

2023 Organic Transition Pilot Program
 Questions & Answers
 Updated 9/1/2023

Question Category	Question	Answer
Awards Announcement	Will CDFA announce later which entities got this grant? For farmers' information.	Yes, CDFA will post the list of awarded organizations with their service areas on the OTP website when awards are made in the fall. The funds currently being offered are for organizations to support farmers, not for direct applications from farmers.
Financial Management	Is only one advance payment allowed? Or can you get an advance payment multiple times?	CDFA may allow multiple advances, but each advance would need to be liquidated before the next can be applied for. Rules about Advance Payments are outlined in CDFA's Grant Administration Regulations as referenced in the RGA.
Financial Management	Can advances be spent on farmers' needs? Would the liquidation rules apply to pass-through funds that would go to farmers?	The block grant recipient can spend the funds from an advance on the farmers' needs. However, whether the organization makes purchases on behalf of the farmers, or passes funds directly to them, it will need to be prepared to document implementation in the quarterly report and invoicing process and track receipts and invoices for purchases made with those funds at the point of project close-out.
Budget Categories	It states that we need to have at least 70% of the budget for farmers, can a small sliver of that budget be for verification activities (e.g. confirming the farm is in transition)?	Activities like verification are considered administrative. At least 70% of the funds provided in an OTP block grant must go directly to farmers as financial assistance, including payments made on farmers' behalf.
Service Area	If you want a broad geographical location represented and we have not yet started the grant, how do we choose the geographical region?	The RGA does not state a preference for proposals with large service areas. Please focus on the application's Statement of Need, its relation to the geographical areas proposed for service, and the practical geographical reach and personnel capacity of your organization and/or partner(s).
Prioritization	Is there any prioritization in application scoring for serving/supporting smaller-scale farmers? Is there a priority for smaller-scale as there is for SDFRs?	There is not a priority for small-scale farmers as there is for SDFRs.
Farmer Land Access	Can you please clarify the land tenure requirements for verification?	Land tenure is a pre-project "verification" issue, not post-project. Before selecting farmers for financial assistance, the block grant organization will have to verify with documentation that the applicant farmer has stable access to the land during the project period, and that the landowner is aware of the expected transition to organic. Details are found in the RGA.
Farmer Eligibility	Will growers who are actively within the 3 years organic certification process be able to apply for this grant?	Yes, growers can begin the transition process before being selected for financial support. But they cannot receive financial support after having their transitioning acres certified organic.
Farmer Eligibility	Will growers who have not yet begun transition be able to receive funding?	Due to the structure of the program, growers must have acreage in transition in order to receive funding. Organic Transition Program recipient organizations can consider and work with farmers who have not yet begun, but financial assistance must not be disbursed while the acres are being managed under conventional production.
Farmer Eligibility	Will adding acreage be eligible? If a farmer has certified land/operation but is trying to add/increase acreage, are they eligible?	Yes, farmers can be managing some fields organically before being selected to help transition more conventional fields to organic.
Cannabis	We work with farmers who have both vegetable/meat/food production farms as well as licensed cannabis farms. Would we be eligible for this grant if ... our grant related work only engaged with food production businesses?	If your organization is one of the eligible application types, then the organization would be eligible to apply and support non-cannabis farms. Your organization's involvement with cannabis farmers would not affect your organization's eligibility to participate. Regarding the eligibility of cannabis growers to be beneficiaries of this program, in the past, the CDFA Legal office has determined that cannabis (excluding hemp) is not eligible for these programs based on the Food and Agriculture Code. We have asked for a review of this analysis, but we do not have a determination yet. In addition to any legal analysis, the Department may layer on additional policy in prioritizing funding.
Cannabis	If we are working with a land owner who has cannabis on one location of the parcel and a separate vegetable farm on another location of the parcel, and the businesses and premises are separate, would they be able to participate to transition their vegetable farm?	Yes. Only information about the acres under transition will be reported to CDFA. That will include current and expected crop type.