2018 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
OCTOBER 11, 2017

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. Are the materials from the SCBGP workshop and webinar presentations available online?
   A. PDF copies of each PowerPoint as well as video of each presentation will be made available on the CDFA SCBGP website (www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants) during the first week of October.

2. Q. Where can applicants find the character limits for each question?
   A. The character limit for each question is provided in FAAST. This limit includes letters, numbers, punctuation, spaces, and special characters.

3. Q. Where can applicants find information about projects awarded SCBGP funding in past years?
   A. Applicants can find project abstracts and Final Performance Reports for past grant awards on the SCBGP website. Note: Program requirements change year to year, so past projects may not necessarily conform to current program requirements.

4. Q. Is CDFA able to provide applicants with assistance developing a concept proposal?
   A. CDFA provides an overview of the program, proposal application, online submittal tool, and general grant writing tips at SCBGP workshops and webinars. Regrettably, CDFA cannot provide one-on-one assistance to individual applicants.

5. Q. Can cooperators or contractors outside the state of California or outside the United States be involved in project activities?
   A. There is no prohibition on cooperating or contracting with an organization outside of California or the United States, provided the country is not listed on the Office of Foreign Assets Control Active Sanctions List and that the applicant sufficiently demonstrates that the primary benefit of the project will be to California specialty crops.

6. Q. Can two or more organizations partner on a project?
   A. Yes, however, only one organization may serve as the lead applicant for a SCBGP project. Any work that cannot be completed by the applicant organization must be completed by a contractor or cooperating entity.

7. Q. Has federal funding for 2018 SCBGP been secured?
   A. Authorization for this program was established under the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 and continues under authorization from the Agricultural Act of 2014 (commonly referred to as the "Farm Bill"). The 2014 Farm Bill contains provisions for the continuation of this program in 2018 and beyond; however, as of the date of this publication, Congress has not passed a new Farm Bill or a continuing budget resolution to reauthorize funding for the program. While CDFA anticipates continued funding for the program as described in the 2014 Farm Bill, grant awards will only be made if continuing authorization for the program is established and funds are made available by USDA, AMS.

8. Q. How much does CDFA expect to award in 2018?
   A. Pending USDA's Request for Applications, CDFA anticipates that up to $19 million will be awarded to projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of California's specialty crops.

9. Q. *Revised: October 11, 2017:* Where should applicants document cooperating entity support?
   A. There is a "Cooperating Entities" tab in the FAAST application that allows applicants to enter any cooperators on the project. After entering the cooperating entity information, click "Save Cooperating Entity" and the information will populate at the bottom of the page. Repeat for any additional cooperating entities. Cooperating entities that receive a portion of the SCBGP funds should also be listed as contractors under category F Contractual.

10. Q. What is a DUNS number and is it required to submit a concept proposal?
    A. A DUNS number is a Data Universal Numbering System number, a proprietary system developed and regulated by Dun & Bradstreet that assigns a unique numeric identifier to a single business entity. A DUNS number is not required prior to submitting a concept proposal; however, if awarded SCBGP funds, recipients will need to obtain a DUNS number before a grant agreement can be executed.

11. Q. Is there a recommended number of cooperating entities that should be included for the concept proposal phase?
    A. No, there is no recommended number of cooperating entities that should be included for the concept proposal phase.

12. Q. Is project benefit, relative to cost, considered in the review of proposals?
    A. Yes, CDFA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to California specialty crop producers in relation to each dollar spent.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

13. Q. Can an organization hire new staff or select a contractor to serve as a project director or project manager?
    A. Yes, an applicant organization may hire new staff or select a contractor to serve as the project manager or project director for a project. However, applicants should provide contact information for staff already employed by the organization in the FAAST application. The contact information listed in FAAST is how CDFA will contact you regarding the status of your concept proposal. If new staff are hired, applicants may update the project manager or project director contact information.

14. Q. Who should be listed as Project Director and Project Manager?
    A. It is up to the applicant organization to determine who should be the Project Director and the Project Manager. For the purposes of the SCBGP, the Project Director is the authorized representative for the applicant organization whereas the Project Manager oversees the day-to-day activities.

15. Q. Can organizations be awarded less than the amount of their Grant Proposal request?

    A.   Yes, CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount which is less than the Grant Proposal amount requested.

New Questions: October 11, 2017

16.   Q.   Can CDFA provide project examples?
        A.   Project examples can be found in the RFCP, Appendix B, pages 21-22.

17.   Q.   The 2018 Request for Concept Proposal asks for less information than the 2017 Request for Concept Proposal. Should applicants provide this information elsewhere or will it be asked in the grant proposal phase?
        A.   The 2018 Request for Concept Proposal was designed to be a simpler, more streamlined application and does not ask for certain information (e.g., project sustainability, work plan, etc.). Applicants invited to the grant proposal phase will be asked to provide further details regarding their project(s).

18.   Q.   Will additional consideration be given to projects that address the impact of recent wildfires on California's specialty crop industry?
        A.   All proposals will be reviewed on their individual merits and scored based upon whether the proposed project is a priority for the specialty crop industry and on the concept proposal's likelihood for success. While the impact of wildfires may be a priority for California's specialty crop industry, additional considerations will not be given to proposals solely for addressing this issue.

ELIGIBILITY

1.   Q.   Can SCBGP funds be used to purchase specialty crops as part of an educational program?
       A.   SCBGP funds may be used to purchase specialty crops needed as part of an educational program. For example, purchasing specialty crops for a cooking demonstration or for samples to accompany an educational curriculum is allowable. However, it is not allowable to purchase specialty crops to provide to participants to take home.

2.   Q.   Are projects that involve donating produce eligible for SCBGP funding?
       A.   Using SCBGP funds to donate specialty crops is unallowable. Both the cost to purchase or grow the produce and the personnel costs associated with facilitating the donation are unallowable costs. Projects that focus primarily on donating or distributing donated food may want to consider alternative funding opportunities described in the SCBGP RFCP and on the CDFA grants website.

3.   Q.   Are commodity boards or councils eligible to apply?
       A.   Yes, commodity boards and councils are eligible to apply for the SCBGP, as long as the primary focus of the project is California specialty crops.

4.   Q.   Is agritourism an allowable activity?

A.   Agritourism is allowable provided the focus of the project is on benefitting the eligible specialty crop(s) and not the locale, or other businesses/organizations that could benefit from agritourism.

5.   Q.   Are organizations that serve the community eligible to apply for the SCBGP?
A.   Organizations that serve the community are eligible to apply for the SCBGP, provided the organization is one of the eligible organization types listed in the SCBGP RFCP (reference page 1).

6.   Q.   Are winegrapes considered a specialty crop?
A.   Yes, winegrapes are considered a specialty crop. For a list of eligible and ineligible crops, reference USDA's Definition of Specialty Crops.

7.   Q.   Is algae used as a food source considered a specialty crop?
A.   Yes, algae used as a food source may be considered a specialty crop as long as it is managed and used by humans.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

8.   Q.   Can SCBGP funds be used to develop or improve land for growing specialty crops?
A.   SCBGP funds cannot be used for capital improvements, which are expenditures to acquire capital assets or make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Land grading and any permanent construction would be an unallowable cost because it improves the value of the land. However, an applicant could use cost share to pay for capital improvement costs and use SCBGP funds to pay for allowable costs, such as purchasing plants or seeds, soil amendments, etc.

9.   Q.   Is there a list of specialty crops specific to California?
A.   No. The definition of a specialty crop is determined by the USDA. Visit https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop for a comprehensive definition of specialty crops and a list of eligible and ineligible commodities.

10.   Q.   Is there a more detailed list of specialty crops available for plants grown for the cut flower market in California? For example, is Protea a specialty crop?
A.   The list of eligible and ineligible commodities is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to provide examples of the most common specialty crops. Protea may be a specialty crop if the plant is intensively cultivated and used by people for aesthetic gratification.

11.   Q.   Are chia seeds considered an eligible specialty crop?
A.   Chia seeds may be an eligible specialty crop if the plant is intensively cultivated and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification.

12.   Q.   Can an organization that currently has a SCBGP grant award apply for the 2018 SCBGP grant?

A.   Yes, an organization that currently has a SCBGP grant award can submit a proposal for 2018. However, the proposal must be for a unique project. If the proposal advances to the grant proposal phase, a description of how the project differs from, complements, or builds upon the previous work will be required.

13. Q.   Would renting booth space at a trade show that includes exhibitors that are not specific to specialty crops be considered an allowable cost?
     A.   The cost would only be allowable if the applicant's booth at the trade show is solely used to promote specialty crops.

14. Q.   The RFCP states, "Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that directly benefit or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual." What is meant by "directly benefit"?
     A.   "Directly benefit" refers to when the applicant organization appears to benefit from the project rather than California's specialty crop industry. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that the project primarily benefits the California specialty crop industry and/or public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

15. Q.   Are applicants required to contract with other organizations on their projects?
     A.   No, applicants are not required to contract with other organizations on their projects. However, it is up to the applicant to determine whether contracting with other entities is necessary for the completion of their project activities.

16. Q.   Are proposals focused on processed foods made from specialty crops eligible for SCBGP funding?
     A.   Yes, proposals focused on processed specialty crops products are eligible for SCBGP funding. However, since the purpose of the program is to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, the specialty crop in the processed product must constitute greater than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water.

17. Q.   Are proposals focused on increasing the availability of processed or prepared foods made from specialty crops eligible for SCBGP funding? If so, is catering as a means to increase the availability of eligible processed foods an allowable activity?
     A.   Yes, proposals focused on processed specialty crop products are eligible for SCBGP funding. However, the focus of the project proposal must be on the specialty crop in the processed product. Promoting an eligible processed product through catering may be an allowable activity, similar to other retail points of food access if the project enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops, rather than benefit a catering company. In addition, any revenue generated during the grant period by a supported project activity must be listed under budget category J. "Program Income" and include a description of how it will be generated and how it will be used to further support the project objective.

New Questions: October 11, 2017

18. Q.   Is Cannabis considered an eligible specialty crop?

A.   The federal government considers cannabis a <u>federally controlled illegal drug plant</u> and so federal funds cannot be used to support projects that promote cannabis.

FIXED AMOUNT AWARDS

1.   Q.   What are fixed amount awards?
     A.   Fixed amount awards are a type of grant agreement with payments based on outcomes achieved rather than reimbursement for actual costs incurred. This type of award reduces some of the administrative burden and record-keeping requirements for both the recipient and CDFA. While payment is based on outcomes achieved, fixed amount awards must comply with the federal cost principles and the program requirements described in the <u>SCBGP RFCP</u>.

FAAST APPLICATION

1.   Q.   Can changes be made to a concept proposal that has already been submitted in FAAST?
     A.   It may be possible to change a concept proposal that has already been submitted in FAAST. If such a change is necessary, applicants should contact the FAAST Help Desk at (866) 434-1083 or FAAST_ADMIN@waterboards.ca.gov and reference the 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program along with their PIN. All requests must be received within a reasonable amount of time before the submission deadline, no changes can be made after the submission deadline, and applicants are still required to resubmit their revised proposal before the submission deadline.

2.   Q.   Can applicants use their existing FAAST account to submit a Concept Proposal?
     A.   Individuals who already have a FAAST account may use their existing account to access the 2018 SCBGP application and submit their proposal.

3.   Q.   What attachments are required to be submitted with the concept proposal application? Should letters of support be included?
     A.   The budget template is the only required attachment. It is not necessary to provide letters of support during the concept proposal phase. Successful applicants will have an opportunity to submit letters of support during the grant proposal phase. During the concept proposal phase, the Technical Review Committee is not required to review any additional attachments and additional attachments cannot be used to circumvent the character limits for each question. For these reasons, applicants are discouraged from relying on additional attachments to support or explain their concept proposal.

4.   Q.   Can more than one person/individual work on a single proposal in FAAST?
     A.   Yes, more than one person/individual can work on a single proposal in FAAST. The applicant organization is able to add multiple users in the FAAST application under the "Add User" tab. However, only one user can be in the FAAST application at once.

5. Q. If a project spans several Regional Water Quality Control Board boundaries what should applicants enter for "Responsible Regional Water Board"?
    A. If your project spans multiple Regional Water Quality Control Board boundaries, select "Statewide" from the "Responsible Regional Water Board" drop down list.

6. Q. Is a federal tax ID required prior to submitting a concept proposal?
    A. Applicants must have a legal business name and a federal tax ID in order to submit a concept proposal. Applicants may begin an application in FAAST prior to receiving a federal tax ID number; however, a federal tax ID number must be entered in FAAST prior to submitting a concept proposal.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

7. Q. Is it possible to use a Macintosh to submit a proposal in FAAST?
    A. It may be possible to use a Macintosh to submit a proposal in FAAST. However, the FAAST System Administrator recommends using a PC with Internet Explorer (6.0 or higher) and disabling pop-up blocking software while using FAAST. CDFA is not responsible for any submission issues that may arise from applicants using non-recommended operating systems or browsers and cannot grant deadline extensions.

FUNDING AREA AND FUNDING CATEGORY

1. Q. Is there a limit to the number of proposals an organization can submit?
    A. There is no limit to the number of proposals an organization can submit. However, each proposal submitted, regardless of funding area or category, must be for a unique project. Most importantly, organizations should only submit the number of proposals their organization would be able to administer if all were ultimately awarded funding.

2. Q. What types of projects should be submitted within Research Category A: Environmental Stewardship and Conservation?
    A. Projects submitted in this funding area should focus on enhancing soil health, conservation of agricultural land and water, and address specialty crop agriculture's contribution to adaptation and/or mitigation of climate change. Projects should seek to expand stewardship practices and natural resource conservation to improve the environmental and financial performance of California specialty crop growers. In addition, all SCBGP projects are required to include an outreach component, and applicants should ensure their projects address at least one of the program priorities listed beneath their chosen funding category.

3. Q. Will a project be disqualified, if it does not address the funding area to which it is submitted?
    A. All proposals must address at least one program priority for the funding category selected. While a proposal will not be disqualified solely for failing to address the funding category or program priorities selected, this may affect technical and administrative review of the proposal.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

4. Q. Can an applicant select more than one funding area for a single proposal?
    A. No. Although it may be possible for a project to address more than one funding area, applicants must select only one funding area and category. Selecting a funding category ensures that concept proposals are evaluated by the appropriate Technical Review Committee. Note that the selected funding area and category cannot be changed once the concept proposal is submitted.

5. Q. Does CDFA allocate a specific number of projects or amount of the total funding available per funding category?
    A. No, CDFA does not allocate a specific number of projects or amount of the total funding available per funding category.

6. Q. Can a single proposal contain multiple projects?
    A. Yes, a proposal may contain multiple projects but only one funding area and related funding category may be selected. Additionally, CDFA cannot anticipate how projects that are broad in scope will be received by the Technical Review Committee.

7. Q. In the Specialty Crop Access and Nutrition Education funding category, must nutrition education be done in a direct, interactive teaching setting or can it be done indirectly by distributing printed materials?
    A. Nutrition education can occur either directly in a teaching setting or indirectly by distributing printed materials. In both cases, however, the project will need to select an outcome measure and report on the change in knowledge gained by the education objective.

New Questions: October 11, 2017

8. Q. Should all food safety projects be submitted to the Center for Produce Safety (CPS)?
    A. Generally, proposals focused on providing practical, translatable research data to address food safety practices in production, harvest, and post-harvest handling should be submitted to CPS. Proposals focused on the application of established food safety practices through training and education are typically more appropriate to CDFA's competitive process. Applicants should review the program priorities in the SCBGP RFCP and the 2018 CPS Research Priorities to determine the most appropriate program for their proposal.

9. Q. What type of project should be submitted to the Training and Education Category B: Equipping Current and Next Generation Specialty Crop Farmers?
    A. Projects submitted in this funding area should benefit current and next generation specialty crop farmers through training and education. These projects should seek to ensure the viability of California specialty crops by investing in training for operators to address current and future challenges. It is up to the applicant to explain how the project addresses one or more of these priorities.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

1. Q. Can a proposal address more than one program priority? Does identifying more priorities make a proposal more competitive? Do projects that address certain program priorities receive higher priority for funding than others?

    A. A proposal may address multiple program priorities. However, there is no priority given to projects that address multiple program priorities. In addition, there is no consideration given to any specific program priorities.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

2. Q. *Revised: October 11, 2017:* The instructions in FAAST indicate to enter verbatim at least one of the 2018 SCBGP program priorities, however there is a maximum of 1000 characters available in the text box. Should additional explanation be added? If selecting multiple priorities can you list the priority numbers rather than entering them verbatim?

    A. Additional explanation is not required in the concept proposal phase. Simply enter verbatim (or copy and paste) at least one (or more, if applicable) of the 2018 SCBGP program priorities. Extra space has only been provided to accommodate the entry of any program priorities your project may select.

3. Q. Under Training and Education Category A: Specialty Crop Access and Nutrition Education, program priority 5 indicates a project must increase the capacity for specialty crop production and distribution into underserved communities. What is meant by "capacity" and how would it be identified and measured?

    A. "Capacity" refers to the ability of the community to accommodate increased amounts of specialty crops which can be made available to the community. It is up to the applicant to determine how to best identify and measure this based on the focus of the project.

New Questions: October 11, 2017

4. Q. Can a project address program priorities from funding categories other than the one selected for the proposal?

    A. Yes, a project may address program priorities from other funding categories. However at least one of the priorities listed must be associated with the funding category selected for the project.

5. Q. What kinds of projects should be submitted to the Specialty Crop Access and Nutrition Education category priority 4?

    A. Any project submitted to Specialty Crop Access and Nutrition Education category, priority 4 must ensure that the project increases the availability of specialty crops in homes, schools,

the workplace, hospitals, prisons, and in other underserved communities. It is up to the applicant to explain how the project addresses this and/or other priorities.

PROJECT PURPOSE
No questions at this time.

PROJECT GOALS
No questions at this time.

OUTCOME MEASURES

1. Q. Where can applicants find additional information about the outcome measures and indicators/sub-indicators?
    A. The outcome measures, indicators, and sub-indicators have been developed by USDA and the Office of Management and Budget for nationwide reporting purposes and cannot be altered, amended, or replaced. All projects must accomplish at least one outcome measure and indicator/sub-indicator. Refer to the Outcome Measures supplemental document for specific information on outcomes and indicators/sub-indicators. This document can also be found on page 12 of the SCBGP RFCP or downloaded under question 6 in the FAAST application.

2. Q. Should applicants quantify the indicator(s) identified for their chosen outcome measure(s)?
    A. During the concept proposal phase, applicants are only asked to identify the outcome measure(s) and indicator(s) of success. If known, applicants are encouraged to provide a quantified estimate for each indicator identified; however, a number is not required at this point. If invited to submit a grant proposal, applicants will be asked to provide more detail.

3. Q. Do projects that address more than one outcome measure receive higher priority for funding?
    A. There is no priority given to projects that address more than one outcome measure.

4. Q. What is an appropriate way to measure a change in sales?
    A. There are multiple ways to measure a change in sales. Each applicant must determine the most appropriate method for their project and the data available. However, changes in sales must be based on actual sales data, which means that a project must start with a baseline or establish a baseline as part of the project. For example measuring change by comparing quarterly sales reports would be appropriate; counting social media impressions or survey responses would not.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

5. Q. The instructions in FAAST indicate to enter verbatim the outcome measure(s) the project will achieve, however there is a maximum of 1000 characters available in the text box. Should additional explanation be added?

    A. Additional explanation is not required in the concept proposal phase. Simply enter verbatim (or copy and paste) at least one of the outcome measures. Extra space has only been provided to accommodate the entry of any outcome measures your project may select.

6. Q. Do projects that select Outcome Measure 1 have to develop a marketing campaign?

    A. Projects that select Outcome Measure 1 are not required to develop a marketing campaign.

7. Q. Do projects submitted to Training and Education need to select Outcome 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales?

    A. It depends on the nature of the project. All marketing and promotion projects, defined as involving efforts to sell, advertise, promote, market, and generate publicity, attract new customers, or raise customer awareness for specialty crops or a specialty crop venue, must select Outcome Measure 1. Therefore, any projects submitted that meet this definition would need to select Outcome Measure 1.

8. Q. Do projects submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category have to select the outcome to increase sales?

    A. All proposals submitted to California Grown Promotion funding category and any other proposals that meet the definition of marketing and promotion as described in the Outcome Measures Supplement are required to select the outcome to increase sales.

9. Q. What if there is no existing sales baseline? Is it a requirement to establish a baseline as part of the project in order to demonstrate an increase in sales?

    A. If a sales baseline does not already exist, one of the objectives of the project must be to determine a sales baseline during the grant period in order to document the value of sales increased by the end of the project.

10. Q. Are retail promotions including point of purchase items, labels, and packaging considered marketing/promotional materials?

    A. Yes, retail promotions including point of purchase items, labels, and packaging are considered marketing/promotional materials. Therefore, applicants whose projects include retail promotions are required to select Outcome Measure 1.

New Questions: October 11, 2017

11. Q. Can any Outcome Measure be selected for projects under any category?

    A. Yes. Applicants may select whichever outcome measures and indicators/sub-indicators will best demonstrate the success of the project and that can be addressed by the project activities. However, Outcome Measure one must be one of the outcome measures selected for all projects that include a marketing and promotion component.

PROJECT SUCCESS

No questions at this time.

PROJECT DURATION
No questions at this time.

BUDGET TEMPLATE

1. Q. Where can applicants download the budget template?
   A. The budget template is accessible here. The template is also linked on page 12 of the SCBGP RFCP and directly under question 9 in the FAAST application.

2. Q. What should be included within the description column of the budget template?
   A. Refer to the SCBGP RFCP, pages 13-14, for detail regarding what to include in the description column. Although there are no character limits within the description column, applicants should provide a brief description of the costs or activities associated with each budget category. Applicants will be asked to provide greater detail if invited to submit a grant proposal.

3. Q. Is there a limit to the amount of funds that may be requested within each budget category in the budget template?
   A. Aside from category H. Indirect Costs, there is no limit to the amount of costs that may be requested within each budget category, as long as the total SCBGP funds requested stays within the allowable grant amount: $25,000 minimum - $300,000 maximum ($25,000 minimum - $150,000 maximum for fixed amount awards). The amount requested for category H. Indirect Costs must not exceed 8.00% of total personnel costs (A. Salary and Wages + B. Fringe Benefits). CDFA cannot predict how the Technical Review Committee will view projects with high percentages in single budget categories.

4. Q. Can applicants charge an indirect cost rate greater than the eight percent of total personnel costs?
   A. The indirect cost rate for the SCBGP is established in federal statute. Please reference 2 CFR 200.414 (c)(1) as well as section 10010(4) of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79. This statutory limitation covers both applicant indirect and CDFA's costs to administer the program. For this reason, CDFA will not accept requests for indirect costs greater than eight percent of total personnel costs. Applicants that might ordinarily be eligible to receive a higher indirect rate from other state or federal programs are responsible for ensuring that their organization/institution will allow an exception for this program before submitting an application.

5. Q. *Revised: October 4, 2017:* Will any unallowable costs result in disqualification of a proposal? What is meant by substantial unallowable costs?

A. Proposals with substantial unallowable costs for items or activities necessary to complete the project objectives will result in disqualification of a project proposal. The determining factor is the impact of the unallowable costs on the ability of the project to be successful. If eliminating the costs for unallowable items or activities has a significant impact on the ability of the project to be successful, the proposal will be disqualified.

6. Q. Does the SCBGP place a limit on how much funds can be budgeted for each year?
   A. No, there is no per year budget limit. However, the total budget cannot exceed $300,000 or $150,000 for Fixed Amount Awards.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

7. Q. What are some examples of program income?
   A. Program income refers to net income generated during the grant period by a supported project activity or earned as a direct result of the award. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds), registration fees for conferences, etc. If a project will generate program income, applicants must provide a description of how it will be generated and how it will be used to further support the project objective. Program income cannot be used as a net profit and it must be spent before the end of the grant period in accordance with restrictions on allowable and unallowable costs and activities.

8. Q. If project personnel, including applicant organization staff or contractors, have not yet been identified, how should applicants reference these individuals in the concept proposal?
   A. Any project personnel that have not yet been identified (e.g., staff that will be hired if the grant is awarded) should be referred to in the concept proposal by the title of the position to be filled.

9. Q. Which category of the Budget Template should graduate student researcher tuition and fees be listed under?
   A. Graduate student researcher tuition and fees should be listed under category G Other.

10. Q. Would leased equipment be listed under budget category D. Scientific Research Equipment or category G. Other?
    A. Costs to lease equipment may be allowable if reasonable and necessary for the completion of the project and should be included in category G. Other.

11. Q. Are costs for marketing materials such as brochures an allowable cost and if so, what is the appropriate budget category?
    A. Costs for marketing materials such as brochures may be allowable costs if they solely promote the specialty crop rather than promote or benefit a program or single organization. Costs to purchase supplies for printing brochures (e.g., ink, paper, etc.) would be listed under budget category E. Supplies. Costs to have a vendor print brochures would be listed under budget category G. Other.

12. Q. Are applicants allowed to follow their own organization's established travel policy guidelines?
    A. It is a program requirement that applicants follow the lesser of the rates in effect at the time of travel as established by the United States (U.S.) General Services Administration (GSA) or the applicant's established travel policy.

13. Q. The RFCP states that proposals with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project objectives may be disqualified. What if a project has some unallowable costs or activities? Can these be covered by cost share?
    A. Applicants are allowed to use matching funds or in kind contributions to cover any costs and activities that are not allowable under the SCBGP. In the concept proposal, only describe costs and activities that will be paid for with SCBGP funds; do not include any unallowable costs or activities that will be paid for with matching funds or in-kind contributions. If your proposal advances to the grant proposal phase, you will be asked to provide additional detail about funding sources and activities that will be paid for with matching funds.

14. Q. Should all sections of the Budget Template be completed? For example, are fringe benefit costs required to be included in the budget?
    A. It is only necessary to complete those sections of the Budget Template for which SCBGP funds will be used to complete the activities of the project. Fringe benefit costs are not required and do not have to be included as part of the budget.

15. Q. What are indirect costs?
    A. Indirect costs (also known as "facilities and administrative costs") are costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. Typically, these involve costs to run an organization as a whole, including administrative staff salaries, information technology services, rent, utilities, internet and telephone service, general use office supplies, insurance, and maintenance.

16. Q. Are contractors allowed to charge indirect costs? If so, is there a maximum amount? Where should these costs be listed in the budget template?
    A. Each contractor is allowed to claim indirect costs up to eight percent of their respective personnel costs. Each contractor's requested indirect costs should be included within the amount requested for category F. Contractual. Do not combine contractual indirect with applicant indirect in category H; this will make the indirect rate appear to exceed the eight percent maximum and could result in disqualification.

17. Q. What is the difference between "scientific research" and "general purpose" equipment? Is there a minimum or maximum cost limit for special purpose equipment?
    A. Both "scientific research" and "general purpose" equipment refer to tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds $5,000 per unit. "Scientific research" equipment used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities may be conditionally allowable. "General purpose" equipment is used for purposes other than research, scientific, or other technical activities and is not

allowable. The amount that can be charged for scientific research equipment cannot exceed the maximum award amount.

New Questions: October 11, 2017

18. Q. How should program income be used after the grant period has ended?
    A. Program income refers to net income generated during the grant period by a supported project activity or earned as a direct result of the award. However, if income will be generated by continued project activities after the grant duration it can be used to sustain the project. Applicants invited to the grant proposal phase will be asked to provide details about sustainability within the "Project Sustainability" section where applicants can explain how income generated after the grant duration will be used to sustain the project.

19. Q. Are membership costs or licensing fees allowable?
    A. Costs for membership in business, technical, or professional organizations are an allowable use of federal grant funds. Licensing fees may be allowable if they are necessary and reasonable to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project.

GRANT PROPOSAL PHASE

1. Q. What percentage of proposals make it through each phase?
   A. About 50-60 percent of concept proposals are invited to submit grant proposals and about 40-50 percent of grant proposals are submitted to USDA for consideration. These percentages vary each year and depend on the individual grant requests and CDFA's SCBGP allocation.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

2. Q. In the grant proposal, what details will need to be provided for contractual costs?
   A. While a detailed breakdown for contractual costs is not needed for the concept proposal a reasonable estimate should be provided that reflects the cost of work by any contractor(s). At the grant proposal phase the applicant will need to provide a breakdown of contractual costs for each contractor via cost subcategories (Salary and Wages, Fringe Benefits, etc.) where applicable. In addition, the applicant must, at a minimum, demonstrate that procurement transactions for contractors were or will be conducted in a manner that provides full and open competition and is consistent with the standards described in 2 CFR 200.317 – 200.326.

3. Q. Can substantial changes be made between the concept proposal and grant proposal?
   A. Applicants may revise and refine their project during the grant proposal phase as some degree of change is anticipated in response to grant proposal requirements and any feedback provided. However, substantial changes are discouraged as CDFA cannot anticipate how these changes will be received by the Technical Review Committee.

2018 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PHASE I, CONCEPT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
OCTOBER 11, 2017

New Questions: October 11, 2017

4. Q. Can the amount and/or allocation of SCBGP funding requested change from the concept proposal phase to the grant proposal phase?
    A. The amount of SCBGP funding requested in the grant proposal phase may increase or decrease from the concept proposal phase. In addition, the allocation of funding requested for each category of the budget may be altered. Although there is no limit on the amount that the budget may change, CDFA cannot anticipate how changes will be viewed by the Technical Review Committee and substantial changes (+/- 10 percent) may be questioned. If the budget changes, ensure the revised amount is between $25,000 and $300,000 ($25,000 and $150,000 for fixed amount awards) and update the amount listed under Funds Requested on the Project Budget tab in FAAST. Be sure that costs for each budget category are allowable and give justification for the costs as directed.

COST SHARE

1. Q. Are matching funds or in-kind contributions required?
    A. Matching funds and in-kind contributions are not required; however, the Technical Review Committee may view matching funds or in-kind contributions as an indicator of industry support.

2. Q. If an organization is staffed by volunteers, would volunteer time dedicated to the project be considered an in-kind contribution?
    A. Yes, in-kind contribution refers to the determined value of assets (i.e., equipment, use of land, volunteered staff time, etc.) donated to the project.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

3. Q. Does cost share need to be itemized in either the concept proposal or the grant proposal?
    A. In the concept proposal phase, an estimation of cost share committed to the project must be included in the Project Budget tab in FAAST, however a detailed description of cost share is not required. In the grant proposal phase, the amount of funds secured, type of cost share, the source, and a summary of activities that will be covered will be required. If awarded funds, cost share use will need to be documented and reported.

New Questions: October 11, 2017

4. Q. Is there any restriction on the kind of funds or resources that can be used for cost sharing?
    A. Funds from other federal grant programs cannot be used as matching funds or cost sharing. Reference 2 CFR Part 200.306 (b)(5).

5. Q. Can applicants use funds from more than one grant program to support the same project?
    A. SCBGP funds cannot be used to duplicate costs or activities supported by other state or federal programs. If invited to the grant proposal phase, applicants will need to disclose if

they have applied for or are receiving state or federal funds for a project submitted to the SCBGP in the "Other Support from Federal or State Grant Programs" section.

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Q. What is required to serve on the Technical Review Committee (TRC)? May TRC members submit concept proposals?
    A. All individuals interested in serving on the TRC submit an application form and a copy of their résumé to grants@cdfa.ca.gov, which are reviewed for experience and expertise. TRC members are asked to complete and sign conflict of interest disclosures. In addition, applications and resumes are reviewed to identify possible conflicts of interest. All TRC members are recused from reviewing/discussing any proposals where conflicts of interest are identified or would likely occur. TRC members and their organizations may submit concept proposals, but said TRC members are prohibited from reviewing/discussing them.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

2. Q. How will reviewers evaluate whether the proposed project is a priority for the specialty crop industry?
    A. TRC members are assigned projects to review within the funding category of their expertise. Each funding category has a list of associated program priorities that serve as a guide to the priority issues facing the specialty crop industry in that category. Projects must select at least one of these program priorities. It is then up to the applicant to demonstrate, within the eight questions that make up the concept proposal application, that the proposed project addresses a specific issue, problem, or need that is important and timely for the specialty crop industry.

3. Q. How will reviewers evaluate the concept proposal's likelihood for success?
    A. To determine a concept proposal's likelihood for success, reviewers will evaluate the responses to the eight questions in the concept proposal application to determine if the project has a well-developed strategy for evaluating and measuring project success. Applicants must demonstrate that the project has relevant and well thought out goals and objectives and a plan for measuring and evaluating those goals and objectives that adequately captures the level of change the project hopes to achieve.

4. Q. Are proposals that build on previously funded SCBGP projects given a higher priority by the Technical Review Committee?
    A. No. Projects that build on previously funded SCBGP projects are not given higher priority by the Technical Review Committee. However, failure to adequately explain how a proposal is different from and builds upon previously funded work may negatively impact scoring.

5. Q. Are previously awarded applicants given extra consideration by the Technical Review Committee?

A.   No. Previously awarded applicants are not given extra consideration as all proposals are reviewed based on their own merit. However, any significant issues with an organization's past performance may affect the probability of funding or necessitate additional requirements if funds are awarded.

6.   Q.   How many Technical Review Committee members are assigned to each funding area and category?
      A.   The number of Technical Review Committee members varies each year depending on the number of applications submitted. Technical Review Committee members are assigned to funding areas and categories based on their relevant area of expertise. CDFA tries to ensure that an equal number of members are assigned to each category.

7.   Q.   Do the Technical Review Committee members change between the concept proposal phase and the grant proposal phase?
      A.   The Technical Review Committee does not typically change members within a specific funding category between the concept proposal phase and the grant proposal phase. Generally, members review the same concept proposals and grant proposals. However, there are certain instances when it is necessary for CDFA to reassign proposals within a category.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

1.   Q.   If a proposal is awarded funding, what entity listed in the proposal receives the funds?
      A.   When awarded funding the organization listed as the "applicant organization" in FAAST is the entity that would enter into an agreement with CDFA and receive the grant funds.

CALIFORNIA GROWN

1.   Q.   Do applicants have to be a member of the Buy California Marketing Agreement (BCMA) in order to submit a proposal to the California Grown Promotion funding category?
      A.   Applicants do not have to be a member of BCMA in order to submit a proposal to the California Grown Promotion funding category.

2.   Q.   Do projects submitted to the California Grown Promotion funding category have to incorporate the CA GROWN logo?
      A.   Applicants are not required to use the CA GROWN name or blue and yellow license plate logo in their projects. However, applicants that choose to use the CA GROWN name and logo must be members of BCMA.

3.   Q.   Can an organization partner with BCMA on a proposal?
      A.   Yes, an organization can partner with BCMA on a proposal. However, partnering with, or being a member of, BCMA will not affect the possibility of funding.

New Questions: October 4, 2017

4. Q. Can a promotional project focused on environmental stewardship highlight one farm or a group of farms that are using environmental agricultural practices such as regenerative agriculture?
    A. Highlighting a farm or a group of farms engaging in environmental stewardship initiatives may be allowable so long as the focus of the project is solely to promote California specialty crops rather than any organizations.

5. Q. Would a project promoting sales of regional produce within a regional area be appropriate for the California Grown Promotion funding category?
    A. A Project promoting sales of regional produce within a regional area may be appropriate for the California Grown Promotion funding category as long as it meets one of the program priorities for this funding category.

6. Q. For program priority five in the California Grown Promotion funding category, would highlighting specialty crop stakeholders who are not specifically farmers qualify as part of the diverse stories of California's rich agricultural history?
    A. Highlighting specialty crop stakeholders who are not farmers may be an appropriate way to utilize diverse stories of California's rich agricultural history to promote and solely enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops.

7. Q. If the project's focus is in-store or retail promotion, how can increased sales be measured?
    A. One example would be to partner with a retailer willing to share sales data linkable to the promotion. However, it is up to the applicant to determine the approach that would be best based on the needs of the project.