2023 State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program - Block Grant Pilot Program Frequently Asked Questions

General

1. **Who is eligible to apply for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program - Block Grant Pilot Program?**
Eligible applicants are Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs); University of California (UC), California Community Colleges, or California State Universities (CSU); Federally- and California-Recognized Native American Indian Tribes; Local or regional government agencies; California Commodities; and Nonprofit organizations. For-Profit entities and individuals are not eligible.

2. **Who is eligible to serve as a Technical Assistance Provider in the applications?**
The Block Grant applicants must provide technical assistance to Grant Beneficiaries as required by [AB 2377](). The eligible organizations to provide Technical Assistance are Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), University of California Cooperative Extensions, and Nonprofit organizations. Technical assistance is one of the most important components for evaluating Block Grant recipients' capability to support on-farm project development, selection, and successful implementation. Lead applicant organizations not eligible to provide technical assistance must partner with eligible organizations.

   The program requires that in each application, functions of each organization must be clearly defined (e.g., lead applicant organization, contractual and/or partner organizations).

3. **Who is eligible as a Grant Beneficiary for the Block Grant Recipient?**
Grant Beneficiaries are defined as California farmers/ ranchers or agricultural operations (including nonprofits), and/or federally- and California-recognized Native American Indian Tribes. Grant Beneficiaries must either own or control the agricultural land where SWEEP eligible practices will be implemented. For individual Block Grant Recipients (BGRs), the eligible Grant Beneficiaries will be those whose on-farm project locations are within the Block Grant recipient's service area boundaries identified in their application.

4. **Is there any minimum and/or maximum grant award per Block Grant**

application?
Yes, the minimum and maximum award per application is $2,000,000 and $5,000,000, respectively.

5. **What are the requirements for funding distribution among different components within a Block Grant?**
At least 80 percent of the total funding amount requested per application should be used for on-farm project implementation for Grant Beneficiaries. The budget amount for technical assistance is eligible for up to 5 percent of the total grant amount, according to AB 2377. The base for indirect cost calculation should not include dollar amount for on-farm projects or equipment purchase.

6. **What is the expected grant duration for the Block Grant awarded projects?**
The grant duration will be from the date the grant agreement is fully executed, to November 30, 2027. Therefore, the grant start date may vary slightly from project to project. Any cost incurred outside the grant term will not be reimbursable.

7. **What is general process for selecting on-farm projects to be awarded?**
There are three steps in the awarding process:
   (1) The Block Grant recipient will review and select applications submitted by potential Grant Beneficiaries using the methods described in their grant agreement. The Block Grant recipient then reports to CDFA the details of the on-farm projects selected for funding using the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program Block Grant On-Farm Project Reporting Template once it is developed. This reporting template will be updated on an on-going basis.
   (2) CDFA will review the submitted report with potential Grant Beneficiaries and flag for the BGR if any on-farm projects on the list are not eligible for funding according to the program requirements (State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program Block Grant Pilot Program Request for Grant Applications (RGA): On-Farm Project Selection and Approvals, and State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program Requirements for On-Farm Projects).
   (3) After receiving eligibility feedback from CDFA, the Block Grant Recipient can notify the Grant Beneficiaries that their applications have been selected for State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program grant awards.

8. **What is the expected implementation time for the on-farm projects?**
On-farm projects are allow 2-years for project implementation. The start and end dates for an on-farm project must fall within the Block Grant term; no earlier than the Block Grant's start date, and no later than November 30, 2027, or the Block Grant term end date.

9. **Is there any minimum and/or maximum grant award per on-farm project?**
   There is no minimum award amount, and the maximum award amount is $200,000 for an on-farm project.

10. **How is on-farm project grant award amount calculated?**
    Projects should use the NRCS payment schedule, to the extend feasible, to identify reasonable costs for project components. The grant award is based off of allowable costs that are identified in the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Programs Block Grant Programs RGA

11. **Who is considered as a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher (SDFR)?**
    Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A socially disadvantaged group is defined by the 2017 Farmer Equity Act as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include all of the following: (1) African Americans (2) Native Indians (3) Alaskan Natives (4) Hispanics (5) Asian Americans (6) Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

    As required by AB 2377, at least 25 percent of the technical assistance funds must be used to provide technical assistance to SDFRs. The State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program aims to allocate 25 percent of total grant funding to on-farm projects that benefit SDFRs and encourages Block Grant recipients to meet or exceed this target. The Block Grant applicants are required to provide a SDFRs percentage target commitment in their applications.

Grant Application

12. **How do I find my application ID number?**
    Your application ID is located in the URL of your application browser. The ID is the 5-digit number at the end of the URL. For example, if your application browser is: https://www.gotomygrants.com/Public/OportunityApplications/ApplicationForm/12345, then 12345 is your application ID.

13. **How do I enter indirect cost in the application?**
    Indirect costs should be calculated by the applicant using the Lead Organization's agreed upon indirect rate. The indirect costs for the grant will be entered into the Budget Template section of the application as a budget subcategory. When entering the indirect cost line items, the costs category form in the line item is labeled as "direct costs" - this form is where you enter the

indirect cost budget.

14. How do I enter cost share in the application?

Cost share is not required. If the Block Grant applicant will provide cost share, they can indicate as such and enter the estimated amount for cost share in the budget narrative section of the application form.