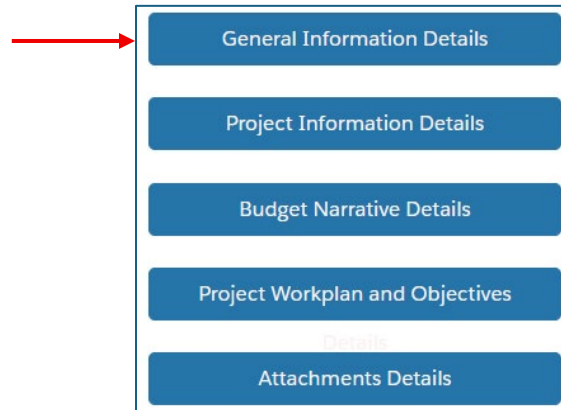
- Application Summary Form – this fillable PDF will allow you to complete the application questions outside of the platform, and not worry about timing out or forgetting to save a section. As the form mirrors the online application questions, you can copy and paste developed responses.
- Attachment B: Work Plan Template – this table's contents will be copied in to the Project Work Plan and Objectives section.
- Attachment D: Budget Worksheet Template – the totals and category sub-totals from this template can be used to fill out some of the prompts in the Project Information Details section and the table in the Budget Narrative Details section.
- Attachment E: Estimated GHG Emissions Reduction – some of the inputs in the AMMP or DDRDP Benefits Calculator Tools will be utilized to complete some of the prompts in the Project Information Details section.

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



General Information Details

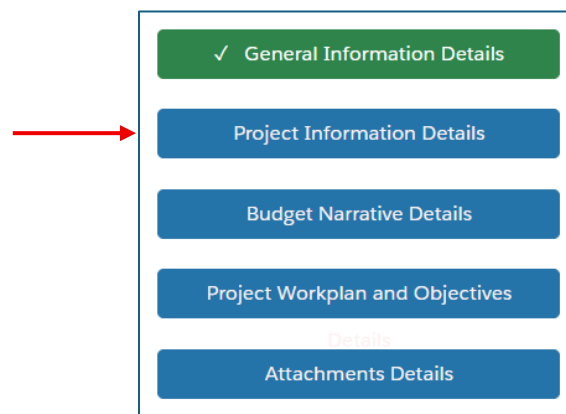
1. Select the “General Information Details” button on the right side of the page. This section covers Applicant Details and Additional Applicant Information and is split across two pages.



2. Please complete all questions in this section. It is recommended that applicants utilize the previously filled-out attachment "Application Summary Form" when completing the questions in the online application portal.
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

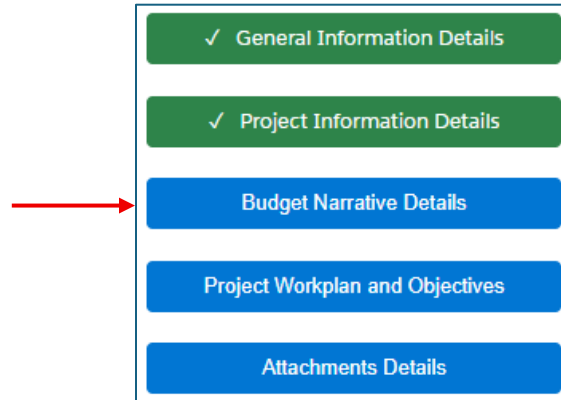
1. Select the "Project Information Details" button on the right side of the page.



2. Please complete all questions in this section. It is recommended that applicants utilize the previously filled-out attachment "Application Summary Form" when completing the questions in the online application portal.
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 page.

Budget Narrative Details

1. Select the Budget Narrative Details button on the right side of the page.



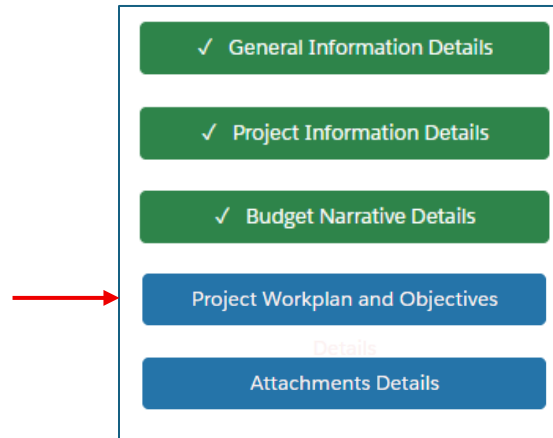
2. Dairy Plus Program applicants should provide information on the project's anticipated budget using their previously filled-out budget worksheet (Attachment D) – enter category totals under “Planned Amount” and brief descriptions of what is included in each category and why it is needed under “Reason”.
Note: In this section, only the categories listed in Attachment D: Budget Worksheet Template are permitted. These categories are Equipment, Supplies, Labor (which can be represented as “Contractual” and/or “Construction”), Other, and Cost Share. Please leave any unallowed sections blank.
3. The Total Fund Requested will automatically calculate above and at the bottom of the budget table, and should not exceed \$1,250,000.00.
4. 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 page.



Estimated Total Appropriation Amount: \$34,000,000.00		
Total Fund Requested: \$1,250,000.00		
CATEGORY	PLANNED AMOUNT	REASON
Salaries and Wages	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text"/>
Fringe	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text"/>
Travel	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text"/>
Equipment	<input type="text" value="\$600,000.00"/>	Brief description of what is covered in the planned amount. <input type="text"/>
Supplies	<input type="text" value="\$380,000.00"/>	Brief description of what is covered in the planned amount. <input type="text"/>
Contractual / Subawards / Subgrants	<input type="text" value="\$0.00"/>	<input type="text"/>
Construction	<input type="text" value="\$175,000.00"/>	Brief description of what is covered in the planned amount. <input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text" value="\$95,000.00"/>	Brief description of what is covered in the planned amount. <input type="text"/>

Project Workplan and Objectives

1. Select the "Project Workplan and Objectives" button on the right side of the page.



2. Applicants should complete the Project Work Plan table with tasks using their previously filled-out Work Plan (Attachment B). Fill out Sr No (Task Number), Activity, Performed By, Start and End Date. Objective may be left blank. Use the "+ Add Row" button to expand the table.
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 page.

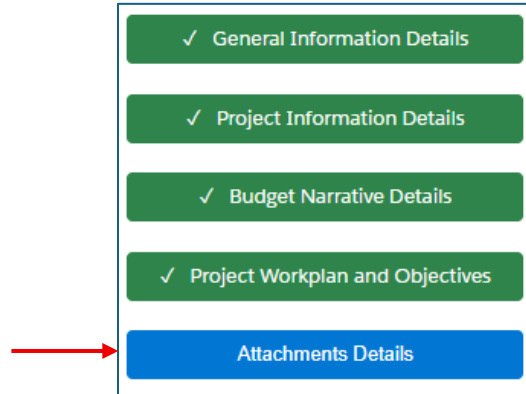
Project Workplan + Add Row

Sr No.	Objective	Activity	Performed By ?	Start Date	End Date
1		Dirt work, gradi	Contractor 1	Mar 1, 2027	Apr 9, 2027

Save

Attachments Details

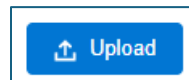
1. Select the "Attachments Details" button on the right side of the page.



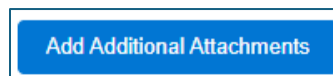
- Under “Opportunity Attachments”, you will find blank, downloadable copies of templates and forms that should also be available on the program webpage.
Note: all attachments that have a template are available in this section. This does not include attachments where a template is not provided (such as Attachment A.1 for project site plan, design documents, etc.) or the AMMP/DDRDP Benefits Calculator Tool (available at <https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/tools>).

Opportunity Attachments (6)						Add Additional Attachments
Title	File Size	Document Type	Attached On	Download Link	Action	
OARS-022-2026_DairyPlus_Application_Summary_Form.pdf - Application Template	891.87 KB	Application Template	6/15/2026	Download	Upload	
2026_DairyPlus_Work_Plan_Template.docx - Workplan Template	36.61 KB	Workplan Template	6/15/2026	Download	Upload	
2026_DairyPlus_Project_Description_Template.docx - Application Template	42.51 KB	Application Template	6/15/2026	Download	Upload	
2026_DairyPlus_Nitrogen_and_Salt_Management_and_Water_Quality_Template.docx - Application Template	34.18 KB	Application Template	6/15/2026	Download	Upload	
2026_DairyPlus_Budget_Worksheet_Template.xlsx - Budget Template	26.23 KB	Budget Template	6/15/2026	Download	Upload	
oefi-021_FSA_Release_of_Information_Request_Form.pdf - FSA Permission Form	112.92 KB	Other	6/10/2026	Download	Upload	

3. Once all required attachments have been completed, they should be uploaded in this section and will show up under “Uploaded Attachments”.
 - a. For templates and forms listed under Opportunity Attachments – upload the specific project's saved and completed attachment using the blue “Upload” button next to the appropriate line item. It will then show up under Uploaded Attachments.



- b. For completed required or optional attachments that do not have a template and are not listed under Opportunity Attachments, such as the AMMP or DDRDP Benefits Calculator Tool, use the “Add Additional Attachments” button at the top right side of the page. Enter a *short* description of the document, such as “GHG Calculator” or “Att A.1”, click Upload Files to browse for your file or drag and drop the file, and click Submit. The file will show up under Uploaded Attachments.



4. You may need to press  to refresh the page to view your newly uploaded files.

Additional guidance and reminders for attachments:

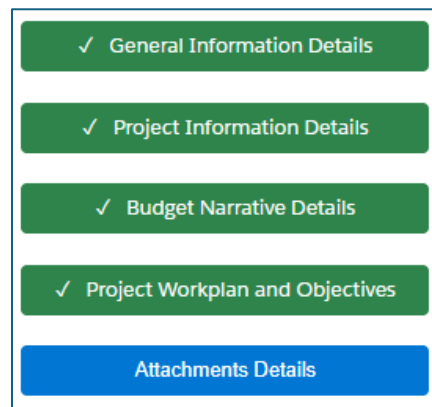
- Verify that all documents are legible, complete and uncorrupted, and correctly uploaded before submitting the application.
- Name your files clearly to prevent errors during upload and submission. Include the attachment type (e.g., Att_A), along with some identifying information such as Applicant ID or the project operation in the file name (e.g., Att_A_CowFarm or Att_A_1234).
- Ensure you have uploaded all required attachments for the application. There are **8 required attachments**, and every submitted application should have that as the minimum; some applications may have more, if including optional attachments. The full listing of attachments and whether they are required can be found in the Request for Grant Applications, Grant Application: Questions and Attachments, and Appendix A: Attachments.

Preparing to Submit

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

Completing the application

Take a moment to ensure that the application is complete by browsing the sections and clicking the “Save” button at the end of each. A completed Dairy Plus Program application should show General Information Details, Project Information Details, Budget Narrative Details, and Project Workplan and Objectives in green with a check mark (remember, this only means a section has been saved and is not an indicator that all fields have been filled out); the Attachment Details button will remain blue.



Reviewing the application

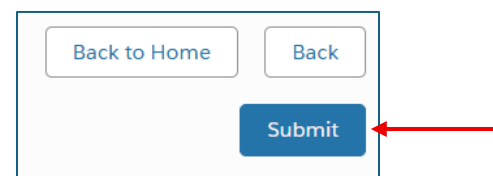
To review all of the application contents in a read-only form, select the “Preview” tab in the upper left corner of the application’s main page (next to the “Details” tab).



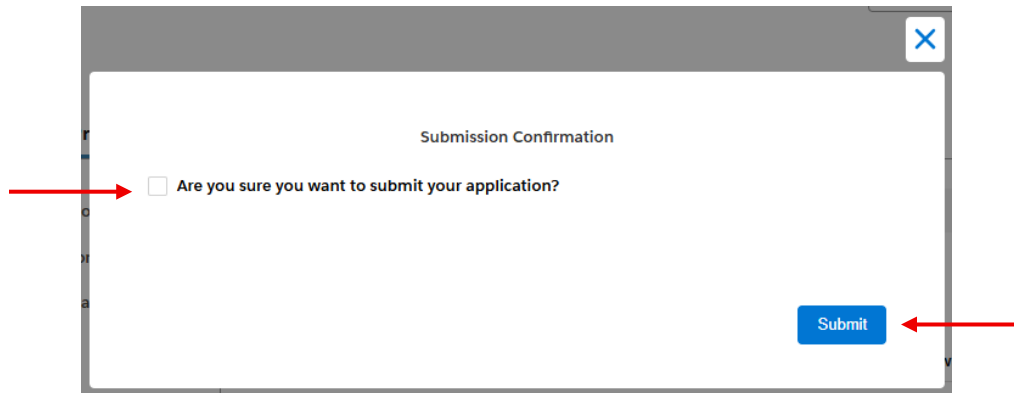
Take a moment to ensure that all of the fields are complete and that the information provided is correct.

Submitting the application

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



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

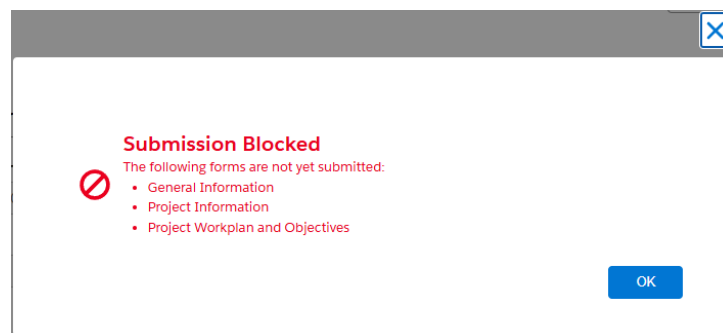


Submission Confirmation

Are you sure you want to submit your application?

Submit

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.



Submission Blocked

The following forms are not yet submitted:

- General Information
- Project Information
- Project Workplan and Objectives

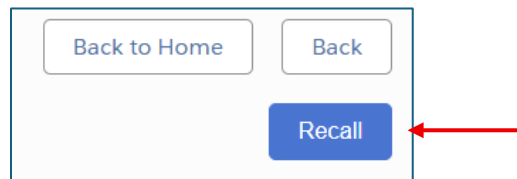
OK

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.

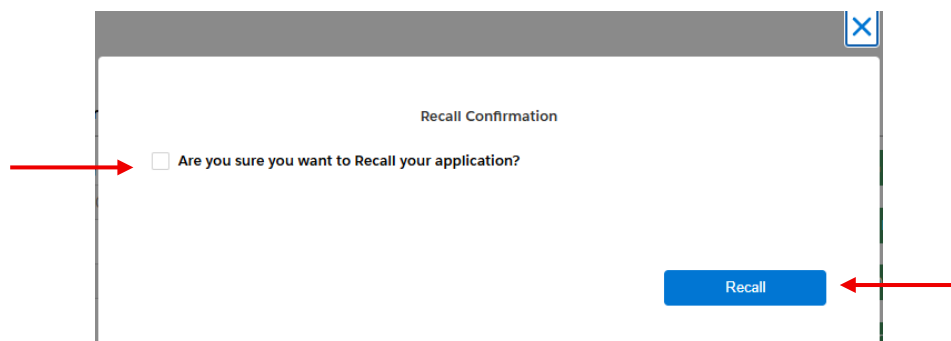
Program	Submitted Date	Application Status
	6/15/2026, 4:00 PM	Submitted
Program		
Dairy PLUS Program		
Application Status		
Submitted		

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.



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 show up 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 for the number of times an application can be recalled and re-submitted.

Next Steps

CDFA will notify applicants via email once the technical advisory committee has made its decision. CDFA appreciates the applicant's participation in this cycle of the Dairy Plus Program and patience with our new application system.