

California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Office of Farm to Fork

# CALIFORNIA NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

2026 CNIP Expansion – WIC, WIC Farmers' Market  
Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition  
Program

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Grant Application Deadline: 5:00 PM PT on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025



California Department of Food and Agriculture

**CALIFORNIA NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

**2026 CNIP Expansion – WIC and WIC/Senior Farmers’ Market  
Nutrition Program**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**2026 CNIP Expansion WIC and WIC/Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program REQUEST  
FOR PROPOSALS**

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The Office of Farm to Fork (CDFA-F2F), within the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s (CDFA) Division of Inspection Services, is currently accepting proposals for the California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) 2026 CNIP Expansion – Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP), and Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). Authority for CNIP is derived from California Food and Agriculture Code Section 49010-49016. CNIP was established to encourage the purchase and consumption of healthy, California-grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and nuts by nutrition benefit clients, including CalFresh, WIC, WIC FMNP, and SFMNP clients.

For the 2026 CNIP Expansion – WIC, WIC FMNP and SFMNP, CDFA is seeking project proposals from qualified entities to support nutrition incentive shoppers and/or to distribute nutrition incentives to shoppers using a) WIC fruit and vegetable benefits (also known as Cash Value Benefits or CVB), b) WIC FMNP, and/or c) SFMNP benefits to purchase California-grown fresh fruits and vegetables at authorized Certified Farmers’ Markets. As of 2025, WIC, WIC FMNP and Senior FMNP benefits are distributed electronically to participating shoppers. WIC FMNP shoppers and SFMNP shoppers will also receive CNIP incentives directly on their cards. Applicants can propose projects that offer additional nutrition incentives and accompanying support (Track 1) or projects that focus solely on outreach, support, and technical assistance for shoppers, vendors, and market managers (Track 2).

Projects that reach low-access areas and low-income populations, particularly communities where a large proportion of the population is eligible for nutrition benefits (such as CalFresh, WIC, and SFMNP) and experiences high rates of diet-related diseases, will be prioritized.

CDFA reserves the right to fund a portion of the selected proposals, in whole or in part, without further competition.

This is a competitive process.

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## 1. FUNDING AND DURATION

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CDFA anticipates up to \$1,750,000 will be available for awards. Funds requested must range from \$10,000 to \$500,000; requests outside of this range may result in disqualification.

Grant duration is nine (9) months. Grant funds can be used beginning April 1, 2026, and cannot be expended after December 31, 2026.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

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The 2026 CNIP Expansion – WIC, WIC FMNP and SFMNP is focused on increasing California-grown fruit and vegetable purchases at Certified Farmers' Markets by shoppers using WIC, WIC FMNP and SFMNP benefits.

Eligibility is limited to the following entities or combination of eligible entities:

- (a) Certified Farmers' Markets authorized to accept WIC, WIC FMNP and/or SFMNP benefits
- (b) Non-profit organizations that are applying to work with Certified Farmers' Markets accepting WIC, WIC FMNP and/or SFMNP benefits

All applicants must agree to participate and cooperate with CDFA's tracking and evaluation of the program, including providing data including but not limited to requested sales and incentive metrics (for Track 1 grantees) and supplying backup documentation when requested.

This is a reimbursement-based grant program.

## 3. TIMELINE

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Request for full proposals announced	September 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2025
Webinar	11:00 AM PT October 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
<b>Full proposals due</b>	<b>5:00 PM PT November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025</b>
Award notification	January 2026
Project start date (estimated)	April 1, 2026
Project end date	December 31, 2026

## 4. TRACKS

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This grant application cycle has two tracks: one that includes incentive distribution (Track 1) and one that focuses on outreach and technical support only, without incentive distribution (Track 2).

### Track 1: Incentive Distribution and Support

- Distribute CNIP incentives to WIC, WIC FMNP and/or SFMNP shoppers at authorized

#### Certified Farmers' Markets

- Supporting activities (such as outreach and marketing, assistance to farmers using the new SFMNP and WIC FMNP electronic software, assistance to shoppers (e.g. transportation from a senior center to a farmers' market, etc.)
- Allowable expenses include (but are not limited to): Incentive funding; support for incentive tracking and distribution; physical incentives (e.g. tokens, coupons, etc.); mobile hotspots; tablets; outreach, training and technical assistance to farmers using the new SFMNP and WIC FMNP electronic software; outreach and technical assistance to Senior and WIC shoppers using electronic benefits (including transportation to and from the market, market tours, assistance using their new Farmers' Market Cards, outreach)

#### **Track 2: Support and Technical Assistance for Electronic Benefits**

- Supporting activities (such as outreach and marketing, assistance to market managers, vendors, and farmers using the new SFMNP and WIC FMNP electronic software, assistance to shoppers (e.g. transportation from a senior center to a farmers' market, etc.)
- Allowable expenses include (but are not limited to): Mobile hotspots; tablets; outreach, training and technical assistance to farmers using the new SFMNP, WIC FMNP and WIC electronic software; outreach and technical assistance to Senior and WIC shoppers using Farmers Market Cards (including transportation to and from the market, market tours, assistance using electronic benefits, outreach)

### **5. COST SHARE/MATCHING FUNDS**

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While cost sharing is not a requirement for participation in this program, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate cost sharing. Cost sharing will be considered during the technical review process. Cost sharing may take the form of cash, materials, or in-kind support (e.g. staff time, rental space). Cost sharing may be from the applicant or third-party partners.

Costs incurred prior to the start of this project or unrelated to the proposed project will not be considered applicant match/cost sharing.

### **6. GRANT PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

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Proposals shall include all sections as outlined in the application template and the budget excel spreadsheet available on the [CNIP website](#). The proposal shall be submitted in Microsoft Word format (doc/docx) or Adobe format (pdf), and the budget spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel (xls/xlsx).

Proposals are limited to 15 pages (not including the Budget Narrative). Proposals exceeding the page limit will not be considered.

## 7. HOW TO SUBMIT A GRANT PROPOSAL

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Grant proposals must be submitted by e-mail to: [cafarmtofork@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:cafarmtofork@cdfa.ca.gov), no later than **November 4, 2025, 5:00 P.M. Pacific Time**. Please use “2026 California Nutrition Incentive Program Expansion Proposal” in the subject line to ensure timely receipt of your application package.

Grant proposals must include all required components in one email submission (completed proposal template and budget spreadsheet) to be deemed complete and eligible for consideration. Mailed or faxed copies will **not** be accepted. Applicants will receive a confirmation email within two business days from their date of their grant proposal submission.

CDFA cannot assist in the preparation of grant proposals.

## 8. PROPOSAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION

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CDFA will conduct an initial administrative review of all timely submitted proposals to determine whether all application requirements have been met.

Proposals that have met all application requirements will receive a technical review to evaluate the merits of the grant request based on established scoring criteria (see Section 10, page 7).

CDFA may disqualify and reject project proposals based on the following:

- Proposals from individual applicants.
- Incomplete proposals: proposals with one or more unanswered questions or only minimal responses.
- Incomplete proposals: proposals with missing, blank, unreadable, corrupt, or otherwise unusable attachments; or proposals with an incorrect attachment file.
- Proposals that include activities outside the grant duration.
- Proposals for less than the minimum award amount or more than the maximum award amount.
- Proposals with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project objectives.
- Proposals with indirect costs that exceed the limit set forth in this document.
- Proposals with misrepresentations.

**APPEAL RIGHTS:** Any discretionary action taken by the Office of Farm to Fork may be appealed to CDFA’s Office of Hearings and Appeals within ten (10) calendar days of receiving a notification of disqualification from CDFA. Email notification should serve as the date of service. The appeal must be in writing and signed by the responsible party named on the grant application or their

authorized agent. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the Office of Farm to Fork decision being challenged. The submission must be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Hearings and Appeals, 1220 N Street, Suite 315, Sacramento CA 95814 or emailed to [CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov)

If submissions are not received within the time frame provided above, the appeal will be denied.

## 9. AWARD NOTIFICATION

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All applicants will be notified regarding selection by the end of January 2026.

CDFA reserves the right to work with selected applicants to modify their submitted proposals.

## 10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

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### **Administrative Review**

Proposals must meet the requirements below to be considered for funding.

Eligible Entity (a) Certified Farmers' Markets that are authorized to accept WIC, WIC FMNP and/or SFMNP benefits (b) Non-profit organizations that are applying to work with organizations that fall into category (a)	
Timeline and budget are within program guidelines	
Agrees to participate in CDFA's evaluation and reporting efforts	
In good standing with CDFA, USDA, and the State of California, including no current violations with SNAP authorization (USDA), Direct Marketing Program (CDFA), any other CDFA grant agreement or contract, the State Controller's Office or open Wage Claims filed with the Labor Commissioner's Office.	
Complete answers to all RFP questions, including completed budget template	
Application submitted on time	
Application includes only allowable costs and time range	

### **Technical Review**

Grant proposals will be rated on the following criteria.

	Possible Points
Project Proposal: Goals/Objectives/Activities	15

Does the proposal effectively meet the goals and purpose of CNIP? Do the proposed activities help achieve those goals? Is the timeline reasonable?	
<b>Project Proposal: Marketing/Outreach to participants</b>	<b>10</b>
Will the marketing and outreach activities effectively advertise the program to a diverse range of WIC, WIC FMNP and/or SFMNP participants? How will the project help with the SFMNP Farmers' Market Card and WIC Farmers' Market Card?	
<b>Project Proposal: Technical Assistance/Support to Vendors</b>	<b>10</b>
Will the project provide sufficient support to market managers and vendors using the Senior and WIC Farmers' Market Cards (if applicable)? What types of support will be offered?	
<b>Operations</b>	<b>15</b>
Will the program efficiently distribute, track and/or support WIC, WIC FMNP and/or SFMNP incentives?	
<b>Communities Reached</b>	<b>10</b>
Does this proposal help CDFA reach diverse communities throughout California? Do the communities reached have high rates of diet-related diseases? Do the communities reached have high rates of eligible shoppers? Do the communities reached lack access to healthy foods?	
<b>Previous Experience</b>	<b>15</b>
Does the organization have sufficient relevant experience to implement the program?	
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<b>5</b>
Does the proposal incorporate other community organizations to maximize the benefits of the program?	
<b>Budget</b>	<b>20</b>
What percentage of the total funds go directly to incentives, outreach, and technical assistance? What percentage of the costs are administrative costs? What amount of matching funds does the organization bring?	

<b>Track 2 Criteria</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
<b>Project Proposal: Goals/Objectives/Activities</b>	<b>15</b>
Does the proposal effectively meet the goals and purpose of CNIP? Do the proposed activities help achieve those goals? Is the timeline reasonable?	
<b>Project Proposal: Marketing/Outreach to participants</b>	<b>15</b>
Will the marketing and outreach activities effectively advertise the program to a diverse range of participants? How will the project help participants use their electronic benefits and incentives?	
<b>Project Proposal: Technical Assistance and Support</b>	<b>20</b>
Will the project provide sufficient support to market managers and vendors using the SFMNP and WIC FMNP electronic software? What types of support will be	



offered?	
<b>Communities Reached</b>	<b>10</b>
Does this proposal help CDFA reach diverse communities throughout California? Do the communities reached have high rates of diet-related diseases? Do the communities reached have high rates of eligible shoppers? Do the communities reached lack access to healthy foods?	
<b>Previous Experience</b>	<b>15</b>
Does the organization have sufficient relevant experience to implement the program?	
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<b>5</b>
Does the proposal incorporate other community organizations to maximize the benefits of the program?	
<b>Budget</b>	<b>20</b>
What percentage of the total funds support outreach and technical assistance? What percentage of the costs are administrative costs? What amount of matching funds does the organization bring?	

## 11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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The Office of Farm to Fork (CDFA-F2F) works to reduce food insecurity and ensure that all Californians have access to nutritious food. This solicitation and other information about the Office of Farm to Fork and the California Nutrition Incentive Program are available on the CDFA-F2F website, [www.cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov](http://www.cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov)

CDFA-F2F will offer technical assistance through a webinar and posted FAQs to help applicants. CDFA staff will be available to answer questions and provide guidance on the application process and eligibility requirements. Please note that CDFA will not offer support for writing or submitting applications. Questions may be emailed to [cafarmtofork@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:cafarmtofork@cdfa.ca.gov)

## 12. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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### Invoicing

This is a reimbursement grant program. Invoices are submitted monthly or quarterly, and grantees can expect to be reimbursed within 45 after invoices are approved in most circumstances.

### Reporting

Track 1 recipients will be required to submit monthly reports on incentive distribution. CDFA-F2F reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project.

### Final Report

A final report will be required for all recipients (Track 1 and 2) within sixty (60) days following completion of the project. The final report shall include a reasonably detailed description of the work completed; an assessment of the potential for future viability of the project; a final budget

report describing any changes from original proposal; and a description of problems encountered, if any, which affected completion of the project. In addition to the final report, CDFA-F2F reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts.

### **13. OTHER GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

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Please explore other CDFA grant programs that might be of interest to you on the CDFA grants webpage: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants/> These include:

[California Underserved and Small Producers Program](#) The California Underserved and Small Producers (CUSP) Grant Program is designed to facilitate direct assistance to individual small and mid-scale and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers who need support applying for economic relief grant programs and assistance with business planning and marketing strategies. This program also includes direct relief payments for historically underserved and small producers impacted by COVID-19 and drought. **This grant is currently OPEN for applications.**

#### [Farm to School Incubator Grant Program](#)

CDFA's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is focused on supporting local and regional farm to school projects that promote nutrition education, sustainable food production and procurement, and high-quality student engagement through experiential learning. **This grant is currently CLOSED for applications.**

#### [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program](#)

CDFA conducts an annual competitive solicitation process to award Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds to projects that enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops. Specialty crops are fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). **Concept Proposals for the 2026 SCBGP were due Sept 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

### **14. CONTACT INFORMATION**

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For more information please contact the Office of Farm to Fork at [cafarmtofork@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:cafarmtofork@cdfa.ca.gov).