Request for Proposal (RFP)

California Grown Request for Proposal – Consumer Research

California Grown Background

California Grown (also legally known as the Buy California Marketing Agreement) is a membership-based, consumer-focused marketing association with the expressed purpose of building awareness and sales of California Grown agricultural products and appreciation for the people that produce them.

Current California agricultural organization membership representing tens of thousands of California producers (not including 100+ individual company members) are as follows:

- American Pistachio Growers
- California Apple Commission
- California Avocado Commission
- California Blueberry Commission
- California Certified Organic Farmers
- California Cantaloupe Advisory Board
- California Farm Bureau Federation
- California Fig Advisory Board
- California Fresh Fig Growers Association
- California Milk Advisory Board
- California Olive Committee
- California Olive Oil Council
- California Poultry Federation
- California Prune Board
- California State Beekeepers Association
- California Sweetpotato Council
- California Table Grape Commission
- California Walnut Commission
- California Wild Rice Advisory Board
- Raisin Administrative Committee
- Wine Institute

Established in October 2001, California Grown operates under the authority of the California Food and Agricultural Code. The Agreement is governed by a board of directors and operates under the oversight of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

Purpose of this RFP

California Grown seeks a qualified research partner to plan and implement consumer research. The research project is expected to begin July 2023 and to be conducted over a two-year period with possible extension to a third year.

California Grown is conducting consumer research to benchmark changes in consumer trends and preferences. The selected firm will conduct consumer research regarding shifts in consumer behaviors and views. The West Coast focused consumer study will include evaluation of consumer awareness of California Grown specialty crops and the California Grown concept as well the positives and negatives about specialty crop
agricultural products grown in California. The consumer research will focus on shopping trends, methods, and thoughts on “buying local.”

The research results will aid in the development of a marketing communications strategy and consumer campaign concept development, which is being managed separately and not included in this RFP.

The source of program funds predominantly comes from the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) Program administered by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). The advertising agency of record will be selected to develop and execute paid advertising as outlined in Specialty Crop Block Grant #21-0433-001-SF.

Timelines, Proposal Submission and Evaluation Details

Written proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. (PST), June 16, 2023. Proposal review and contractor selections will take place by June 23, 2023.

Proposals may be submitted electronically to BCMA Executive Director Cherie Watte at cher@californiagrown.org.

Proposals may also be delivered to:

Buy California Marketing Agreement
Request for Proposals- Consumer Research
P.O. Box 1604
El Centro, CA 92244

The contract commencement date is expected to be July 3, 2023.

Eligible researchers include those with experience planning and implementing qualitative and quantitative research with both consumer and trade audiences. Significant research experience with food products preferred. Research experience with agricultural commissions and boards is a plus.

Proposals should include the following:

- Capabilities of researcher/agency – with specific emphasis on recent experience with food brands and agricultural boards, as well as client references/testimonials
- Overall approach to servicing account – i.e., allocation of agency resources and approach to consumer research. This section of the response should include detailed information on the team that would be assigned to the business as well as a timeline for execution based on details provided in this document.
• Rough budget outline – a detailed budget is not required. Please provide a short narrative outlining a reasonable range of fees to plan and conduct in-person and virtual consumer focus groups, polls, surveys and other research methods.

A selection committee will review all submissions. Proposals will be evaluated according to experience, cost effectiveness, and demonstrated capabilities.

Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for interested parties to submit proposals</td>
<td>Friday, June 16, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCMA evaluation of proposals</td>
<td>June 19-23, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contractor Selection</td>
<td>Friday, June 23, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Negotiation/On-boarding</td>
<td>June 23-30, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracted Agency to commence work</td>
<td>Monday, July 3, 2023</td>
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NOTE: The California Grown management team is available prior to proposal submissions to answer questions regarding this request. Proposers wishing clarification of this RFP should submit questions via email to cher@californiagrown.org.

Scope of Work

• Plan and implement multi-year, West Coast based consumer research to benchmark changes in consumer trends. Usage and Attitude study market research preferred.
• Report research results to California Grown Board of Directors, management, and creative team.
• Provide regular reports (at minimum quarterly) to the Executive Director and Board of Directors upon request.
• Provide a comprehensive final report at conclusion of research project.
• Interact with and update the California Grown Board of Directors

Skills, Deliverables and Knowledge Base

Selected contractor will have:

• At least five years of research experience.
• Ability to work quickly and efficiently.
• Proven track record of delivering results on time and on budget.
• Basic knowledge of California agricultural products, seasonality, and availability.
• Ability to develop pre- and post-research benchmarks.
• Previous experience with commodity or agricultural organizations, a plus.
• Ability to provide sufficient staff and administrative resources.
• Ability to adhere to strict financial management and fraud prevention procedures.
• Provide monthly invoicing including detailed invoice back up.
• Provide detailed quarterly reporting.
• Ability to work in a team environment.

**Contracted Term**

The term of the awarded contract is two years. California Grown may utilize the selected agency for a period of three years provided funding to do so is appropriate.

**Budget**

California Grown’s budget for consumer research varies according to the scope of work outlined in Specialty Crop Block Grant. Agency budgets for execution of consumer research must include all program expenses including travel. The detailed level of budget and staffing resources for activities outlined in the Specialty Crop Block Grant scope of work will be mutually agreed upon by the appointed contractor and the Buy California Marketing Agreement in a contractual format.

It’s important to note the source of program funds predominantly comes from the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) Program administered by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). SCBG funds are awarded on an annual basis and come with a required list of accounting and administrative expectations as well as creative and program mandatories that will involve support from the agency chosen for this business. Please see the links below for more information on the SCBG program.


**Research Ownership**

Data and information collected as a result of the project will remain the property of California Grown and shall not be disseminated or shared with outside parties without prior approval by the Executive Director.

Please direct questions and submit proposals to BCMA Executive Director Cherie Watte at cher@californiagrown.org.

*Disclaimer: The Buy California Marketing Board reserves the right to modify or withdraw this RFP at any time, and to accept or reject any or all proposals in whole or in part. BCMA is not responsible for any costs incurred by the submitting PR agency in connection with this RFP.*

Date Posted: June 1, 2023