



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)

ADDENDUM 2

Request for Proposal (RFP) #26-0007

Cannabis Appellations Program (CAP) Education and Outreach

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

June 25, 2026

1. Q: **How many appellation petitions have been submitted and approved to date?**
A: To date, the program has not yet opened for petition submittal. CDFA anticipates the program to open for petition submittals later this year following regulatory modifications through the formal rulemaking process currently underway.
2. Q: **Is the primary objective increased awareness, increased petition submissions, increased consumer understanding, or all three?**
A: The goals and objectives as outlined in the RFP are to (1) raise awareness of the appellations of origin program to cannabis cultivators, consumers, local government officials, and the industry, (2) provide education to these stakeholders on the process of petitioning to establish an appellation of origin, (3) provide education to consumers on the benefits of appellation of origin designated products, and (4) facilitate relationship building between the department and local jurisdictions in aid of program expansion.
3. Q: **Are there target KPIs CDFA expects proposers to address in their work plans?**
A: Proposals may provide relevant target KPIs for consideration in their work plans. However, CDFA has not mandated this.
4. Q: **What percentage increase in participation would CDFA consider successful?**
A: As the program has not yet opened, CDFA cannot provide a specific percentage increase in participation as a measure of success. Rather success of the campaign will be based on the contractor meeting deliverables on a timely basis.
5. Q: **Has CDFA already identified priority audience segments?**
A: No, CDFA has not identified priority audience segments.

6. Q: **Does CDFA currently have branding, messaging, logos, visual identity standards, or style guides for CAP?**
A: No, CDFA does not have specific branding, messaging, logos, visual identity standards, or style guides related to CAP. CDFA does maintain these for general departmental and office communications. All CAP-specific media must be aligned with CDFA-specific media standards.
7. Q: **Are there existing outreach materials that must be incorporated into the campaign?**
A: Yes, CAP has existing outreach materials which could be beneficial to incorporate but incorporation is not mandatory.
8. Q: **Will CDFA provide content experts for technical review of materials?**
A: CDFA staff and CAP technical experts will provide technical review of materials.
9. Q: **Is the third-year option expected to fund ongoing execution or only maintenance and reporting activities?**
A: The third-year funding option is flexible and may be used for ongoing execution or maintenance and reporting activities.
10. Q: **Are media buying expenses expected to be included within the \$50,000 annual budget cap?**
A: Yes, proposers must use the stated annual budgets in their work plan.
11. Q: **Are trade show fees, sponsorships, event booths, and retailer display costs expected to come from the contractor's budget allocation?**
A: Yes.
12. Q: **Is the contractor expected to absorb translation costs for all materials within the stated budget?**
A: Yes.
13. Q: **Is the development of videos, retail displays, databases, websites, and ADA compliance all expected to be delivered within the same budget ceiling?**
A: Yes.
14. Q: **Does CDFA have separate funding available for paid media placement?**
A: No.

15. Q: **Deliverables include branding, website content, stakeholder engagement, retailer outreach, trade shows, media relations, database development, analytics, and ADA compliance. Can CDFA prioritize which deliverables carry the greatest importance if budget limitations prevent equal emphasis on all activities?**
A: No. However, proposals may provide input as to what activities to prioritize to meet project objectives and goals.
16. Q: **Which deliverables are mandatory and which are optional?**
A: All deliverables are mandatory.
17. Q: **Does CDFA already have retailer relationships that the contractor can leverage?**
A: No.
18. Q: **Are there geographic priorities for retailer recruitment?**
A: No. However, proposers are free to provide suggestions which best meet project objectives and goals.
19. Q: **Does CDFA have preferred software platforms for database development?**
A: No.
20. Q: **Who will own and maintain the database after contract completion?**
A: As stated in the RFP, all materials, supporting data, analyses, and raw files produced through this contract agreement and related to each deliverable listed will be the sole property of CDFA. Ongoing maintenance is not a part of this contract but may be necessary at a later date.
21. Q: **Among the 140 technical points, which criteria historically separate top-scoring proposals from average proposals?**
A: CDFA cannot make this determination as every contract varies depending on program needs.
22. Q: **What distinguishes an "Excellent" response from a "Good" response in CDFA's view?**
A: The Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet included in the RFP provides guidance to this question.

23. Q: **Is direct cannabis industry experience weighted more heavily than general public-sector outreach experience?**
A: As shown in the Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet, experience in marketing, outreach, and/or communications campaigns are weighted more heavily than direct experience in the cannabis industry.
24. Q: **How important is demonstrated experience working with appellations, agricultural branding, geographic indications, or terroir-based marketing?**
A: The Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet included in the RFP provides guidance to this question.
25. Q: **What specific aspects of California's legal cannabis market does CDFA most want proposers to demonstrate understanding of?**
A: CDFA does not have specific aspects proposers should demonstrate. However, as shown in the Evaluation and Scoring Criteria sheet, proposal scoring will include whether the proposal demonstrates an understanding of the cannabis industry. This understanding should be demonstrated in the workplan.
26. Q: **Would experience in wine appellations, agricultural marketing, or specialty crop branding be viewed favorably?**
A: The Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet included in the RFP provides guidance to this question.
27. Q: **Does CDFA prefer a statewide awareness campaign or a targeted regional strategy?**
A: CDFA does not have a specific preference at this time. Proposers may provide their input on what would best meet the project objectives and goals.
28. Q: **Does CDFA value innovative communication approaches over traditional outreach methods?**
A: CDFA does not have a specific preference at this time. Proposers may provide their input on what would best meet the project objectives and goals.
29. Q: **How much emphasis will be placed on creative concepts versus measurable implementation plans?**
A: CDFA does not have a specific preference at this time. Proposers may provide their input on what would best meet the project objectives and goals.

30. Q: **The RFP indicates cost represents 30% of the total evaluation score. What methodology will be used to score cost proposals?**
A: To calculate cost points, CDFA uses the lowest proposed cost as the numerator and each proposer's cost as the denominator. That ratio is then multiplied by 60 to determine each proposer's cost score.
31. Q: **Will evaluators consider value and approach, or primarily lowest cost?**
A: Evaluators will evaluate each proposal based on the evaluation and criteria in the RFP. The RFP will be awarded based on highest score.
32. Q: **Is there an expected budget allocation by deliverable that CDFA would consider reasonable?**
A: No, CDFA does not have an expected budget allocation. Proposers may provide an allocation by deliverable. CDFA will determine reasonableness of this allocation on a case-by-case basis depending on the overall project proposal.
33. Q: **Is CDFA seeking a traditional advertising agency, a public affairs firm, a marketing agency, or a stakeholder engagement consultant?**
A: CDFA does not have a preference as to which type of agency, firm, or consultant is contracted with.
34. Q: **Does CDFA prefer a contractor with cannabis industry experience, government outreach experience, or both?**
A: The Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet included in the RFP provides guidance to this question.
35. Q: **How important is experience working with regulated industries?**
A: The Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet included in the RFP provides guidance to this question. Prior work experience with regulated industries is not a requirement nor necessary criteria.
36. Q: **Would CDFA prefer a contractor with existing cannabis stakeholder relationships throughout California?**
A: The Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet included in the RFP provides guidance to this question.
37. Q: **Does CDFA expect the contractor to act primarily as a strategic advisor, implementation partner, or both?**
A: The "Tasks and Deliverables" section of the RFP outlines CDFA's expectations of the contractor. They generally amount to serving both roles.

38.Q: **How important is experience facilitating collaboration between industry groups and government agencies?**

A: The Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet included in the RFP provides guidance to this question.

39.Q: **Is consumer marketing expertise more important than B2B stakeholder engagement expertise?**

A: The Evaluation Scoring and Criteria sheet included in the RFP provides guidance to this question, specifically, no distinction or preference is made between the two.

40.Q: **Is there a limit on overhead or administrative expenses?**

A: There is no limit on indirect cost rates. CDFA can, however, audit a contractor's documentation for a proposed indirect cost rate. Indirect cost rates to be deemed excessive or unreasonable must be returned to CDFA before final payment is issued or will be reduced from the final invoice.

41.Q: **Should media placement costs be shown separately from labor?**

A: Yes, all individual tasks, and associated costs, related to a deliverable must be identified in the cost proposal.

42.Q: **Should subcontractor costs be itemized separately?**

A: Yes, provide subcontractor costs under the "subcontractors" category in the cost proposal worksheet. Subcontractor costs should be itemized by service.

43.Q: **How should travel be reflected in the template?**

A: Provide travel budget under the Travel cost category in the cost proposal worksheet. Breakdown the budget by type of cost. Use the guidance provided in the RFP for travel costs.

44.Q: **Are contractors expected to budget separately for translation services?**

A: Translation services can be included in the "Other costs" category of the cost proposal worksheet.

45.Q: **Is there an expected labor mix CDFA considers reasonable?**

A: No. CDFA will assess the reasonableness of the budget relative to the proposed work.

46.Q: **Has CDFA already identified preferred communication channels, events, publications, or retail partners?**

A: No, CDFA does not have preferred channels, events, publications, or retail partners.

47. Q: Does CDFA already have a strategic outreach plan that the selected contractor will be expected to implement?
A: No, CDFA does not have a strategic outreach plan specific to the CAP.
48. Q: Is this procurement intended to launch a new CAP education and outreach initiative, or is it a continuation, expansion, or replacement of prior CAP outreach, education, communications, research, media, or stakeholder engagement work?
A: CDFA intends to launch a new CAP education and outreach initiative.
49. Q: Has CDFA or CAP previously contracted with any external firm, consultant, agency, nonprofit, association, or individual for CAP-related outreach, education, communications, research, web, creative, media, retail, or stakeholder engagement services? If yes, please identify the contractor(s), contract number(s), contract term(s), scope(s), and contract amount(s).
A: No, CAP has not previously contracted with an external firm for outreach.
50. Q: Is there a current or recent incumbent contractor performing any work substantially similar to the services requested in this RFP? If yes, is that contractor eligible to submit a proposal for this RFP?
A: Similar cannabis outreach services have been requested in the past; however, it is unknown whether contractors from those previous agreements remain eligible to submit a proposal. Once CDFA receives all proposals for this RFP, an administrative review will be conducted to determine eligibility.
51. Q: What elements of prior CAP education or outreach efforts, if any, does CDFA consider successful and worth continuing?
A: CDFA's outreach and education efforts related to CAP have been departmental led and focused primarily on regulation formation. This RFP would mark the beginning of an education and outreach campaign specifically for the purpose of program awareness and understanding.
52. Q: What elements of prior CAP education or outreach efforts, if any, does CDFA believe have not worked as intended or need improvement?
A: Not applicable.

53. Q: What are the most significant barriers CDFA has encountered to date in increasing CAP participation, such as petition cost, stakeholder trust, market demand, consumer understanding, local government engagement, retailer participation, regulatory complexity, or other factors?
- A: Not applicable. The program has not opened.
54. Q: Are there known stakeholder concerns, objections, misconceptions, or sensitivities regarding the Cannabis Appellations Program that proposers should address in their approach?
- A: Not applicable. As discussed in the RFP, CDFA will provide specific input and guidance to the contractor during the term of the contract.
55. Q: Are there specific lessons learned from past outreach to cannabis cultivators, cannabis retailers, local governments, or consumers that CDFA wants the selected contractor to incorporate?
- A: Not applicable. As discussed in the RFP, CDFA will provide specific input and guidance to the contractor during the term of the contract.
56. Q: The RFP uses both “RFP No. 26-0007-A” and Addendum 1 refers to “RFP #26-0007.” Please confirm the correct solicitation number that should be used in the subject line for questions and in proposal documents
- A: The 'A' indicates that these services are being solicited a second time. The number to be used when submitting a proposal for this RFP is 26-0007-A. It was a typographical error that the 'A' was not included in the addendum.
57. Q: The RFP refers to a “Request for Proposal,” while Addendum 1 refers to changes being made to the “IFB” and uses the term “bids.” Please confirm whether this procurement is being conducted as an RFP with qualitative scoring or as an IFB.
- A: All terminology in the addendum referring to an IFB or bid is a typographical error. Please disregard those references. This solicitation is an RFP and will be evaluated and processed accordingly.
58. Q: Addendum 1 refers to an “Estimated Opening of Cost Proposal” during July 6–10, 2026, while the original RFP refers to an estimated date of team evaluations during the same period. Please confirm the evaluation sequence and whether technical proposals will be evaluated before cost proposals are opened.
- A: Proposals will be reviewed by administrative staff between June 29, 2026, and July 6, 2026, to ensure all required information outlined in the RFP has been submitted. Once CDFA administrative staff identify all qualified proposals, they will be forwarded to program

staff for individual evaluation. A formal evaluation meeting with both administrative and program staff will take place between July 6, 2026, and July 10, 2026, during which each proposal will be scored according to the scoring criteria outlined in the RFP. The terminology used in the addendum was a typographical error.

- 59.Q: The sample contract includes work order provisions. Does CDFA expect to issue individual work orders under this contract, or should proposers treat all tasks and deliverables in the RFP as fixed requirements to be completed under the base agreement?
- A: The Sample Contract in the RFP is a sample of what language could be in the contract. Based off the requirements in the RFP, CDFA does not expect the work order provision to be applicable to this contract.
- 60.Q: If work orders will be used, how should proposers reconcile work-order-based assignments with the requirement to provide a detailed work plan, schedule, hours, and cost proposal for the full contract term?
- A: The Sample Contract in the RFP is a sample of what language could be in the contract. Based off the requirements in the RFP, CDFA does not expect the work order provision to be applicable to this contract.
- 61.Q: Are quarterly meetings intended to be the minimum level of coordination, or does CDFA expect more frequent working sessions during creative development, outreach planning, media execution, retailer coordination, web development, or approval cycles?
- A: Yes, the quarterly meetings are the minimum.
- 62.Q: For market research, does CDFA expect the contractor to conduct primary research such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, listening sessions, retailer interviews, or stakeholder workshops, or is secondary research sufficient?
- A: CDFA cannot provide guidance nor expectations on the specific type of market research for contract tasks and deliverables 3 and 4. Proposers may submit their plan for meeting these deliverables, goals, and objectives.
- 63.Q: If primary research is expected or allowed, will CDFA assist with recruiting participants, approving research instruments, or providing access to cultivators, retailers, local jurisdictions, or other stakeholders?
- A: CDFA has a mailing list for the CAP. CDFA can use this mailing list to assist the contractor in contacting program stakeholders and

connect the contractor to other industry groups that may be willing to assist. DCC also makes mailing information for licensed cultivators available online. CDFA is willing to assist in reviewing and approving research instruments.

64. Q: The RFP references “potential outdoor cultivators” and the needs of outdoor cannabis cultivators. Should outreach and education focus only on outdoor cultivators, or should proposers include mixed-light, indoor, licensed, unlicensed, prospective, legacy, or equity cultivators where relevant?

A: The goals and objectives portion of the RFP provides guidance on this question. The CAP is solely for outdoor cultivators; however, knowledge and awareness of the program may lead certain cultivators to transition, hence the reference to potential outdoor cultivators.

65. Q: Are proposers expected to coordinate with the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC), local cannabis regulators, county agricultural commissioners, tourism entities, or other state/local agencies as part of the outreach campaign?

A: Yes, there is an expectation that the contractor will coordinate, and as a minimum, facilitate connections with relevant agencies and entities as necessary to achieve contract deliverables, goals, and objectives (task/deliverable 6).

66. Q: Are there legal, policy, or regulatory constraints on consumer-facing cannabis education, paid or unpaid media, social media content, event participation, retail displays, or point-of-sale materials that proposers should account for?

A: The contractor will be responsible for making necessary assessments prior to conducting consumer-facing outreach activities to ensure compliance.

67. Q: For retail displays and retail events, should proposers assume outreach will occur only in licensed cannabis retail environments, or may the campaign include non-cannabis venues, agricultural/tourism events, local government venues, or general consumer education settings?

A: Retail displays and retail events may only take place at licensed retail environments. General outreach and education may occur within other settings.

68. Q: What approvals, if any, will be required from DCC, retailers, local jurisdictions, or other entities before retail displays, consumer-facing materials, videos, or event activations can be used?
A: Approvals will be determined on an as-needed basis.
69. Q: For the deliverable requiring videos, does CDFA have expectations regarding the number of videos, approximate length, production quality, use of animation versus live action, captioning, voiceover, translation, distribution channels, or ownership of raw footage?
A: CDFA does not have specific requirements regarding videos produced. This will be further developed with the contractor. As specified in the RFP, all materials, supporting data, analyses, and raw files produced through this contract agreement and related to each deliverable listed will be the sole property of CDFA.
70. Q: For “website posts and design” and the “program’s webpage,” will the contractor have access to CDFA’s web content management system, or is the contractor expected only to provide recommended content, designs, wireframes, graphics, and assets for CDFA to implement?
A: The contractor will be expected to provide content and designs for CDFA's use.
71. Q: Are there CDFA, state technology, cybersecurity, privacy, accessibility, hosting, or data governance requirements that apply to any web analytics, dynamic database, online media, or data collection tools developed under the contract?
A: Yes, the contractor will work with CDFA to ensure all content meets the requirements of CDFA’s Information Technology Services Division.
72. Q: For tracking retail price differentials and other market metrics, may proposers include third-party datasets, subscription tools, web scraping, retail audits, or manual price collection in their approach, assuming costs fit within the budget?
A: Yes, contractors may propose/provide third-party datasets.
73. Q: Are there any restrictions on collecting, storing, or analyzing cannabis retail price data, stakeholder contact information, web analytics, or other data generated through the campaign?
A: Yes. Contractors will propose a plan for meeting contract deliverables. Restrictions on data collection and analytics will be determined based on the specifics of each plan.

- 74.Q: The RFP states that materials and videos must be produced in English and Spanish “when appropriate.” How will CDFA determine when Spanish-language materials are appropriate, and will CDFA require any other languages based on audience research?
- A: Based on audience research conducted by the contractor (task and deliverable 3), CDFA may determine translation to Spanish or other languages are appropriate and may be requested/prioritized.
- 75.Q: The RFP requires samples and reference letters from the prime contractor. If a proposed subcontractor has highly relevant cannabis, web, research, creative, retail, or outreach experience, may those samples and qualifications be used to demonstrate the overall team’s qualifications, or will only prime contractor experience be scored?
- A: The entire proposal will be evaluated per the Evaluation and Scoring Criteria sheet. This includes the use of subcontractors. See Proposal Requirements, #8, Subcontractors.
- 76.Q: The RFP states that the contractor or subcontractor must have an established record in web development for data gathering and analytics. Please confirm whether this minimum qualification may be satisfied by a subcontractor.
- A: Yes, this may be fulfilled by a subcontractor.
- 77.Q: The DVBE section includes language regarding both required DVBE participation and waived DVBE participation with an incentive. Please confirm whether the 3% DVBE participation requirement is mandatory for this solicitation or whether DVBE participation is optional but eligible for an incentive.
- A: In the DVBE section of the RFP document, the box indicating that a minimum 3% DVBE participation is required for RFP 26-0007-A is checked.
- 78.Q: The evaluation table lists Small Business Preference and DVBE Incentive points, while the DVBE incentive language describes a price-based incentive. Please clarify exactly how Small Business Preference and DVBE Incentive will be applied in this points-based RFP.
- A: DVBE incentive will be based on points. These points will be added to the individual proposers overall score. See the chart below:

<u>Confirmed DVBE Participations of:</u>	<u>DVBE Incentive:</u>	<u>DVBE Incentive Points:</u>
5% or Over	5%	10 points
4% to 4.99% inclusive	4%	8 points
3% to 3.99% inclusive	3%	6 points

79.Q: Is there TACPA preference for this RFP?

A: If the proposal is over \$100,000, vendors may apply for TACPA preference if the vendor is located in a qualified zone.

80.Q: Would CDFA kindly please consider extending the proposal deadline for 2 weeks to allow proposers more time to prepare proposals and obtain necessary items such as reference letters?

A: CDFA is unable to extend the deadline.