

**Project** *Apis m.*



# USDA Climate Smart Grant Cover Crop Program

## Seed Supplier

Request for Proposals

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# PROJECT SUMMARY

Product/Service Requested: **Cover Crop Program Seed Supply**

***Proposed RFP Deadline Dates***

Project Start Date	<b>March 11, 2024</b>
Deadline for Responses	<b>April 10, 2024</b>
Estimated Decision Date	<b>Week of April 15, 2024</b>

***Contact Information***

Name of Contact	<b>Brett LeDuc</b>
Address	<b>PO Box 26793 Salt Lake City, Utah 84126</b>
Telephone	<b>916-287-3035</b>
Email	<b><a href="mailto:brett@projectapism.org">brett@projectapism.org</a></b>

# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

## Organization Background

Project Apis m. (PAm) is the go-to organization at the interface of research, honeybees, and agriculture. Since 2006, we have infused over \$10 million into honeybee research and \$2.9 million into forage programs, resulting in science-driven resources for bees and beekeepers. We work closely with commercial beekeepers, growers, and scientists in the USA and Canada to identify challenges as they arise. We are a 501(c)5 nonprofit organization governed by a Board of commercial beekeepers and other agricultural stakeholders. Learn more about [Project Apis m.](#) and our [Seeds for Bees Program](#).

## Background Information

PAm is a sub awardee on a USDA Climate-Smart Commodities Partnerships Grant awarded to Blue Diamond Growers in September 2022 (more info found [here](#)) in which they support the project by providing almond growers with free cover crop seed to help increase the density diversity and duration of bee forage in California almond orchards, while adding organic matter to the grower's soil, increasing water infiltration, reducing erosion, and providing natural weed control. Project goals include 50,000 acres of cover crop, and 2,800 acres of conservation cover planted over 5 years.

## Glossary

RFP: The request for proposal issued to solicit bids for the product or service described herein.

Organization: The company issuing the RFP.

Contractor/Bidder: The company responding to the RFP.

Contract: The legal agreement between the organization and the contractor/bidder for the delivery of the products or services described in the RFP.

# STATEMENT OF NEED

## Scope of Work

Project Apis m. seeks a qualified seed supplier that can fulfill our planned seed orders related to their sub-awarded USDA Climate-Smart Commodities Partnerships project, through 2027. The selected contractor shall be responsible for providing the particular seed mixes and estimated quantities outlined below.

## Seed Mixes

Expected seed mixes include but are not limited to the following and contents may change on an as needed basis:

Pollinator Brassica - 20% Early Canola, 25% Daikon Radish, 20% Yellow Mustard, 20% White Mustard, 15% Oriental Mustard

NitroBuilder – 70% Triticale, 25% Vetch, 5% Daikon Radish

Annual Bee Clover – 15% Balansa Clover, 23% Persian Clover, 16% Crimson Clover, 23% Berseem Clover, 13% Medic, 10% Turf Annual Ryegrass

Whole Orchard Recycling Mix - 30% Triticale, 10% Vetch, 10% Annual Ryegrass, 25% Forage Peas, 1% Lacy Phacelia, 2% Mustard, 22% Faba Beans

Bee Pasture - 20% Vavilov Siberian Wheatgrass, 20% Hycrest Crested Wheatgrass, 7% Idaho Fescue, 6% Yellow Sweetclover, 6% White Sweetclover, 10% Rangelander Alfalfa, 8% Falcata Alfalfa, 3% Grindelia , 1% California Poppy, 8% Hard Fescue, 1% Lacy Phacelia, 5% Intermediate Rye, 5% Bachelor Button

Estimated Volumes for 2024-2025 program year. Future years will be adjusted based on actual volume needed in the previous year, and discussed annually with selected supplier.

Pollinator Brassica: 18 Tons

NitroBuild: 25 Tons

Annual Clover Mix: 25 Tons

Whole Orchard Recycling Mix: 8 Tons

Bee Pasture Mix: 1.5 Tons

## Delivery Requirements

All seed must be delivered within 2 weeks of the placement of the seed order or by September 30, whichever comes soonest. Preference given to companies that can assist in organizing pickup and/or delivery to pick-up locations across the Central Valley of California.

<b>Experience</b>	To be considered, contractors should have credible and longstanding experience providing seed to agricultural clients in California's Central Valley.
<b>Qualifications</b>	<p>The organization expects contractors to have the following certifications and qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience developing seed mixes well suited to California's Central Valley.</li> <li>• Experience shipping large quantities of seed to farmers and growers during a short and demanding planting season.</li> <li>• Understanding of organic certification and requirements of seed to meet that certification.</li> <li>• Understanding of laws surrounding seed choice for California's Central Valley.</li> <li>• Understanding of the Seeds for Bees mission and program</li> </ul>
<b>Contract Term</b>	The selected contractor shall provide all services described herein for a minimum of 1 year. The organization, in its sole discretion, will have the option to review and renew the contract on an annual basis, by agreement of both parties, up to the end of the USDA Climate-Smart Commodities Partnerships program, December 2027.
<b>Timeliness</b>	The organization expects contractors to compile and deliver seed orders in a timely manner, so growers have seed before a narrow planting window in the fall. All seed must be delivered by September 30, with the greatest number of orders expected in the month of August.
<b>Customer Service</b>	The selected contractor shall provide adequate support in the event of any service issues. At a minimum, the selected contractor shall provide an account manager that will serve as the buyer's main point of contact throughout the project. The account manager should be available during normal business hours at a minimum.
<b>Number of Employees</b>	Prospective contractors should be of a sufficient size to supply the quantity of seed requested in a timely manner. Prospective contractors must have the staff capacity to provide the requested services within the time frame stated in the RFP.
<b>Financial Health</b>	To be considered, all prospective contractors should be financially sound.
<b>Subcontractors</b>	The organization expects the contractor to employ skilled trade services from outside contractors as needed. However, all services conducted by subcontractors must be performed under the supervision of the contractor. It is understood that the contractor will be responsible for all payment of fees charged by the subcontractor(s).

# PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

<b>Proposal Requirements</b>	<p>Proposals must be submitted by the proposal deadline (April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024) as a PDF or Word document. Proposals are to be emailed to the project contact provided in the Project Summary.</p> <p>Each proposal should contain a cover letter, which includes the contractor's response to the organization's statement of need, and any additional documentation that is relevant to answering the RFP. Contractors should explain how their operations will meet the total seed quantities and delivery requirements over the season. Submissions not received by the deadline will not be considered.</p>
<b>Cost Proposal</b>	<p>Contractors should submit a cost proposal for the project. This proposal should describe the cost for each seed mix and estimate shipping charges to almond growers in California's Central Valley. Describe any additional or necessary costs.</p>
<b>Experience &amp; Qualifications</b>	<p>Contractors should describe their experience in the market and any qualifications they have that relate to the project. The proposal should include information about the number of years the contractor has been in operation, their longest-tenured clients and how established they are in the market.</p>
<b>Regulatory Compliance</b>	<p>Contractors should document that they are currently in compliance with any local, state, and federal regulations that are relevant to this market. They should provide evidence of appropriate certifications and licenses, if applicable, and indicate how they stay up to date on regulatory changes.</p>
<b>Competition</b>	<p>Contractors should indicate how they maintain a competitive edge over other providers in the market. This information will be important for setting this proposal apart from the others that the organization receives. Contractors are also encouraged to document their reputation among peers and clients.</p>
<b>References</b>	<p>Contractors should include at least three references from clients for whom similar quantities of seed orders have been filled during the past two years. Please include the names, telephone numbers and e-mails for each contact.</p>
<b>Service Offerings</b>	<p>Contractors should submit a comprehensive list of all related services they offer. Additionally, contractors should indicate whether they offer any bundling discounts based on contract size.</p>
<b>Conflicts of Interest</b>	<p>Contractors should disclose whether they will face any potential conflicts of interest by entering into this contract. Failure to disclose conflicts of interest in advance could result in termination of the contract.</p>

## SELECTION CRITERIA

<b>Technical Proposal</b>	Contractors will be selected based on how well they are able to meet the organization's needs. Preference will be given to contractors with technical proposals that meet all requirements set forth in the RFP.
<b>Cost Proposal</b>	Contractors will be evaluated based on the competitiveness of their cost proposals.
<b>Experience &amp; Qualifications</b>	Contractors' experience in the market and their qualifications for meeting the organization's needs will be key factors in the final decision on contract awards. In particular, the organization will consider how many years contractors have been active, and how long their longest-tenured clients have been with them
<b>Timeliness</b>	Contractors will be evaluated based on the timeliness of their work plans. Preference will be given to contractors that have a record of completing services on schedule.
<b>Reputation</b>	Contractors should have a good reputation among clients and the larger market. In particular, the organization will look for contractors that are known for the quality of their services. The organization will give strong consideration to references from past clients.
<b>Service Offerings</b>	The organization will evaluate prospective contractors based on the range of services they offer. Strong preference will be given to contractors that provide a wide range of services, in addition to the solutions being sourced in this RFP.
<b>Supplier Diversity</b>	The organization will give preference to traditionally underrepresented suppliers. In particular, the organization will look for the following types of diverse contractors: women-owned enterprises, minority-owned enterprises, veteran-owned enterprises, and small businesses.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES REGARDING FEDERAL FUNDING

To be made aware to the applicant: All contracts made through this RFP must contain specific provisions found within Appendix II to Part 200 (as applicable) which can be reviewed here:

[https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/appendix-](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/appendix-Appendix%20II%20to%20Part%20200)

[Appendix%20II%20to%20Part%20200](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/appendix-Appendix%20II%20to%20Part%20200)