



Biologically Integrated Farming Systems Grant Program 2026 Applicant Guide: Concept Proposal

California Department of Food & Agriculture
Office of Pesticide Consultation & Analysis

2026



Contents

Contents.....	2
Introduction	3
About the BIFS Program.....	3
Application Process.....	3
General Resources & Contact Information	4
Preparing to Apply	5
Determining Eligibility.....	5
Registering an Account	5
Navigating to the Application	5
Beginning the Application.....	6
Navigating within the Application.....	6
Saving the Application	7
Returning to the Application	8
Resources within the Application	9
Help Text	9
Developing an Application	10
General Information Details	10
Project Information Details.....	11
Budget Narrative Details.....	13
Project Workplan and Objectives	13
Attachments Details.....	14
Preparing to Submit.....	16
Completing the application	16
Reviewing the application.....	16



Submitting the application.....	16
Recalling the application.....	17
Next Steps.....	18

Introduction

About the BIFS Program

The goal of the revitalized Biologically Integrated Farming Systems (BIFS) grant program is to provide outreach of innovative, biologically integrated plant-based farming systems that reduce chemical pesticide inputs.

BIFS program proposals should advance the goals of [California's Sustainable Pest Management \(SPM\) Roadmap](#). This includes efforts to:

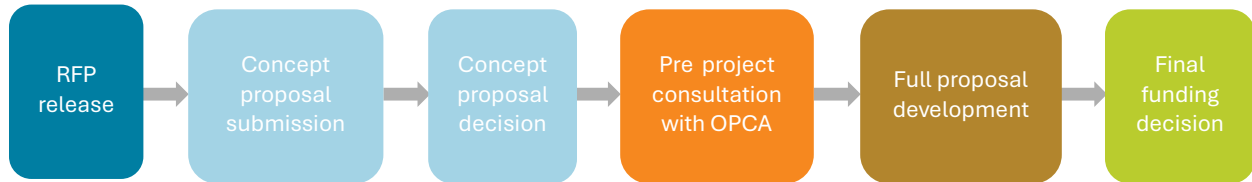
- 1) Enhance knowledge, research, and technical assistance
- 2) Align pest control advisors (PCAs) with SPM
- 3) Reduce economic risk for growers transitioning to SPM

Application Process

For this application cycle, CDFA is launching a new online application system (see [Preparing to Apply](#) for more details). During this transition, applicants may experience technical issues and confusing processes. If you encounter issues while using the new system, please contact OPCA at CDFA.OPCA@cdfa.ca.gov.

The BIFS application process occurs in two stages – a short concept proposal submission and a full proposal submission. Once applicants complete phase 1 (submission of the concept proposal), a committee consisting of scientists and specialists at CDFA and other state agencies, California universities, non-governmental environmental organizations, and/or grower representatives will review the merits of the proposals. After concept proposals are reviewed and scored, OPCA will select up to three applicants to develop full proposals.

Stages of the BIFS application process:



General Resources & Contact Information

- [Application Portal](#) – To access the online application system.
- [FAQ Page](#) – To access answers to FAQs submitted by applicants during the application process. OPCA does not accept questions within five business days of the application deadline.
- [Contact](#) – For all inquiries regarding the BIFS program.

Preparing to Apply

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

Determining Eligibility

Review the BIFS program eligibility criteria before beginning the application process. The following groups are eligible to apply:

- Public or private colleges and universities
- Local or State entities
- Federal government entities
- Tribal governments
- Non-profit organizations
- Commodity groups

Additionally, the project lead(s) and their institutions must be based in California, though out-of-state collaborators are allowed. California state agencies may not submit proposal applications but may be subcontractors on other proposals. A state agency's share of funding may not exceed 30% of total funding. State agencies may not take the lead in project management.

Registering an Account

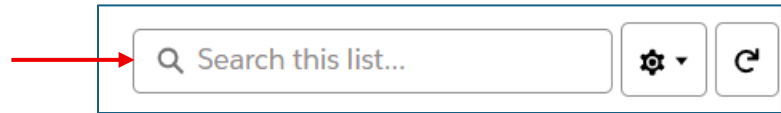
BIFS applications are developed and submitted via CDFA's online portal system. Register for an account [here](#). Individuals are not eligible for this program. Please create an organization account.

Navigating to the Application

CDFA's online portal system hosts several grant program applications. Navigate to the BIFS application by selecting the "Funding Opportunities" tab in the navigation bar at the top of the page.

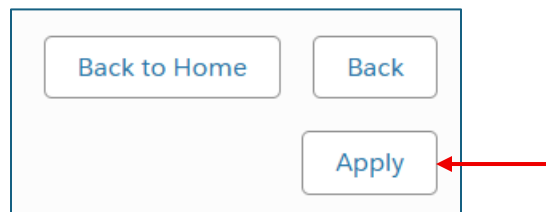


Once in the Funding Opportunities tab, scroll to the application titled “Biologically Integrated Farming Systems” or use the search bar in the upper right corner.

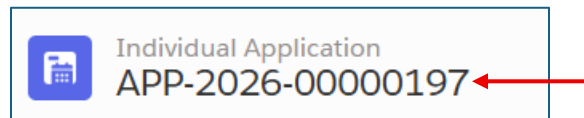


Beginning the Application

Select “Apply” in the upper right corner to begin the application process.



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

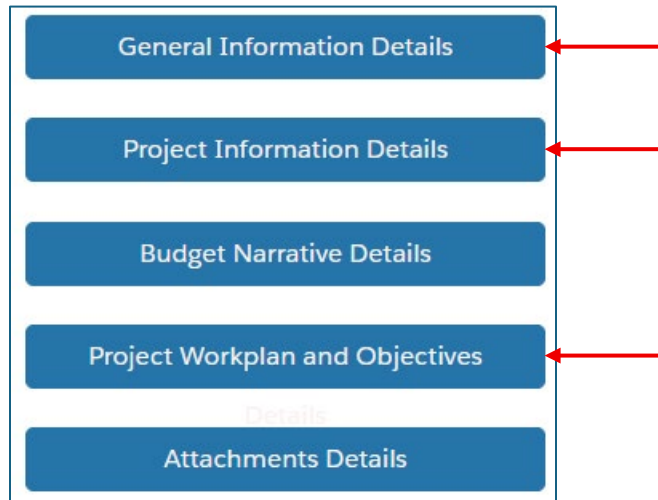


Navigating within the Application

The BIFS program application includes five sections:

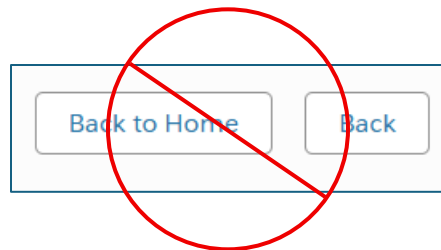
1. General Information Details
2. Project Information Details
3. Budget Narrative Details
4. Project Workplan and Objectives Details
5. Attachments Details

Select one of the buttons on the right side of the page to open an application section. **BIFS applicants should only complete the General Information Details, Project Information Details, and Project Workplan and Objectives Details sections during the concept proposal phase of the application process.**



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. Applicants will be directed to a new page without saving progress.

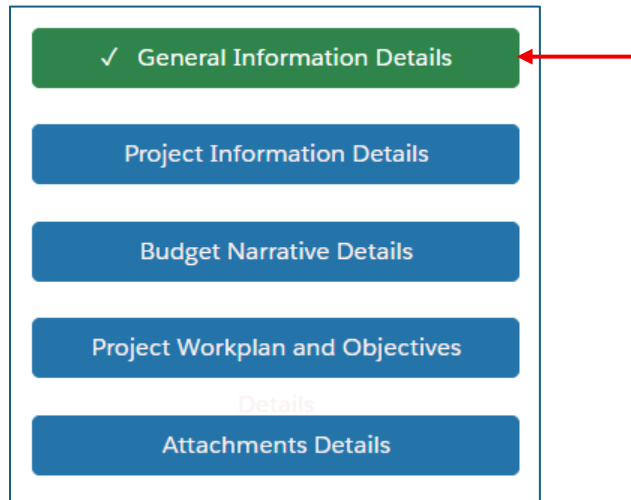


Saving the Application

OPCA 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.



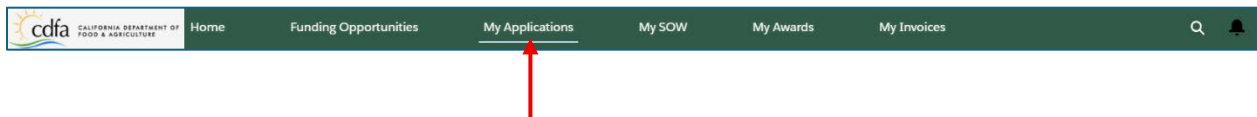
Once an application section has been saved, the section will turn green with a check mark.



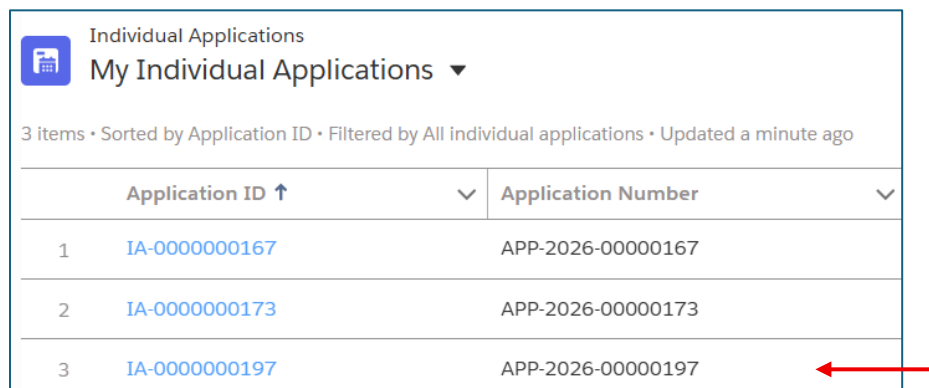
This does not mean the section is complete. Applicants may return to the saved application section and make edits at any time.

Returning to the Application

Log into 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.

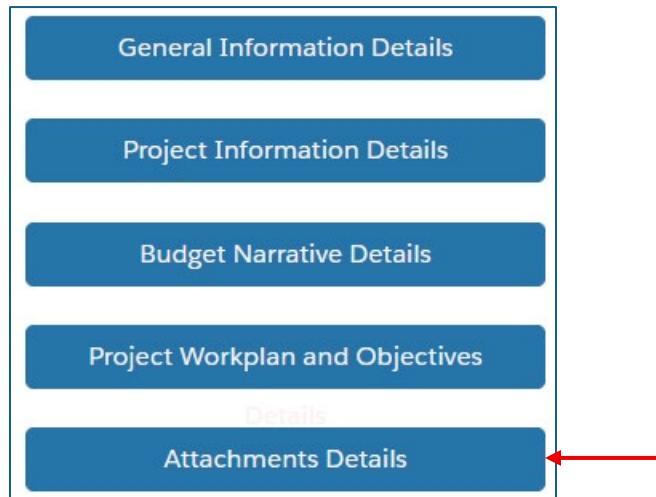


A screenshot of a table titled 'My Individual Applications'. It shows 3 items, sorted by Application ID. The table has two columns: 'Application ID' and 'Application Number'. The third row is highlighted with a red arrow pointing to the 'Application Number' cell.

	Application ID ↑	Application Number
1	IA-0000000167	APP-2026-00000167
2	IA-0000000173	APP-2026-00000173
3	IA-0000000197	APP-2026-00000197

Resources within the Application

Resources for developing the BIFS concept proposal including the Request for Proposals (RFP), the budget template, and this Applicant Guide are provided in the Attachments Details application section. **BIFS applicants should not fill out the budget template or upload any attachments to this section during the concept proposal phase of the application process.**



Help Text

Application prompts in CDFA's online portal include help text which provides applicants with specific instructions for each entry. Hover over the **i** icon next to each prompt to view the text.

Developing an Application

Please carefully follow the steps below to develop the application. The new application system has several idiosyncrasies that can be confusing.

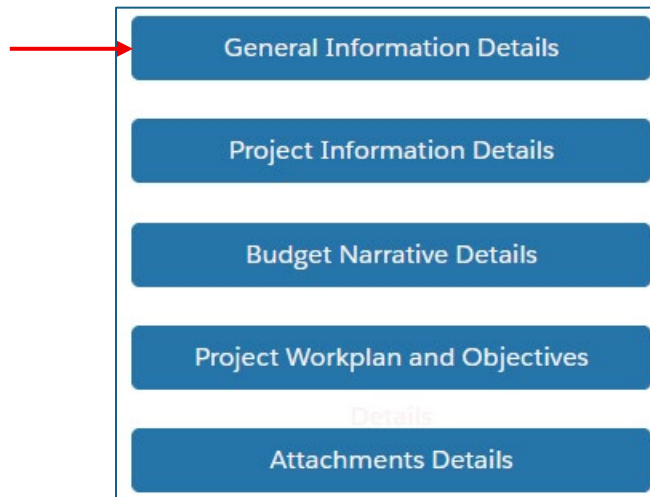
BIFS applicants should not complete all prompts in the application. Prompts that must be completed are listed below by section and indicated by the label “Required”. Prompts that are not required but completed will not be used during the evaluation and scoring of applications.

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 Organization Details, and Contact and Funding Information.



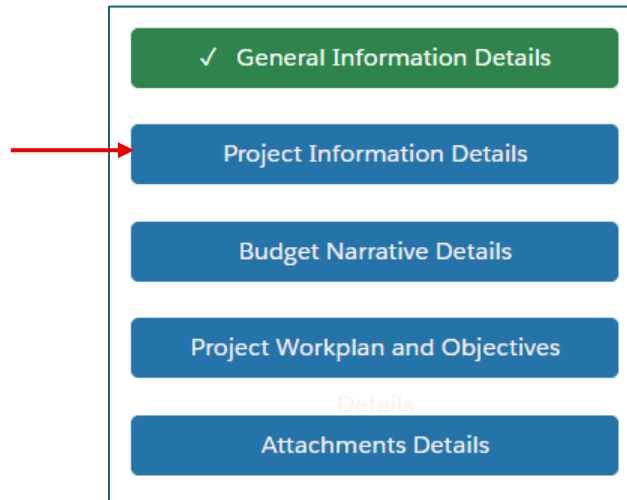
2. Within Organization Details, there is one subcategory; *Applicant Organization*. Complete the following required prompts in this section:
 - a. Name of Organization – **Required**
 - b. Organization Phone Number – **Required**

- c. Organization Address – **Required**
 - d. Organization Type – **Required**
3. Within Contact and Funding Information, there are three subcategories; *Contact Information*, *Funding Tier*, and *Funding Category and Target Audience*. None of the prompts in these sections are required.
4. Below *Funding Category and Target Audience*, there are three essay prompts. All of the prompts in this section are required:
 - a. Specify each Project Leaders name, title, organization/affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, and email address (*1,500 character limit*) – **Required**
 - b. Specify each Management Team member's name, title, organization/affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, and email address. Include commodity boards/growers/grower groups providing funding or in-kind support (*1,500 character limit*) – **Required**
 - c. Specify each organization and/or individuals that support the ideas and objectives of the project but are not providing funding (*1,500 character limit*) – **Required**
5. 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 Information Details

1. Select the “Project Information Details” button on the right side of the page. This section covers Applicant Eligibility Information and Project Purpose.



2. Within Applicant Eligibility Information, there are two subcategories; *Project Overview* and *Geographic Information*. Complete the following required prompts in these sections:
 - a. Project Title – **Required**
3. Below *Geographic Information*, there is one essay prompt and one numeric prompt. Both prompts in this section are required:

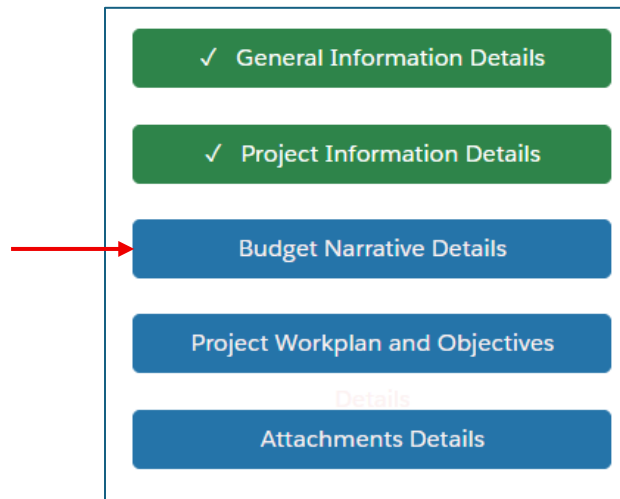
Concisely describe the project, including project objectives (1,500 character limit; detailed descriptions of objectives are required in the *Project Workplan and Objectives application section*) – **Required**

 - a. Enter the total requested. Proposed project activities and objectives must be achievable based on the requested amount. Significant changes to the Scope of Work during the full proposal development stage may result in the rejection of the proposal (\$1,000,000 maximum) – **Required**
4. Within Project Purpose, there are two subcategories; *Project Information* and *Project Purpose*. None of the prompts in these sections are required.
5. 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.



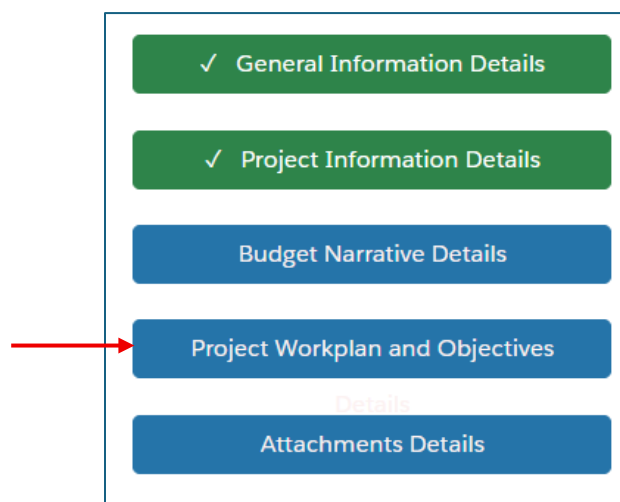
Budget Narrative Details

BIFS applicants are not required to provide any information on budgets or budget justifications during the concept proposal phase of the application process. Because of this, the Budget Narrative Details application section button will remain blue. Please continue to Project Workplan and Objectives.



Project Workplan and Objectives

1. Select the “Project Workplan and Objectives” button on the right side of the page. This section covers only Project Workplan & Objectives.

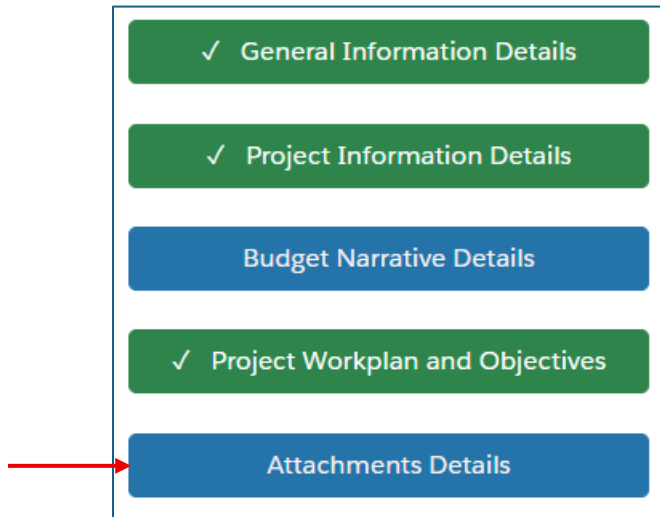


6. Within Project Workplan & Objectives, there are two subcategories; *Expected Measurable Outcomes* and *Project Workplan*. Complete the following required prompts in these sections:
 - a. Project Workplan (*add rows to the table as necessary*)
 - i. Sr No. (*numeric; number the objectives in order of anticipated completion*) – **Required**
 - ii. Objective (*no character limit; please be descriptive*) – **Required**
 - iii. Activity (*no character limit; please be descriptive*) – **Required**
 - iv. Performed by? (*no character limit; list all personnel performing each objective*) – **Required**
 2. Below *Project Workplan*, there are four essay prompts. All of the prompts in this section are required:
 - a. Provide a brief overview of the cropping system(s), target pest(s), and conventional management strategies (i.e. pesticides) currently used (*1,500 character limit*) – **Required**
 - b. Describe the alternative BIFS farming system to be demonstrated and potential environmental and economic benefits (*1,500 character limit*) – **Required**
 - c. Describe the work of any subawardees, if applicable, specifying who will carry out the work and what approaches will be taken (*1,500 character limit*) – **Required**
 - d. Describe how information exchange and outreach will occur, specifying the outreach activities to be carried out and why the chosen approach will be effective (*1,500 character limit*) – **Required**
 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.



Attachments Details

BIFS applicants are not required to provide any additional attachments during the concept proposal phase of the application process. Because of this, the Attachment Details application section button will remain blue. Please continue to Preparing to Submit.

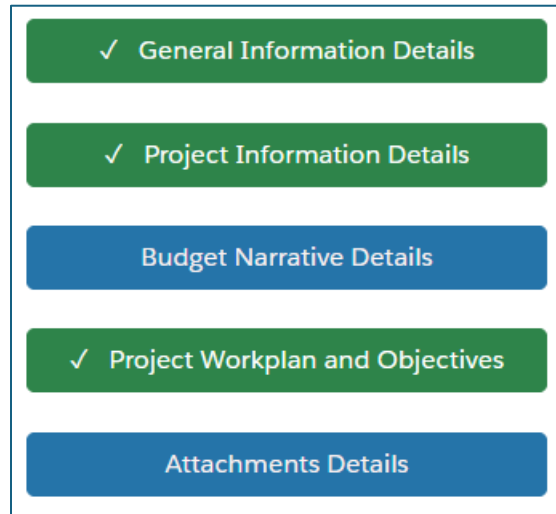


Preparing to Submit

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 selecting the “Save” button at the end of each required application section (excluding Budget Narrative and Attachments sections). A completed BIFS concept proposal application should show General Information Details, Project Information Details, and Project Workplan and Objectives in green with a check mark.



Reviewing the application

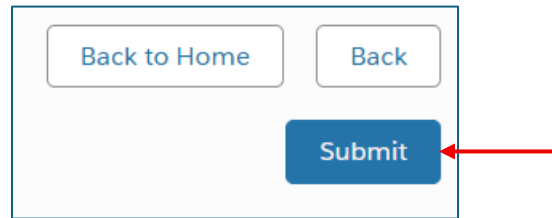
Select the “Preview” tab in the upper left corner next to the “Details” tab.



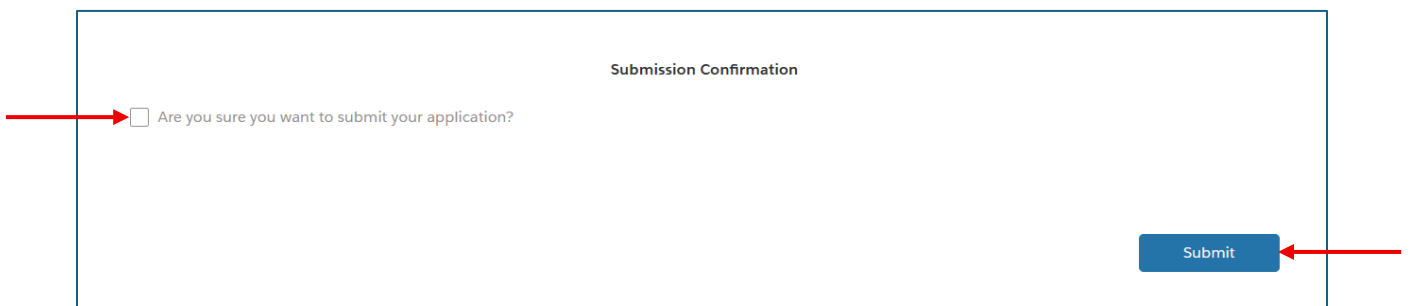
Take a moment to ensure that all of prompts labeled “**Required**” are complete, and that the information provided is correct.

Submitting the application

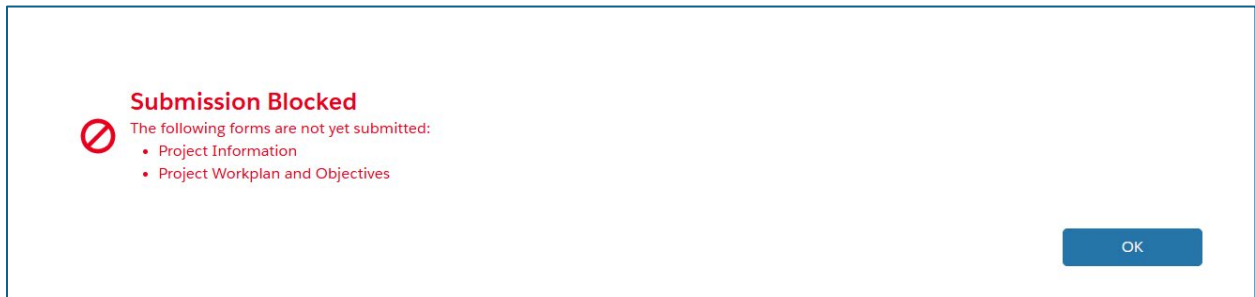
Select the “Submit” button in the upper right corner.



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



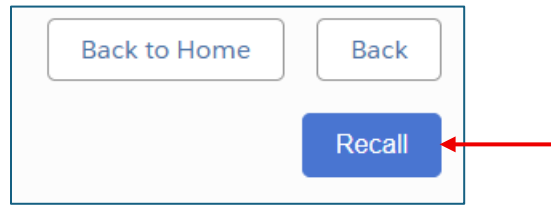
The application system considers an application incomplete if one or more of the required application sections are not saved. Attempting to submit an incomplete application will prompt a message that specifies which sections must be saved.



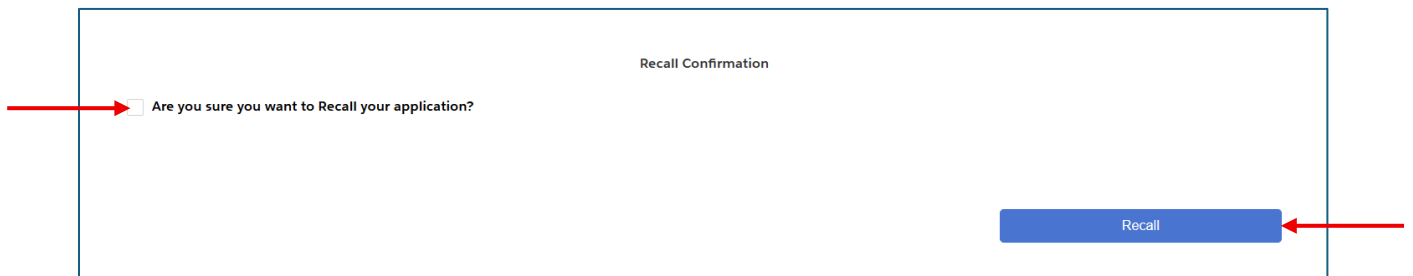
Once submission is finalized, applicants will receive a confirmation email from the application system.

Recalling the application

Applicants may recall their application at any time before the opportunity 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 the recall is finalized, applicants will receive a confirmation email from the application system.

Next Steps

OPCA will notify applicants via email once the review committee has made their decision. OPCA appreciates the applicant’s participation in this cycle of the Biologically Integrated Farming Systems Program and patience with our new application system.