

Introduction:

The following notes are questions and comments that emerged during the Grants 101 session with Thea Rittenhouse and Carmen Carrasco from the Farmer Equity Program. Invitees were asked to answer three questions based on the presentation delivered by Thea and Carmen. Attached in the email, you will find the PDF of the Jamboard.

Rose: What is something you learned from the presentation?
There are a lot of opportunities for grants. Impressed with the variety.
good to know the history of the grants - allows us to learn more about what willingness the state has had to fund us and in what ways
i learned that many grants have been offered to primarily BIPOC communities within the past year

Bud - What’s something you want to learn more about or get clarification on?
It seems land based grants are contingent on ownership. How does the process work with tenant operation?
<p>There are specific programs that are tied to land ownership such as conservation easements that are placed on the property where the landowner transfers land development rights in favor of conservation. Most other grant programs (state & federal) are not tied to land ownership but may require longer term (3 years or more) leases that the tenant has previously arranged with the landowner.</p> <p>CDFA grant programs do not require land ownership to participate. The Climate Smart Ag programs have this eligibility requirement in the program guidelines “Applicants must lease, own, or otherwise control the fields and APNs where project activities are proposed to occur for the entirety of the project duration. If leasing land, applicants must ensure the proposed project does not violate their lease agreement and document approval by the landowner to implement proposed practices(s) from date of grant agreement execution to TBD</p>

Are there funding opportunities for collaborative work amongst farmers (i.e. regional food hubs/cooperatives)?

The most recent budget signed by Governor Newsom included \$15 million in funding for a “Farm to Community Food Hub grant Program”. More information will become available in early 2022 as the program is developed. This program will serve to fund several “pilot

projects” around the state. The program will be implemented under the Office of Farm to Fork. [CDFA - Office of Farm to Fork \(ca.gov\)](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov)

[In the case of cooperatives that include groups of farmers and are constituted as a non-profit, they can apply to all grant programs that list non-profits as an eligible entities in the CDFA Grants Catalogue: [CDFA - Grant Programs \(ca.gov\)](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov)]The same applies to individual farmers wishing to apply to grants they are eligible for under ‘Farmers and Ranchers.’

Interesting to learn what practices are being funded (i.e. minimal tillage) not just materials (i.e. cover crop seed).

[Please check specific programs for approved practices but for the Healthy Soils and SWEEP Programs: Healthy Soils Program (HSP)- Compost & mulch application, cover cropping, no-till methods, conservation planting. SWEEP Program- Include (among others) soil moisture monitoring, drip systems, switching to low pressure irrigation systems, pump retrofits, variable frequency drives and installation of renewable energy to reduce on-farm water use and energy.]

How is farmer/farm defined? Acreage, crops, etc?

[CDFA does not have a formal definition of a “farmer”. There are specific crops that are eligible for specific programs, such as the Healthy Soils Program, but a farmer is not defined. The USDA defines a “farm: as a tract of land cultivated for the purpose of agricultural production. A farm is classified of having \$1,000 or more of agricultural products being produced or sold. A Small Farm, according to USDA census is a farm that is 179 acres or less in size or earns \$50,000 or less in gross income per year (NC Dept of Ag & Consumer Svcs] In CA, for the purposes of the CUSP Program, a “Small producer” is defined as a producer operates on 100 acres or less and less than \$250,000 in revenue.

Farmer training - can this support for-profit farms?

[At this time, CDFA’s new Beginning Farmer and Farmworker Training Program will not be open to for-profit farms but non-profit organizations already providing services to farmworkers to include new agricultural skills training and capacity building either as an added component of an existing program or the creation of a new training program to serve this purpose. However, there might be an opportunity to provide stipends or incentives to for profit farms who employ/train apprentices who are participating in a program]

How are awards disbursed? Payment timeline. What is the process? What can an awardee expect?

If a farmer applies for a grant through CDFA or USDA, there is *typically a 3-4 month timeframe between application and awarding of funds, although this may vary depending on the program and could be shorter or longer depending on the process and the applicant. It is important to check the Request for Proposals for timelines and deadlines. CDFA grants are “reimbursement grants”, therefore funds are spent and then reimbursed by the State. There are options for “advance payments” through both CDFA and USDA to support farmers who cannot afford to pay upfront for costs.

In the case of the direct farmer economic relief grants being awarded through the California Underserved and Small Producer (CUSP) Grant Program, the average time from application to fund distribution is between 6-8 weeks. CDFA is not working directly with farmers and instead, the agency is collaborating with organizations across the state who have implemented their own application process and guidelines, in order to ensure an efficient turnaround for economic relief funds. These organizations include: [CCOF](#), [CAFF](#), and [Mandela Partners](#).

Would love to know what other agencies in California are doing for farmers, and how many intersect with CDFA

Note: There was mention during the presentation of USDA Grants. Are there any links that you would like to share that can re-route folks to common farmer grants websites?

USDA relief grants can be found through these links:

Farmers.gov Portal- Pandemic Assistance grants and programs, farmer resources. <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance>

Other USDA conservation, land loan and other grant programs can be found on the CDFA Farmer Resource Portal. www.cdfa.ca.gov/Farmerresources/

Many of the conservation incentive programs at USDA have special considerations and separate funding pools for beginning producers and socially disadvantaged/historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

Are grants accessible for undocumented individuals?

Most traditional “Grants” are not for individuals, but non-profit organizations or university groups. However, if grants are available for individuals, grant programs require a social security number, Tax ID number and a California address. The CUSP direct economic relief funding program is available for undocumented individuals. No farmers are excluded from receiving TA for any of CDFA’s programs nor are they excluded from accessing resources or information necessary to run their farm businesses.

Are there trans-national opportunities/grants offered by cdfa?

CDFA does not fund any projects outside of California.

The USDA-NRCS however, has grant programs for conservation projects that can be implemented across several states. Also check the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Institution for similar opportunities.

Universal wifi access: can grant funding support this? we work with disadvantaged communities.

Governor Newsom has invested in California Broadband for All initiative, through the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), check there for updates on any grants, although at this time they are funding a select group of pilot projects.

USDA- Rural Development may have other programs available:

<https://muninetworks.org/content/federal-government-devotes-billions-internet-access>
Department of education:
[USDA Reconnect Program](#)

I would like to learn how to make an application, what I need, and a checklist of what I need to apply? Sometimes one applies without having all the necessary documents, and so be able to complete the application in one sitting.

Note: I believe Thea made a comment that certain grants come with the opportunity to work with staff to prepare materials and learn more about how to present a strong project. This is in the presentation- for all the CDFA Climate Smart Ag programs, there are local groups who can help with this- see the link to the list of orgs for who to contact for assistance.

For organizations (not individual farmers), also the SCBG has a priority application assistance for first time applicants to the program. ([CDFA - Specialty Crop Block Grant Program \(ca.gov\)](#))

I believe Thea was referring to the Additional Assistance under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) which included 1:1 technical assistance from a CDFA analyst to provide added support for organizations from historically underrepresented organizations. This program is not available to individual farmers however, technical assistance related to economic relief, marketing and business planning assistance under the CUSP Program is available to individuals. www.cdfa.ca.gov/CUSP.

I'm not part of any non-profit, I'm by myself. How can I connect to one in order to apply for funds?

Here are two resources with free webinars on which types of farm legal structures make sense for types of activities, including becoming eligible for grants. [Farm Commons - Support and resources for legal resilience](#). There's likely some info in these webinars about legal structures

What is being done to address the Equity Report in 2020 that noted there is very limited information about urban farming at the statewide level?

[The Farmer Equity Program will be working closely with the Office of Farm to Fork Division to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new urban agriculture program. This grant program will be available to farmers statewide in the coming year. We are in the process of organizing convening sessions with interested farmers to provide input and feedback on the development of the program. If you are interested in taking part in these sessions, please let

CDFA know and we will add you to the list of participants.]

Can you share more about how many urban farms / non profits / cooperatives have received funding, where this funding was located, the average grant given?

CDFA is currently working on an urban agriculture program to support this group and a Beginning Farmer and Farmworker Training Program for Farm Incubator projects and capacity building for farmworkers across the state.]

Thorn: What do you want CDFA to know about your project?

- We need creative funding for land access.

-"outdoor cafe" educational buildings are crucial for urban farms / office space is really helpful

-Take into consideration urban forestry projects that are creating jobs.

-Take into consideration small gardens, no matter the size.