



California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Farm to Fork

## **2023 CALIFORNIA URBAN AGRICULTURE GRANT PROGRAM**

### **Summary of Public Comments and CDFA Responses**

**Public Comment Period: June 1, 2023 – June 15, 2023**

TABLE OF CONTENTS: Please note that all public comments that follow are based on the 2023 DRAFT RFA for Public Comment.

Table of content from the Draft RFA:

1. General
2. Purpose of Grant
3. Definitions
4. Funding and Duration
5. Eligibility
6. Solicitation Process and Timeline
7. Program Requirements
8. Allowable Costs
9. Unallowable Costs
10. Application Process
11. Application Supplements
12. Appendices
13. Review Process
14. Evaluation Criteria
15. Reporting Requirements
16. Payment

Track	1. General	
	Public Comment 6/06/2023	CDFA Response
NA	Thank you for the info session! Very helpful!	Happy to hear it was helpful!
NA	Thank you, Sara & Rachel, for the presentation & the grant opportunity! Much appreciated!	Thank you!
NA	Are there any exclusions for cannabis or industrial hemp production?	<p>Yes, there are exclusions for cannabis and hemp production. As part of the CDFA's Office of Farm to Fork, the Urban Agriculture Grant Program is committed to helping all Californians access healthy and nutritious food.</p> <p>For information and opportunities that support cannabis and hemp production please visit:  <a href="https://cannabis.ca.gov/cannabis-laws/laws-and-regulations/">https://cannabis.ca.gov/cannabis-laws/laws-and-regulations/</a></p>
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
NA	Is native/indigenous cultural gathering considered agriculture?	Yes. A project that supports traditional pathways of food foraging is permitted.
NA	Does CDFA offer technical assistant when opening the application in August?	<p>Somewhat. To keep as much funding as possible available to support urban agriculture projects directly, CDFA's Urban Agriculture Grant Program did not set aside funding from the \$6.2million to establish a formal technical assistance program. However, CDFA staff will host office hours every Tuesday 12pm-1pm PT throughout the month of August and Thursdays 2pm-3pm PT throughout the month of September during the application period to answer and support applicants throughout the application process. CDFA staff is unable to advise on specific aspects of an individual's proposal as this would provide unfair advantages.</p>
NA	Is there a good place to find out more about...hedgerows,	Thank you for your comment. CDFA suggests starting by connecting with UC Agriculture and Natural Resources

	native plant gardens or food forests?	(UCANR) materials <a href="#">HERE</a> . CDFA's Urban Agriculture Program does not currently have resources to provide regarding native plant gardens, hedgerows or food forests.
NA	Ideas for big orgs for Track 1 would include for Oakland - The Black Cultural Zone and The West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP)	Thank you for your comment.
NA	Thank you. I am cheered to see what's possible through our systems and with collaboration.	Thank you for your comment.
NA	Thank you Sara and Rachel and CDFA for hosting this info session! Food Literacy Center is looking forward to applying for Track 2	Thank you for your comment.
NA	Thanks Sara for all your hard work to build this wonderful program! This meeting is very informational! Thanks everyone!	Thank you for your comment.
NA	Contrasting the Urban Ag Grant you've been working on to other CDFA grants, I can tell that you've put a considerable amount of effort, thought, and advocacy in supporting those who will receive and administer the grant and those who will be its beneficiaries. For me, it feels good that a grant support the inventiveness and autonomy of its applicants (like RCD's). Thank you for making it like that. It is appreciated.	Thank you for your comment.
NA	The draft states that up to 10% of awards are for Tribal	A total of up to 10% of all available funds combined for Tracks 1 and Track 2 for the

	Governments and Tribal Based non-profit organizations. Would that be 10% total combined for Track 1 & Track 2 OR 10% for each Track?	Urban Agriculture Grant Program will be set aside for projects led by Native American Tribes.
Track	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
1	In the FAQs, eligibility appears to be defined for CBOs with nonprofit 501(c)(3) status. However, under eligibility it states that tribal governments, non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses and operations are all eligible to apply. It is unclear then why CBOs have been defined. Further non-profits including 501(c)(5) statuses and should be eligible to apply. These non-profits could be working the CBO spaces as well.	<p>Thank you for identifying this error. CDFA will be making necessary edits to the FAQ to correct Eligibility and reflect the information available in the RFA. CDFA has made edits to Eligibility based on public comment recommendations to include non-profits, and Resource Conservation Districts in both Track 1 and Track 2 as well as Institutions of higher education in Track 1 only.</p> <p>For details on Eligibility please review the Final RFA Eligibility section once published.</p> <p>If you have further questions regarding eligibility please reach out at <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a></p>
NA	It would be beneficial to including certain aspects of “food deserts” and how urban agriculture can address lack of lack of a grocery store with adequate refrigeration nearby to provide fresh fruits and vegetables. This missing information shows a disconnect in programs (between this program and the Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program) run under the same Office (Farm to Fork Office) at CDFA. A de-siloed approach to such program will ensure great success and greater partnerships.	Thank you for your comment. While CDFA understands the benefits of focusing funding on food deserts, the breadth of benefits that come from urban agriculture do not allow CDFA to highlight or isolate every positive possible benefit of the program in the RFA. During the application, applicants will be able to define project goals and outcomes that align with their community needs and the grant program's goal of helping all Californians access healthy and nutritious California-grown food.

NA	<p>We would like to request another public comment period after the current public comment period close to transparently see what public comment changes were made to the solicitation. This will allow for another round of public comments to ensure that stakeholders associated with this solicitation are fully heard and understood. This will also allow for stakeholders to learn more about this new program that is being implemented for the first time. This additional round of public comments are justified given that this public comment period was only 15 days long. The draft RFA is 43 pages long and was challenging to review, digest, and provide public comments, all within a 15 day period (11 working days).</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Due to the funding timeline, which is dictated by the State Legislature, the CDFA must move forward with the project application period and award announcements to ensure selected projects have necessary time to implement their initiatives.</p> <p>If you have additional questions about the program, please email <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a></p>
NA	<p>We suggest using a different font for the solicitation. With the current font, many letters are overlapping, and it is difficult to read.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA will explore this issue with the web team to improve legibility of the RFA document.</p>
NA	<p>Thank you all for putting this opportunity together! It's amazing to see more accessible opportunities for funding. I would specifically like to highlight the reasonable reporting methods to support actually DOING the work, especially since I've been in the thick of submitting lengthy and tiresome reports recently. Overall truly amazing and</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

	inspiring for government granting opportunity.	
1	I am curious about the tax liabilities with the Track 1 grants. If the CBO distributes grants to for profit entities it would change their tax bracket significantly and a large portion of the funding would go to the IRS rather than supporting the entities needs. I know there's a difference between 1099-NEC and 1099-MISC where the latter option the grant recipients are tax exempt. Another option would be to support the CBOs with becoming a grantor, this option I'm less familiar with, but there is some way to sign up to be an official grantor and recipients can receive the full amount without having to pay taxes. Just pointing these out to make sure the CBOs are aware of what Track 1 would truly entail.	<p>Thank you for your comment. Because every applicant's financial situation will vary, CDFA cannot give direct accounting advice on what is best practice. However, CDFA acknowledges that unintended financial challenges can emerge within grant programs.</p> <p>To ensure applicants, have the support they need, CDFA allows and encourages applicants to include accounting and financial consultation as part of their grant project budgets. Edits have been made within the final application to ensure that applicants are aware of this eligible expense.</p>
NA	We would like to express gratitude to the State of CA and the CDFA for recognizing the value and public benefit of urban agriculture, and for moving forward with this program. The hiring of Sara Bernal and her subsequent dedication to meeting with stakeholders and steadfast commitment to creating an equitable program is encouraging, and we are excited to apply for a Track 2 project.	Thank you for your comment.
NA	We believe that the proposed grant program is crucially	Thank you for your comment.

	needed and thoughtfully designed. We applaud the program's broad definition of urban agriculture and are excited by the possibilities here locally.	
NA	Thank you for developing a robust and Urban Agriculture program for our California urban growers.	Thank you for your comment.
NA	We appreciate CDFA's attempt to lower administrative barriers, increase accessibility, and prioritize funding for community-led urban agriculture initiatives in communities with the greatest needs.	Thank you for your comment.
NA	The 2-week public comment window from June 1 - 15 for the draft Urban Agriculture Grant Program RFA was prohibitively short and placed at a busy time of year. Additionally, the comment period coincides with a peak period for organizations engaged in state legislative and budget advocacy and falls during high season when urban farmers are getting summer crops into the ground. Although we appreciate CDFA's robust engagement with urban agriculture stakeholders leading up to the draft RFA, the comment period itself leaves very little time for smaller and low-capacity organizations to develop nuanced comments and build consensus about their recommendations with partner organizations. If the Urban Agriculture Grant Program receives funding for future	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA appreciates the importance of public comment and understands the challenge for stakeholders when being presented with stakeholder feedback such as this. Currently CDFA is unable to go back and reopen the public comment process. If future opportunities exist for another round of funding, CDFA will find a way to extend the public comment period beyond the two-week window.</p> <p>Due to the funding timeline which is dictated by the State Legislature, the CDFA must move forward with the project application period and award announcements to ensure selected projects have necessary time to implement their initiatives.</p> <p>If you have additional questions about the program, please email <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a></p>

	<p>fiscal years, we strongly recommend offering at least four but preferably six weeks for public comments to give community organizations more time to digest the material and offer the most helpful feedback possible to improve the final program. For instance, the CDFA Community Resilience Centers Program offered a 30-day comment period from July 25 - August 24, 2022.</p>	
NA	<p>We appreciate that CDFA is offering regular weekly bilingual office hours to support applicants. Personalized technical assistance and support to develop applications is particularly helpful for applicants who are new to completing state grant applications. However, we strongly recommend diversifying the time and date of these office hours and offering a few weekday evening and weekend office hour time slots so that community members and grassroots organizations who may have conflicts during Tuesday at noon are able to attend.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA acknowledges that this may present a barrier to those unable to make that day and time and will amend this so that office hours during the first month of applications is Tuesday 12:00pm-1:00pm and Office Hours the second month of the application period will be Thursdays 2:00pm-3:00pm.</p>
Track	2. Purpose of Grant	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
1	<p>I work for RCD but also have in-house projects like community gardens. Would Track 1 funded programs not be able to subaward to our own projects?</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. In the final RFA, CDFA has amended allowable expenses for Track 1 applicants.</p> <p>Track 1 applicants may now divert between \$5,000 and \$60,000 for urban agriculture projects that are operated by the applicant.</p> <p>For example:</p>



		<p>A track 1 applicant applies for and receives \$400,000. The awardee is allowed to dedicate up to \$60,000 for their own urban agriculture project and dedicate the remaining \$340,000 for the subaward program.</p> <p>Please note that the indirect cost rate of up to 30% would be applied to the entire \$400,000 award and would also need to be factored into an applicant's planning.</p>
1	If our region is not listed in Track 1 and we do not have a statewide reach, does that mean we should not apply to Track 1?	Yes. Community Based Organizations that are not in one of the five designated regions nor have statewide reach are ineligible to apply to Track 1. When the final RFP is published please feel free to reach out with final eligibility questions.
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
NA	General priority question: For programs that support community gardens where some fall into the CalEnviroScreen designated areas and others do not, but are in communities with limited access to fresh produce, is it allowable to support all of those gardens or just those in the designated areas?	CDFA has changed the tool used to identify priority areas from CalEnviroScreen to a more comprehensive mapping tool called the California Climate Investments Priority Populations map found <a href="#">HERE</a> . Priority will be given to work that occurs in an area that qualifies as a priority population layer in the California Climate Investments Priority Populations map. Programming outside of these designated areas will not be prioritized for funding. This is a competitive grant application. If you have further questions please reach out to us at <a href="mailto:caurbamag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbamag@cdfa.ca.gov</a>
NA	I appreciate all the efforts. - including this meeting - to be transparent and inclusive. Question - I am wondering about my orgs relationship with multiple sites in nearby two school districts. Given multiple sites and systems, which Track is advisable/allowable?	<p>Thank you for your comment. As the multiple sites you refer to are both projects operated by your organization, you would only be eligible to apply for Track 2. Track 2 applicants may have an unlimited number of sites spread across a geographic area and disperse funding throughout their site projects in designated areas defined by the California Climate Investments Priority Populations map.</p> <p>The key difference between Track 1 applicants and Track 2 is that Track 1 applicants are distributing subawards to projects managed by entities outside of</p>

		<p>their organization. The Track 1 applicant plays no role in managing or operating the subawardee project.</p>
NA	<p>Regarding Cal EnviroScreen, what if the organizations is serving an underserved population that is dispersed over a County-wide area? Would this preclude the applicant from receiving priority?</p>	<p>CDFA has edited the mapping tool to identify underserved populations from CalEnviroScreen to California Climate Investments Priority Populations map because of multiple public comment requests to broaden the eligibility of underserved communities, now referred to as priority populations. The California Climate Investments Priority Populations uses CalEnviroScreen as well as Tribal Lands Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income communities. Populations served may be in areas throughout a County or multiple Counties that qualify under the California Climate Investments Priority Populations map.</p> <p>Please feel free to reach out if there are further questions regarding eligibility via email to <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a>.</p>
1	<p>For track 1 is there a maximum number of awards CDFA expects to make for those applying to work state-wide? for the identified regions?</p>	<p>No. There is no designated maximum number of awards that CDFA expects to make for those applying to work state-wide or for an identified region. However no more than \$800,000 will be directed at any one of the six geographic designations.</p>
NA	<p>Would planting shade trees count in “agriculture work”? “Fruit trees” counting as produce is more obvious..</p>	<p>Yes. Urban forestry is included in the definition of urban agriculture. Grant applicants should take into account that priority will be given to projects who focus on the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban settings as defined and that grant programs in the Office of Farm to Fork have a mission to support the increased production and consumption of CA grown foods.</p>
NA	<p>There isn't too much mention about composting, is this an allowable cost?</p>	<p>Yes. Composting is an allowable cost.</p>

1	Can an organization apply for subaward, or do they apply for the main award and then give out subawards community partners?	An organization may apply to a Track 1 funded Regional Lead for subaward funding. If you would like your organization to act as the distributor of subaward funding to stakeholders that are not part of your organization directly but that reside and work on qualifying urban agriculture work in a designated region then your organization would need to apply to Track 1 to become a Systems Builder Community Block Grant Regional Lead.
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
NA	<p>The CalEnviroScreen 4.0 might not be the most appropriate tool for this program. This tool clearly shows where communities need assistance. However, urban cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural production may serve homeless and transient populations which has increased in recent years and distributed throughout major cities (not just in regions identified in CalEnviroScreen 4.0). The tool may guide applicants, but should not dictate or prioritize funding. One requirement for funding should be to assist disadvantaged communities, transient populations, or the homeless with food distribution from urban cultivation through donations. With this model of funding, a vertical farm may be placed in an abandoned building in San Francisco, for example, but could contribute directly to those who need food security through donations.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The CDFA has edited the mapping tool to identify priority populations from CalEnviroScreen to California Climate Investments Priority Populations map because of multiple public comment requests to broaden the definition of underserved communities also referred to as priority populations.</p> <p>The California Climate Investments Priority Populations uses CalEnviroScreen as well as Tribal Lands Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income communities.</p> <p><b>Priority Populations:</b> Per the California Air Resources Board’s California Climate Investments Priority Populations map, priority populations refer to those that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and include disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households.</p> <p>In May 2022, using CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and the American Indian Areas Related National Geodatabase, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) identified the list of disadvantaged community census tracts and land areas available at CalEPA Climate Investments to Benefit Disadvantaged Communities webpage. Low-income communities and households are defined as the census</p>

		<p>tracts and households, respectively, that are either at or below 80% of the statewide median income, or at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) Revised 2016 State Income Limits.</p> <p>Please feel free to reach out if there are further questions regarding eligibility via email to <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a>.</p>
1	<p>It is not clear why there are specific (2) subawards requirement associated with each CBO. Is this to promote applications with multiple partnerships?</p>	<p>Yes. A minimum of 2 subawards is in place to make clear that Track 1 applicants may not subaward funding to only one outside stakeholder. Subawardee's are not required to partner in any way with a Track 1 funded organization. Awardees of Track 1 will have the capacity to support the growth or continue work being done by external organizations as well as individuals doing urban agriculture work in their region.</p>
NA	<p>I'm not sure how much emphasis will be placed on the CalEnviroScreen Tool for scoring, but I think other data sources should also be accepted to demonstrate a community is "underserved". (On a 100 scale, where higher scores are worse, half of the Tenderloin is in the 50-60% range and half is 70-80%. So I think it would probably qualify as an underserved area, but I don't think this tool shows the whole picture.)</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Cdfa has edited the mapping tool to identify priority populations from CalEnviroScreen to California Climate Investments Priority Populations map because of multiple public comment requests to broaden the definition of underserved communities also referred to as priority populations. The California Climate Investments Priority Populations uses CalEnviroScreen as well as Tribal Lands Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income communities.</p> <p>Please feel free to reach out if there are further questions regarding eligibility via email to <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a>.</p>
2	<p>With regards to the structure of Track 2, it is disappointing to see the emphasis placed on new programming, with no option to apply for general operating support. Like many urban growers, our full-time</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Track 2 does not intend to emphasize new programming over established programming. General operating support is an allowable cost to include in your application as seen in the list of Allowable Costs for Track 2 starting on page 13 of the draft RFA.</p>

	<p>staff already operates at or near capacity, and as a one-time program currently lacking future commitment, adding capacity or staff to implement carries inherent risks . Further, the anticipated lead time between submission and start date encumbers detailed project planning and shifts proposals to the realm of aspirational rather than addressing critical needs.</p>	<p>Please reach out to us with further questions or for clarification at <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a></p>
NA	<p>We strongly support the prioritization of funds for “urban agriculture projects led by or serving underserved communities”</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
NA	<p>We appreciate that the Urban Agriculture Grant Program draft RFA creates a 10% set aside for Tribal governments and Tribal Based non-profit organizations. However, given the historic disinvestment these communities have faced, which impacts capacity to develop a competitive application, we urge CDFa to increase this set aside to at least 20% to increase the accessibility of the program for Tribal applicants.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFa looks forward to seeing what level of demand for funding comes from Tribal communities. We intend on supporting and serving Tribal applicants and will consider this recommendation should there be a need for a larger set aside.</p>
NA	<p>The guidelines currently define “underserved communities” using a broad definition per Executive Order 13985 (page 5). However, the guidelines also propose to define “underserved” communities for the purpose of allocating grant dollars using the CalEnviroScreen tool, which is specifically tied to the term “disadvantaged communities.” While we appreciate the</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFa will make edits incorporating this suggestion to ensure clarity around the terms underserved and disadvantaged. In addition, CDFa has edited the mapping tool to identify underserved populations from CalEnviroScreen to California Climate Investments Priority Populations map because of multiple public comment requests to broaden the definition of underserved also referred to as priority populations. The California Climate Investments Priority Populations uses</p>

	<p>intention behind using “underserved” throughout the draft RFA document in order to forego deficit language when referring to priority communities, we also recommend that CDFA clarify that underserved communities will be identified via CalEnviroScreen under the definition of “underserved communities” on page 5. This can help to prevent any potential confusion for applicants that associate CalEnviroScreen with the “disadvantaged communities” term.</p>	<p>CalEnviroScreen as well as Tribal Lands Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income communities.</p> <p>Please reach out to us with further questions or for clarification at <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a></p>
NA	<p>CalEnviroScreen is an important and necessary tool to capture the most vulnerable communities who are impacted by poverty and pollution throughout the state of CA. However, some EJ communities that would benefit significantly from urban agriculture and climate investments do not show up in the rankings of CalEnviroScreen; thus other tools have been developed to identify these vulnerable populations. For example, as part of San Francisco’s efforts to comply with SB 1000, an EJ Communities Map was developed to identify San Francisco’s EJ communities. The map is based on the CalEnviroScreen with additional local data. We recommend that, where available, more localized, municipal mapping tools, county health data, or other</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA has edited the mapping tool to identify underserved populations from CalEnviroScreen to California Climate Investments Priority Populations map because of multiple public comment requests to broaden the definition underserved also referred to as priority populations. The California Climate Investments Priority Populations uses CalEnviroScreen as well as Tribal Lands Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income communities.</p> <p>Additionally, applicants are encouraged to utilize local data when answering question 7:</p> <p>What communities does your project serve? Be specific beyond general Census Tract information. Who are members of your target audience? Describe what identified need(s) exist in the community served by your project and how your project helps address that need.</p> <p>Please reach out to us with further questions or for clarification at <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a></p>

	<p>local data including qualitative data, that have been developed with authentic engagement by community stakeholders, be eligible for use to identify priority communities. Additionally, disadvantaged unincorporated communities that meet the definition of “urban” should also be prioritized, such as fringe and island communities, as they often lack resources afforded to nearby or surrounding incorporated areas.</p>	
Change Made in RFA	3. Definitions	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
NA	<p>Is “innovation” in production referring to a “new to the organization” method? For example, if an org wants to start using aquaponics, is that a new innovation?</p>	<p>No. Innovation in production refers to the use of new technologies to grow food including but not limited to aeroponics, aquaponics, hydroponics, and vertical growing.</p> <p>Innovation does not refer to the newness to which these technologies are in reference to the applicant’s experience using them.</p>
NA	<p>Is regenerative agriculture considered a new technique/innovative?</p>	<p>No, regenerative agriculture is an umbrella term that covers various practices and is therefore not considered a new technique or innovation in production. Innovation in production generally refers to new technologies such as hydroponics, aquaponics and vertical gardens which employ new technologies for growing food.</p>
NA	<p>Being prioritized to underserved communities per CalEnviroScreen. Are you referring to disadvantaged through CalEnviroScreen or the broader definition? Does</p>	<p>Yes, we were referring to the CalEnviroScreen map which shows the disadvantaged communities designated by CalEPA for the purpose of SB 535. These areas represent the 25% highest scoring census tracts in CalEnviroScreen 4.0, census tracts previously identified in the</p>

	<p>this refer to the 25% highest scoring tracts?</p>	<p>top 25% in CalEnviroScreen 3.0, census tracts with high amounts of pollution and low populations, and federally recognized tribal areas as identified by the Census in the 2021 American Indian Areas Related National Geodatabase. Even though we offer a more broad definition of "underserved" in the draft RFA, the way we plan to identify those communities for the purpose of investment allocation was through the Calenviroscreen tool, which uses a separate term "disadvantaged" communities.</p> <p>However CDFA has edited the mapping tool to identify underserved populations from CalEnviroScreen to California Climate Investments Priority Populations map because of multiple public comment requests to broaden the definition underserved also referred to as priority populations. The California Climate Investments Priority Populations uses CalEnviroScreen as well as Tribal Lands Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income communities.</p>
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
NA	Does socially disadvantaged groups include women?	Yes. A "socially disadvantaged group" is 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.
NA	Organic agriculture certifications do not include organic certifications. Climate smart agriculture has not been defined as climate smart agriculture (UN FAO) and this statement is misleading.	Thank you for your comment. Please reach out to CDFA to further elaborate on the meaning of your comment as it remains unclear. You may email us at <a href="mailto:caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov">caurbanag@cdfa.ca.gov</a>
NA	The addition of CBOs is very confusing and may exclude	Thank you for your comment. Based on public comments regarding which entities



	<p>many non-profit organizations. We recommend using non-profits as a central theme rather than CBOs.</p>	<p>are eligible to apply for Track 1 funding we will be adding both Resource Conservation Districts and institutions of higher education as eligible entities, neither of which are non-profit organizations. For this reason, we will edit our definition of Community-Based Organization but cannot restrict our terminology to non-profit alone.</p>
<p>NA</p>	<p>We are concerned that for both <b>Track 1: Systems Builder Community-Based Block Grant Program Requirements</b> and <b>Track 2: Urban Agriculture Practitioner Grant Project Requirements</b>, potential applicants in our region of Sonoma County and the San Francisco North Bay would not be eligible to apply for two reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. The definition of ‘disadvantaged communities’ by the CalEnviroScreen tool is too narrow.</b> Locally, we know that there are many other well documented disadvantaged communities in our region who are underserved and experience persistent inequality in income, health outcomes, and food access due to structural racism.</li> <li><b>2. The definition of the Bay Area is too narrow.</b> Defining the Bay Area as ‘Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose’ excludes many cities in the broader Bay Area that comprise</li> </ol>	<p>Thank you for your comment. For all applications to be measured equitably across the state, a standardized tool must be selected which is accessible to all applicants statewide. CDFA has edited the mapping tool to identify priority populations from CalEnviroScreen to California Climate Investments Priority Populations map because of public comment requests to broaden the definition of priority populations.</p> <p>The California Climate Investments Priority Populations map uses CalEnviroScreen as well as Tribal Lands Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income communities.</p> <p>Although there is great need in many places in the state, the Urban agriculture program focuses on urban communities. To learn more about other programs serving historically underserved communities, visit <a href="https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/farmerresources/grant_programs.html">https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/farmerresources/grant_programs.html</a></p> <p>Regarding the definition of Bay Area, thank you for your suggestion to use the terms North Bay, East Bay and South Bay. We will adopt these terms in the Final RFA replacing San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose.</p>

	<p>the region’s robust urban boundaries.</p> <p><b>We request CDFA to broaden their definitions of ‘disadvantaged community’ and ‘Bay Area’.</b> We recommend using an alternate tool to demonstrate ‘disadvantaged communities’ such as CalFresh Healthy Living Eligibility Data and supplementing quantitative data with qualitative definitions set by communities themselves to demonstrate underserved sub-populations. We recommend expanding the ‘Bay Area’ to include all of the North Bay, East Bay, and South Bay.</p> <p>Our communities are passionate about and deeply interested in urban agriculture, community gardening, and are creating models of innovative urban food production. We hope that CDFA will incorporate broader definitions so that communities in our region might be able to be considered for this promising grant program.</p>	
NA	<p>“Systems-Builder Community-Based Block Grant” / “Urban Agriculture Practitioner”          Defining track tiles/roles for clarity. Adding a brief description to each track's role and responsibility in addition to what has been defined is important to create clarity for communities applying for funding. Example: a)</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA will review the RFA language to ensure these distinctions are clear.</p>

	<p>“Systems-Builder Community-Based Block Grant” In this track you have the capacity to sustain and support the growth of orgs and individuals doing urban agriculture work... b) “Urban Agriculture Practitioner” In this track you are the one doing the work of urban agriculture, be it farm-to-fork programming or building the capacity of your farm operations</p>	
NA	We strongly support the use of an expansive definition of “urban agriculture” that goes beyond food production and highlights other benefits like education, workforce development, green space, and more.	Thank you for your comment.
Track	4. Funding and Duration	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
NA	I realize the grant term is 4/2024 - 9/2026, which is 29 months. As a track-I applicant, can we plan the grant implementation period accordingly? Like one year or two years?	Yes. Applicants to either track may plan their project to begin and end anywhere within the range of April 2024 through Sept 2026. All projects must be fully executed by Sept 2026.
Track	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
NA	The funding ranges are very large. It would be beneficial to understand how these funding ranges were determined for Track 1 and Track 2.	Funding ranges were established because of listening sessions, tours and surveys that occurred during the community engagement period prior to drafting the draft RFA. Stakeholders from across the state expressed what sized grant amounts would provide them with the highest benefit to meet their needs. CDFA took stakeholder feedback and used that directly to design the Urban Agriculture Grant Program.

NA	The project timelines must be expanded beyond two years. It takes six months to initiate the project after funding and six months to close the project with invoicing and billing etc., leaving only twelve months to implement the project. This seems unreasonable and must be expanded by another twelve months.	Unfortunately, CDFA has no power to change project timelines. The liquidation date determining when funds must be expended is determined by the State Legislature and dictated to CDFA.
Track	5. Eligibility	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	
2	I agree with the 5 Letters of Support for Track 2	Thank you for your comment.
NA	We're an RCD w/ significant grassroots work/relationships built w a large network of urban ag producers - but seems like we're not eligible to apply individually. we have folks we'd like to support w/ this who ARE 501c3 but don't have bandwidth to apply	Thank you for your comment. CDFA has planned to amend the Draft RFA eligibility to include RCD's as they currently support and provide assistance to a wide array of urban agriculture stakeholders throughout the state.
2	The RFP states that "Applicant must provide 1-3 eligible Census Tracts using CalEnviroScreen" — for track 2 applicants, does scoring change based on the number provided (e.g. 3 tracts scores higher than 1)?	No. The census tract section of the application is unscored. CDFA has edited the mapping tool to identify priority populations from CalEnviroScreen to California Climate Investments Priority Populations map because of multiple public comment requests to broaden the definition of priority populations. The California Climate Investments Priority Populations uses CalEnviroScreen as well as Tribal Lands Disadvantaged Communities and AB 1550 Low-income communities. Recipients must only show what census tracts they work in that qualify under California Climate Investments Priority Populations map.
1	For track 1 applicants, does the 1-3 census tract	For Track 1 applicants, the 1-3 census tract requirement applies to the project as a

	<p>requirement apply to each individual organization involved in the project, or the project as a whole?</p>	<p>whole. At the time of the application, you will list the top three Census Tracts that you plan on doing most of your outreach and thus to which you have the greatest connections to in order to distribute subaward funding. You do not need to include specific information on potential subawardees during the initial application.</p>
2	<p>Is Track 2 intended for organizations outside of the metro areas listed in Track 1? Or is Track 2 open for organizations that operate within the metro regions from Track 1?</p>	<p>Yes. Track 2 is open to any applicant that meets the Eligibility requirements and who is located in any urban area as defined by CDFA.</p> <p>Yes, Track 2 is open within the metro regions from Track 1.</p>
NA	<p>Are fiscal sponsors allowed? If yes, would the fiscal sponsor be the main applicant or would the sponsoree be the main applicant?</p>	<p>Yes, fiscal sponsors are allowed. The sponsoree is the main applicant. Applicants must clearly identify the fiscal sponsor in the application. If awarded, the fiscal sponsor will be the grant recipient and will be responsible for executing the grant agreement and ensuring all project activities and costs follow grant requirements. The sponsoree will be the lead in submitting the application as well as working through the creation of the final contract should they be awarded funding.</p>
1	<p>I was wondering if you could provide some clarification regarding the geographic scope for Los Angeles—is this Los Angeles County or the City of Los Angeles? Just wanted to see if CBOs in LA County’s smaller cities (those that fit the population guidelines) needed to apply to this specific RFP in order for subawards to be available in those cities.</p>	<p>For subawards to be available in any place that meets the population guidelines, a Community Based Organization located anywhere in Los Angeles County as well as Long Beach must apply and be leads for the LA region.</p> <p>Only Track 1 funded awardees can provide subawards to any eligible stakeholder in the region that qualifies under the CDFA definition of urban.</p> <p>Subawardees do not apply to CDFA for subawards. If you are looking for subaward funding you must wait until the awardees for Track 1 are announced and apply to awardees of Track 1 in your designated region.</p>

		For more eligibility information, please refer to the priority populations map linked here <a href="#">Priority Populations Map</a>
1	It's exciting that you are all gearing up to launch the Urban Ag Grant Program! Although RCDs are not eligible, there are some non-profit organizations in the Inland Empire that this might be a good fit for. I reviewed the information on the program website, and the Inland Empire is not included as an urban area that could be eligible for a subaward through a COB. Is there an opportunity to change this to include the Inland Empire?	CDFA will be amending eligibility to include RCD's. Projects seeking subawards that are located in the Inland Empire may seek funding from Track 1 funded organizations with Statewide reach.
NA	Good morning does San Bernardino county or riverside county count?	It depends on where the specific projects will take place. In order to be eligible for Track 2 funding through the program, an applicant must fit the CDFA definition of urban, be an eligible entity, demonstrate your project meets a community need via one of the benefits of urban agriculture and is led by or serving a priority population as seen in the priority populations map linked here <a href="#">Priority Populations Map</a> . Please review the grant eligibility requirements as seen in the draft RFA for details.  To be a Track 1 awardee folks would need to qualify to apply as a statewide Community Based Organization lead.  To be a Track 1 applicant you must be located in one of the designated regions. CBO's in San Bernardino or Riverside are ineligible to be Track 1 awardees unless they have statewide reach.
Track	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response

1	The track 1 non-profit status should be expanded to including other non-profit designations such as 501(c)(5)s that may also be CBOs.	Thank you for your comment. CDFA has amended the RFA to reflect this recommendation.
NuA	We strongly support the elimination of any matching fund requirements and the offering of rolling advance payments (page 6). Lowering these administrative financial barriers will increase the accessibility of the program for smaller, under-resourced, and low-capacity community organizations.	Thank you for your comment.
2	<p>We request that small businesses and nonprofits be prioritized for funding. Community-based organizations and grassroots urban agriculture initiatives are more likely to have missions that prioritize community accountability. For this reason, we recommend incorporating the following guardrails for private sector applicants to ensure their proposed projects generate benefits for communities with the greatest needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector/small business entities must partner with a CBO that advances climate, racial, economic, or health justice and works with the community that the urban agriculture project is trying to serve, with preference for those that are also physically located in that community and are community-led;</li> <li>• When collecting and submitting letters of</li> </ul>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA has made edits to the draft RFA adopting the definition of Qualified Small Business from the CA Office of the Small Business Advocate and adding this to the Eligibility Requirements for Track 2 applicants.</p> <p>The CDFA Urban Agriculture Program is designed to prioritize projects that are led by and serve priority populations as defined by the California Climate Investments Priority Populations map.</p> <p>Partnerships and collaborations are built into the application as the highest scoring requirement so that every applicant must prove that their project is meeting an identified community need and is supported by the community.</p> <p>In the section called “Urban Agriculture in the Local Food System”, 15 points are allotted for applicants to answer: How does Urban Agriculture programming create benefit for the community you serve and</p>

	<p>recommendation/support, private sector/small business entities should prioritize letters from community-based organizations and partners; • Private sector/small business entities must demonstrate how the urban agriculture project will center community decision-making and community leadership through all phases of the project. Additionally, the guidelines should include some basic eligibility criteria for businesses and nonprofits that are consistent with the CA Office of the Small Business Advocate. For instance, CDFA should consider requiring that a small business or small nonprofit must satisfy the following criteria to be eligible to receive a grant award: 1. Must meet the definition of a “qualified small business”. “Qualified small business” means a business or nonprofit that meets all of the following criteria, A. Is one of the following: i. A sole proprietor, C-corporation, S-corporation, cooperative, limited liability company, partnership, or limited partnership, with an annual gross revenue of less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000). ii. A registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity that had an annual gross revenue of less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000). iii. An organization that is fiscally sponsored by a nonprofit corporation.</p>	<p>how do these address existing needs in the community?</p> <p>Similarly, in the Community Collaboration Section, a matrix is provided to capture an “organizations history with grassroots outreach, collaboration and partnership development” for a total of 30 points.</p> <p>Together these sections comprise 45 of the total 100 points.</p> <p>The aim of these sections is to value organizations and grassroots urban agriculture initiatives that are more likely to have missions that prioritize community accountability.</p>
--	---	---



Track	6. Solicitation Process and Timeline	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	7. Program Requirements	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
2	Is Track 2 also required to adhere to the regions defined for Track 1?	<p>No. Track 2 applicants must only adhere to the geographical limits of the CDFA definition for urban which is:</p> <p>CDFA defines “urban” as a geographic area no more than 25 miles adjacent to or outside of one Urbanized Area containing a population of 50,000 or more people.</p> <p>CDFA defines Urban Areas (UAs) as a continuously built-up area with a population of 50,000 or more comprised of one or more places—central place(s)—and the adjacent densely settled surrounding area—urban fringe. Smaller cities with populations under 50,000 must be no more than 25 miles from an Urban Area of 50,000 or more residents.</p> <p>All other eligibility requirements are also necessary to apply as seen in the Eligibility section starting on page 5 of the draft RFA.</p>
2	If the urban ag site is not located in an area that is not in an underserved community BUT serves an undeserved community are they eligible to apply.	Yes. Applicant projects must be either led by or serve an underserved community as identified in the California Climate Investments Priority Populations map.
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
1	I was wondering if you could provide some clarification regarding the geographic scope for Los Angeles—is this	All regions defined in the RFA for Track 1 include the entire urban area. CDFA defines Urban Areas (UAs) as a continuously built-up area with a population

	Los Angeles County or the City of Los Angeles?	<p>of 50,000 or more comprised of one or more places—central place(s)—and the adjacent densely settled surrounding area—urban fringe. Smaller cities with populations under 50,000 must be no more than 25 miles from an Urban Area of 50,000 or more residents.</p> <p>In the case of LA it would encompass anywhere in LA County that is 25 miles adjacent to a population of 50,000 or more people.</p> <p>Track 1 project applicants must serve one of the urban areas of California listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sacramento: Sacramento, Stockton</li> <li>- Bay Area: North Bay, East Bay, South Bay</li> <li>- Fresno: Fresno, Bakersfield</li> <li>- LA: Los Angeles, Long Beach</li> <li>- San Diego: San Diego</li> <li>- Statewide.</li> </ul>
1	There are some non-profit organizations in the Inland Empire that this might be a good fit for. I reviewed the information on the program website, and the Inland Empire is not included as an urban area that could be eligible for a subaward through a CBO. Is there an opportunity to change this to include the Inland Empire?	<p>Any eligible urban agriculture stakeholder that is interested in a subaward but is not included in a designated region will be able to apply for subaward funding to the Statewide reaching Track 1 awardees as long as the applicant is in an urban area as defined by CDFA.</p> <p>For eligibility, please review the Eligibility section of the draft RFA starting on page 5.</p>
Track	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
NA	The draft RFA requires that grant recipients for Tracks 1 and 2 must accomplish at least one of a long list of	Thank you for your comment. At this time CDFA would like to maintain minimum restrictions to applicants in accessing funding. We anticipate many small-scale

	<p>potential outcomes that range from “build social capital and gather communities” to “pilot an innovation in production.” We appreciate the diversity of projected outcomes listed that reveal the multiple benefits offered by urban agriculture projects. However, we strongly recommend that awardees and sub awardees be required to generate at least 3 benefits. This will help to ensure that grant applications and awards are addressing multiple needs in underserved communities, which can help ensure projects holistically build community resilience, health, and economic opportunity.</p>	<p>projects that may not have the capacity to address more than one benefit at a time. In various projects accomplishing one goal well may be more beneficial to the community than attempting to accomplish multiple goals under strain or duress.</p>
Track	8. Allowable Costs	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
NA	Can funds be used for payroll?	<p>Funds may be used to cover hourly or salaried wages of persons working directly towards accomplishing one or more of the benefits of urban agriculture as listed in the RFA including projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build Social Capitol and Gather Communities</li> <li>• Provide Education and Skills Development</li> <li>• Supplement Access to Fresh Food</li> <li>• Cultivate Agricultural Literacy</li> <li>• Perform Ecosystem Services</li> <li>• Support Economic Development</li> <li>• Increase <b>Food Sovereignty</b></li> <li>• Pilot an Innovation in Production</li> </ul> <p>Payroll for office administration or other indirect staff services to the project may not be included in the Direct Costs portion of the budget but may be included in the total allowance of 30% Indirect Costs section of the budget.</p>
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
2	For track 2, does workforce development mean staffing?	Yes. Staffing is allowable cost under workforce development.

	Or is staff salaries not an allowable cost?	Workforce development strategies include postsecondary education, skills training, apprenticeship programs, and other workforce programs. The overall goal of workforce development is to increase the skill level of employees to help the local workforce and company.
NA	Thank you for understanding that indirect is usually always grossly underfunded!	Thank you for your comment. We are happy to know this makes a difference.
NA	Thanks for making the 30% indirect cost possible!	Thank you for your comment. We are pleased this helps.
2	Would planning activities with the community be an allowed activity?	Yes, planning activities with the community are an allowed activity.
2	Would an application that includes planning and then implementation of what came out of the planning activities be weaker because the details of the latter would not be 100% clear at the time of application?	No. An application that clearly describes the need for planning activities to meet a community need would not score weaker due to lack of future plans. However, if implementation of an unknown project is an expected outcome then it must be made extremely clear what amount of the budget will be set aside to accomplish the implementation plan.  CDFA recommends detailed project work plans and clear understanding of the project budget. For full scoring details, please view the final scorecards beginning on page 15 of the RFA.
2	Would infrastructure for food processing be an eligible cost?	Yes. Infrastructure for the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban settings are all allowable costs.
2	May small scale infrastructure for animals or support around animals like chicken or other be eligible?	Yes. Infrastructure for animals is eligible. County/City zoning rules and regulations must be referenced to show that the project abides to local laws.

1	For track 1, I expect we could support a subawardee buying or building a shed. could we support a subawardee purchasing a portapotty, composting toilet, or tinyhouse through a subaward ?	Yes, Track 1 funded CBO's may support subawardees in purchasing infrastructure that helps to support the benefits of urban agriculture as described in the UAGP draft RFA. Specifically using funds to build a tiny house may or may not be allowable depending on the proposed use of the new tiny house. In general, all infrastructure must provide one of the Benefits of Urban Agriculture found on pages 11 and 12 of the draft RFA. If the tiny house were used as a place for community gatherings and or workshops or for other activities that share the benefits of urban agriculture than the infrastructure would qualify under community gathering.
Track	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
NA	Indirect costs of 30% appear too high and waste of resources. Indirect reporting is a line item that requires no cost breakdown by item or accountability. We suggest limiting the indirect costs to no more than 15%. With the current solicitation at the highest levels of funding, an organization can receive \$120,000 in non-line item indirect expenses? This appears to be a significant amount of funds that CDFA will not track or receive accountability for.	Thank you for your comment. The indirect cost rate of 30% has been adopted after listening to stakeholders statewide who shared that indirect cost rates below 30% make accomplishing project goals very challenging.  Within the application, indirect costs are broadly proposed. However once applicants are selected, additional detail regarding indirect costs is provided to grantees to insure CDFA has project oversight and accountability for the duration of the grant project
NA	The generous indirect costs and allowable expenses are reasonable and generally reflect the needs and reality for urban farmers of all sizes and structures.	Thank you for your comment.
NA	We strongly support the allowance of up to 30% of a total award for indirect costs for Tracks 1 and 2 and the	Thank you for your comment.

	eligibility of a robust list of expenses	
Track	9. Unallowable Costs	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	10. Application Process	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	11. Application Supplements	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	12. Appendices	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	13. Review Process	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
NA	Can you disclose how many people will be sitting on the Grant Committee who will be scoring the applications? Also, will it only be CDFA staff scoring? If not just CDFA staff, will there be an opportunity for folks to apply to sit on a committee that reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations to CDFA on	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA is currently recruiting reviewers for the application. The total number of reviewers will depend on the number of applications received.</p> <p>There will be two review phases. First, CDFA Urban Agriculture staff will conduct an administrative review of each application to insure completeness and eligibility.</p>

	proposals submitted for the Urban Ag Grant?	<p>Second, CDFA will utilize an interagency technical review with reviewers from UC Cooperative Extension, the Health in All Policies Task Force, and CDFA staff outside of the Urban Agriculture Grant program.</p> <p>After training, reviewers will score applications using the score card criteria provided.</p> <p>If CDFA needs additional reviewers and opens the reviewer applicant pool to the public, CDFA will publish an announcement via our newsletter which can be accessed <a href="#">HERE</a>.</p> <p>An important note is that external reviewers must not be applicants to the grant or be connected directly to applicants or have any other conflict of interest that could prevent from observing unbiased scoring of an application.</p>
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	14. Evaluation Criteria	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
NA	<p>Comment on Letters of Support for both Track 1 and 2— make it very clear what type of stakeholders the applicants need to include whether other CBOs, city/county agencies, consumers/residents, farmers/workers, other businesses who may partner with the project. Are all “types” of supporters weighted equally, or do you want to see only certain types of Letters of Support?</p>	<p>CDFA has revised the final RFA to include the list of examples and description of valued stakeholders below.</p> <p>Track 1 Letters of Support, must describe your organizations history with grassroots outreach, collaboration and partnership development.</p> <p>Provide Letters of Support or one letter that multiple parties sign as confirmation of the relationship. In letters, outline your organizations history of community collaboration with the community partner listed and include any projects or partnerships accomplished.</p> <p>Partners and collaborators could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buyers/Customers</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Centers</li> <li>- Schools</li> <li>- City or County officials</li> <li>- Other farmers in your area</li> <li>- Distributors</li> <li>- Added value processors</li> <li>- Farmers Markets</li> <li>- Neighbors</li> <li>- Landowners</li> <li>- Volunteers and or interns</li> </ul> <p>Track 2 Letters of Support. should come from new or existing collaborative partners. Letters should describe the nature of your projects relationship to the collaborator providing the Letter of Support and how the collaboration will help your farm reach its goal.</p> <p>Partners and collaborators could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buyers/Customers</li> <li>- Community Centers</li> <li>- Schools</li> <li>- City or County officials</li> <li>- Other farmers in your area</li> <li>- Distributors</li> <li>- Added value processors</li> <li>- Farmers Markets</li> <li>- Neighbors</li> <li>- Landowners</li> <li>- Volunteers and or interns</li> </ul>
1	16 letters of support, feels like 10 might be more reasonable. In other grants, has submitted 7 max.	<p>Community Collaboration Matrix Complete? Yes/No</p> <p>Community Collaboration 10: ___/30 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 points: Applicant provides Letters of Support and clearly describes 15+ or more relationships with underserved communities.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 points: Applicant provides Letters of Support and clearly describes 12-14 or more relationships with underserved communities.</li> <li>• 20 points: Applicant provides Letters of Support and clearly describes 9-11 or more relationships with underserved communities.</li> <li>• 15 points: Applicant provides Letters of Support and clearly describes 6-8 or more relationships with underserved communities.</li> <li>• 10 points: Applicant provides Letters of Support and clearly describes 3-5 or more relationships with underserved communities.</li> <li>• 5 points: Applicant provides Letters of Support and clearly describes 1-3 or more relationships with underserved communities.</li> <li>• 0 points: Applicant does not provide any Letters of Support and fails to clearly describe any relationships with underserved communities.</li> </ul>
	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
1	16 LOS is a lot of letters, knowing how challenging it can be to gather those letters. 8-10 feels more realistic.	<p>Thank you for your comment. 16 LOS are not a requirement to apply. Due to the nature of successful Track 1 candidates displaying extensive grassroots connections, the number of LOS was set high to gain the maximum points.</p> <p>Fewer LOS are acceptable, and the points are tiered based on the number of trusted relationships organizations can document.</p> <p>For a full breakdown of scoring, please view the scorecard for this section on page 25 of the draft RFA.</p>
1	So would eight letters of support equate to a maximum of half the available points?	Yes, the draft RFA scorecard for this section indicates 8 letters would allot you 15 points out of 30 possible points.

		<p>Draft Scorecard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 points: Applicant provides Letters of Support and clearly describes 6-8 or more relationships with underserved communities.</li> </ul> <p>For a full breakdown of scoring, please view the scorecard for this section on page 25 of the draft RFA.</p>
1	<p>What qualifies as a community partner? it is those who the CBO is partnering and working with?</p>	<p>Yes. A community partner can be anything from an organization with which you collaborate to an individual who for example volunteers or benefits from your project outcomes. Partners and collaborators could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buyers/Customers</li> <li>- Community Centers</li> <li>- Schools</li> <li>- City or County officials</li> <li>- Other farmers in your area</li> <li>- Distributors</li> <li>- Added value processors</li> <li>- Farmers Markets</li> <li>- Neighbors</li> <li>- Landowners</li> <li>- Volunteers and or interns</li> </ul>
2	<p>For Track 2 letters of support, would they have to come from CBOs or could they come from individual community members?</p>	<p>Yes. Letters of Support from Track 2 applicants may include letters from CBO's or from individual community members.</p> <p>Partners and collaborators could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buyers/Customers</li> <li>- Community Centers</li> <li>- Schools</li> <li>- City or County officials</li> <li>- Other farmers in your area</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distributors</li> <li>- Added value processors</li> <li>- Farmers Markets</li> <li>- Neighbors</li> <li>- Landowners</li> <li>- Volunteers and or interns</li> </ul>
1	<p>I think that minimum 10 to 15 is a fair # of Letter's of Support to ask for. With the maximum allowable points at 30 for this section, if you go with 15, then it would be 2 points per letter. Org's could still submit additional letters beyond 15 but the maximum score they could receive would be 30</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your feedback. CDFA has adjusted points to reflect your recommendations.</p>
1	<p>If an organization submits letters that are all coming from other organizations e.g., schools, community groups, churches, food banks, etc., as opposed to an individual e.g. a public official, or a personal reference or business owner, would they be scored differently or would they carry the same weight?</p>	<p>Letters of Support will be scored equally. Only letters of support that demonstrate the following will be counted:</p> <p><b>Letters of Support:</b> Letters of Support play an important role in helping verify the authenticity of each CBO's relationship to underserved communities. The goal of this section is to ensure that awards are made to established and trusted community partners. Please make sure letters of support describe how your organization has established community trust in the Collaboration column.</p> <p><b>Community Name:</b> This can be an urban agriculture stakeholder or group, non-profit or for-profit entity, neighborhood or geographic community, organization, cultural or ethnic group, faith-based community, association, or any other form of community that organizes around shared geography, values or lived experience.</p> <p><b>Collaboration:</b> Describe what types of projects or work you have accomplished together. Include any major projects or partnerships/relationships formed.</p>

1	I think what will be important in scoring is how they explain and provide detail to outreach strategies they want to implement in order to achieve goals stated.	Thank you for your comment regarding Outreach strategies in the Outreach and Communications Plan Section of the Track 1 RFA application. Due to your public comment along with others sharing this sentiment, points will be awarded for strategies organizations commit to using during the Urban Agriculture Grant not proven strategies they have used already in the past.
Track	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
2	Applicants shouldn't be penalized for not having 5 letters of support if it doesn't make sense for their project. (In the most recent urban ag application I worked on, I think we only had one letter of support, and I'm not sure that we could get 5. Our program simply doesn't require that many partners.)	<p>Thank you for your comment. As this program is meant to fund projects that have strong community reach we have asked for five letters to gain the maximum number of points in that section as shared here from the draft RFA:</p> <p>Provide 1-5 Letters of Support from new or existing collaborative partners. Each letter should describe the nature of your relationship and how the collaboration will help your farm reach its goal.</p> <p>Letter of Support Template Provided if needed</p> <p><a href="#">LOS Template.docx</a></p> <p>Partners and collaborators could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buyers/Customers</li> <li>- Community Centers</li> <li>- Schools</li> <li>- City or County officials</li> <li>- Other farmers in your area</li> <li>- Distributors</li> <li>- Added value processors</li> <li>- Farmers Markets</li> <li>- Neighbors</li> <li>- Landowners</li> <li>- Volunteers and or interns</li> </ul>

		For a full breakdown of scoring, please view the scorecard for this section on page 39-40 of the draft RFA.
1	In the review criteria on Page 17 of the solicitations, it states "Is your organization a non-profit". How does one evaluate if it's a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(5) or some other non-profit category since eligibility for applying depends on it.	Thank you for your comment. CDFA will amend the Final RFA to include clarification and detail to the Review Criteria on Page 17 and be sure to include both non-profit types as well as institutions of higher education and Resource Conservation Districts. These additions were made resulting from various public comments that showed valid project work could be accomplished by adding these various entities to be eligible.
1	Clarifying what quantifies a "Project Partner" Given the wide range of how a "project partner" can be defined, are there specific needs from the CDFA to quantify a community partnership for the purposes of this grant? Example: A community partner is an expert or skilled individual such as a horticulturist or herbalist. A community partner is other organizations that intersect with the grant recipients UA programming. A community partner is NOT recurring volunteers	<p>Thank you for your comment. In the draft RFA CDFA has linked an attachment to collect community collaborations for Track 1. This is called the Community Collaboration Matrix and can be viewed <a href="#">HERE</a>.</p> <p>For Track 2 CDFA wanted to leave partners open to a wide variety of stakeholders as this reality will vary greatly from project to project depending on the Benefit of Urban Agriculture that the project aims to achieve.</p> <p>To be a valid project partner for Track 2 applicants should be able to describe the nature of your relationship and how the collaboration will help your farm reach its goal.</p> <p>Partners and collaborators could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buyers/Customers</li> <li>- Community Centers</li> <li>- Schools</li> <li>- City or County officials</li> <li>- Other farmers in your area</li> <li>- Distributors</li> <li>- Added value processors</li> <li>- Farmers Markets</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neighbors</li> <li>- Landowners</li> <li>- Volunteers and or interns</li> </ul>
1	<p>Track 1 Community Collaboration: Letters of Support (LOS) It's important to note that UA is growing in awareness and definition. 30 LOS is an extremely large amount for any 1 organization to have. CAFF recommends reducing the number of LOS for track 1. This can happen either by simply reducing the LOS down to 7 to 10 LOS. Or, by putting it on a range depending on how many years of service the organization has. Example: 45 year old organization should have 25-30 LOS 17 year old should have between 13-15 LOS 5 year old org should have at least 3-7 LOS</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The draft RFA does not ask for 30 LOS. The draft RFA is being amended so that maximum points are 30 points for applicants that submit 15 or more LOS. Points are gradually tiered to ensure that applicants receive points for ranges of LOS.</p> <p>For a full breakdown of scoring, please view the scorecard for this section on page 25-26 of the draft RFA.</p>
1	<p>Track 1: Community Outreach and Communication Plan Maximum points should be awarded to those who have 6 or more points of reference for this strategy. However, if they are strategies being put into play for the first time they should not have the requirement to be proven effective until after the implementation, in which organizations can share how successful said strategy was.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA will utilize your suggestion in the final RFA.</p>
2	<p>Track 2: Scoring Community Need Given the political narrative of UA to provide food access and sovereignty , we recommend awarding a percentage of organizations</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA recognizes the deep value of intersectional approaches to community-based work. As all projects must either serve or be led by priority populations using the California Climate Investments Priority Populations</p>

	<p>who are working with non-traditional forms and intersecting forms of UA with the most points. Example: A foster youth program teaching food nutrition through gardening at a transitional home site. A program working specifically with formerly incarcerated citizens as a form of reentry into the workforce. An organization doing work to address health and diet - related diseases through plant medicine</p>	<p>map as a measurement tool, CDFA aims to reach community members with the greatest need.</p>
1	<p>We strongly support the allocation of the largest number of points in Track 1 for “Community Collaboration”</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
2	<p>The scoring criteria for the project team should include prioritizing leaders of color and those with lived or former experience of racial or economic inequity. Additionally, selection criteria should emphasize communities that are economically disadvantaged and geographies experiencing unhealthy outcomes and lack of access to fresh, affordable, and local produce.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The CDFA Urban Agriculture Grant prioritizes projects led by and or serving Priority Populations as identified using the California Climate Investments Priority Populations map.</p>
2	<p>The requirement of five letters of support is excessive given the capacity required to secure these letters. At least one and no more than three robust letters of support should be required for this funding opportunity. Letters of support should have 10 or fewer points assigned to them and points should be reallocated to center racial equity and include equitable selection criteria,</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. LOS for Track 2 applicants may be drafted by the applicant with signatures collected from partners attesting to the verity of the collaborative relationship described to minimize this burden.</p> <p>In the Project Team section of the application 1/5<sup>th</sup> of all available points is available to applicants who prove that the entirety of their team is composed of community members who are members of Priority Populations using the California Air</p>

	<p>such as ensuring that the project team includes leaders of color and residents of impacted neighborhoods, and/or the project goals benefit people in poverty (through employment, job training, or distribution of resources like no-cost fresh food boxes, access to land to farm, urban agriculture education, and training).</p>	<p>Resources Board's California Climate Investments Priority Populations map.</p> <p>Priority populations refer to those that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and include disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households</p> <p>For a full breakdown of scoring, please view the scorecard for this section on page 39-40 of the draft RFA.</p>
1	<p>Centering racial equity (financial and material benefits to vulnerable populations) is an important component to incorporate that reflects organizational commitments to advancing this issue. We recommend adding questions that help organizations demonstrate their intention and explicit goal to identify and eliminate or reduce barriers to racial equity in the food and urban agriculture system. We also recommend that the services and products provided to/with the community are at no-cost for vulnerable populations and that disadvantaged populations receive material benefits either by being compensated in the budget and/or receiving no-cost services and products as a result of this funding.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. CDFA deeply values centering the needs of priority populations. CDFA acknowledges the financial burdens placed on urban agriculture projects to provide various social services and believe that all programs deserve to have the opportunity to be compensated for their services deemed necessary for the long-term financial viability of their programs or projects.</p> <p>As this is one-time funding CDFA cannot prioritize funding programs who will be unable to support the ongoing donation of their services beyond this grant. CDFA believes that all projects deserve an equal opportunity including those that result in the financial viability of the project to operate outside of this one-time funding source through revenue generation.</p>
NA	<p>We support the open-ended evaluation question that allows for the community to define and measure its own outcomes and recommend CDFA offer technical</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. If given the opportunity to offer a second round of funding CDFA would like to set aside funds from the original funding pool to hire technical support staff. These staff members could assist with issues</p>



	assistance to support grant recipients with identification of equity-centric metrics.	applicants have in composing a grant application as well as providing assistance identifying equity-centric metrics.
Track	15. Reporting Requirements	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
2	As for the data collection reporting portion. If we don't directly distribute the produce how detailed does this need to be? We collect lots of data but would be limited since we don't participate in direct distribution.	<p>The Data that you choose to agree to collect must demonstrate the successful execution of the programs goals as relate to the benefits of urban agriculture described in your application. Metrics or data collected could reflect the following examples (not limited to this list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gross Sales</li> <li>- Gross sales through SNAP</li> <li>- Pounds of produce harvested</li> <li>- Land converted to green space</li> <li>- Community members engaged</li> <li>- Workshops hosted</li> <li>- Markets attended or held if farm stands</li> <li>- Interns trained</li> <li>- Sq ft of weed management</li> <li>- Sq ft of amended/restored soil</li> <li>- Compost produced</li> <li>- Community Outreach (example: social media posts)</li> </ul>
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
2	Do the 5-10 photos have to be of the same site if a single organization operates projects in multiple spaces that funds could be used for?	No. Applicants may submit 5-10 photos of any area or materials that they know will be most affected by the changes that can be implemented because of the project activities funded. Please take pictures of anything that will show a change before and after you complete your grant project.
NA	Can you define what qualifies as a "green" job?	Green jobs (green-collar jobs, sustainability jobs, eco jobs or environmental jobs ) are, according to the United Nations Environment Program, "work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development (R&D), administrative, and service activities that contribute(s) substantially to

		preserving or restoring environmental quality. Specifically, but not exclusively, this includes jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption.
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	16. Payment Type	
	Public Comment 6/6/2023	CDFA Response
	none	
Track	Public Comment 6/12/2023	CDFA Response
NA	Will this be a purely reimbursable grant or is some of the funding available to start?	<p>No. Advanced payments are allowable. Advance payments shall not exceed the amount necessary for project expenses for a three-month period and cannot reduce the project balance below 10% of the award amount.</p> <p>For more information about advanced payments please visit <a href="#">Advanced Payment Guidelines here.</a></p>
NA	As to advance payment of up to 3 months, please clarify that/if the last 10% will not be distributed until AFTER project end.	<p>Thank you for your comment. According to the California Code of Regulations: Withholding of ten percent pending closeout</p> <p>(a) Ten percent of the grant award amount will be withheld by the Department pending approval of the final invoice and final performance report, and resolution of any performance issues or audit findings prior to closeout.</p> <p>(b) A notice will not be sent regarding the ten percent withholding, and the ten percent withholding may not be appealed.</p> <p>(c) The ten percent withholding may be reduced or waived by the Department; such reduction or waiver must be in writing.</p> <p>To see the full California code of Regulations <a href="#">click here</a>. Information on the 10% withholding can be found on page 14.</p>
1	For track 1, Are the subawards funds distributed 100% upfront to the sub awards or also distributed in smaller amounts.	Track 1 subaward processes are not required to be delivered as 100% upfront distributions and will be determined by Track 1 applicant plans in alignment with

		CDFA reimbursement and advance payment regulations. See <a href="#">Advanced Payment Regulation</a>
	Public Comment 6/15/2023	CDFA Response
	none	