



Thelma Hansen Fund Competitive Grant Program 2024 Request for Proposals

Background and Priority Areas

The Thelma Hansen Fund (THF) awards research, education and extension grants to benefit and sustain agriculture and natural resources in Ventura County. The grant program is funded and managed through the Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center (HAREC).

Thelma Hansen Fund Vision/Goals

- Ensure the economic viability of plant and animal agriculture to sustain agriculture's contribution to a healthy Ventura County
- Protect natural resources by increasing water and nutrient use efficiency, reducing pesticide and fossil fuel inputs and promoting soil, watershed and ecosystem health
- Increase public understanding and support of agriculture, including the relationship of agriculture to the economy, healthy families, and the natural resource base

Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Strategic Initiative Themes:

- Water Quality, Quantity and Security
- Endemic and Invasive Pests and Diseases
- Healthy Families and Communities
- Sustainable Food Systems
- Sustainable Natural Ecosystems

Ventura County Priority Areas:

- *Water quality and/or quantity:* e.g., improving water use efficiency, fertilizer use efficiency and minimizing contamination of groundwater while sustaining profitable crop yields, protection and rehabilitation of watersheds.
- *Emerging and re-emerging pests, diseases and weeds:* e.g., biology, epidemiology, diagnosis, detection and monitoring, modeling and prediction, loss/damage assessment, biological, cultural, and chemical control, IPM, pesticide resistance.
- *Sustainable/regenerative agriculture methods:* e.g., methods that protect natural resources, improve soil and plant health and resiliency to climate change, improve animal health and welfare, and protect pollinators and beneficial organisms.
- *Innovation and new technology:* e.g., new crops or production techniques, precision agriculture, new technologies to improve quality and value of food products, food safety, production efficiency and waste reduction.
- *Agricultural careers and literacy:* e.g., agricultural education and training for teens and young adults, internship programs, experiential learning and hands-on programs for kids, community education activities.
- *Economic viability:* e.g., strategies that enhance competitiveness of Ventura County's agricultural producers and products, maintain and enhance market share and provide added value.
- *Natural resources:* e.g., post-fire landscape recovery, working landscapes/ecosystem services, climate change mitigation, carbon sequestration, sustainable urban forests.



1. Eligibility:

In general, public or private, non-profit or for-profit organizations are eligible to receive THF grants.

Individuals who have the appropriate expertise to manage the scientific, educational and administrative aspects of the project are eligible to be Principal Investigators (PI or Co-PI) for THF grants. For research grants, non-researchers are expected to collaborate with researchers at universities or other research institutions. The eligibility of PIs to complete the project will be evaluated during the proposal review.

The Principal Investigator and Co-PIs must be in good standing on all previously funded THF projects.

The HAREC Director is not eligible to participate in THF-funded projects.

2. Proposal Categories:

Applied Research Grants – Applicants may apply for grants for 1 or 2 years in duration with total project funding up to \$25,000 per project. Applied research grants must contain an outreach component.

Education and Outreach Grants – Applicants may apply for grants for up to 1 year in duration for total project funding up to \$10,000 to support educational events, materials and outreach activities.

3. Proposal Requirements:

Proposals may be submitted for research or education activities. Forms can be found on the [THF Competitive Grant Program Website](#). In addition to the [Grant Submission Form and Cover Page](#) the following components are required for a complete application:

- A. Summary/Abstract:** Provide an abstract of 250 words or less for use in the HAREC Annual Report and website describing the project, the issue(s) being addressed, objectives, methodology and expected outcomes.

- B. Project Narrative:** The project narrative should address the following areas below. The narrative should not exceed 5 single-spaced pages, including tables, figures and photos, with no smaller than a 12-point font and 1-inch margins.
 - i. Background:** Include a concise statement of the problem and its importance to Ventura County, the state of California and to agriculture and/or natural resources. Identify which Ventura County priority area the project will address. Provide a brief summary of other relevant previous and ongoing research efforts, if applicable.
 - ii. Justification/Relevance:** State how the project will address the problem and the potential beneficial impacts of the project. Describe methods that will be used to measure or evaluate the short-term and long-term benefits to Ventura County agriculture and/or natural resources. Identify and justify which of the Thelma Hansen Fund goals the project supports and which of the ANR Strategic Initiatives the project aligns with. Briefly describe community support for the project, if applicable.
 - iii. Literature Review** (for research proposals; education proposals as appropriate): Include a concise review of the literature relevant to the proposal (no more than 15 references.)



- iv. **Objectives:** The list of objectives should be brief and logically related to the solution of the problem or the opportunity identified.
 - v. **Procedures:** For research projects, include the experimental design (size and number of plot areas, number of treatments, number of replicates, etc.), data to be collected, timeline, and methods of data analysis. For education projects, describe planned activities in detail and include a timeline. Describe methods by which progress on learning objectives will be measured.
 - vi. **Extension of Results:** Explain plans for sharing the project results, engaging with stakeholders and the public, and evaluating condition changes or impacts. Include details such as publications, field days, seminars, survey methods, etc.
- C. *Budget and Budget Justification:*** Provide a complete budget using the **2024 THF Budget Worksheet** available on the website and a separate justification that describes project costs in detail, such as type and duration of personnel salaries and benefits, materials and supplies, purpose and location of travel. A complete explanation of all current and pending support (cash or in-kind) listing the source, amount and effective dates should also be provided. PI and Co-PI salary, equipment (greater than \$5,000 for an individual item), and Indirect Costs are not eligible.
- D. *Curriculum Vitae or Resume:*** Include a short CV or Resume (1 to 2 pages) for the Principal Investigator (Project Director) and Co-PIs. Explain the role and contribution of each participant.
- E. *Literature cited*** (up to 15 references).
- F. *Letters of Support*** (if appropriate).

4. Review Criteria

In addition to the requirements listed above, the following areas will be considered during the review process:

- The level of direct impact and benefit to agriculture and/or natural resources in Ventura County
- Completeness and clarity of the proposal. For research proposals, the validity and appropriateness of the experimental design, procedures and statistical analysis
- Competence, experience, and integrity of the persons/organizations responsible for conducting the proposed project
- Cost-sharing with other sources of funding
- Collaboration or synergistic activities involving multiple investigators or entities
- For research projects, location of research conducted (in order of preference):
 - within the borders of Ventura County or
 - outside of Ventura County - provide clear justification if a Ventura County location is either unavailable or inadequate



5. Submission and Review Schedule

Proposals must be received by **Friday, February 23, 2024, at 5:00 pm PST**. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered for review. Submit proposals **as a single PDF file** via **THE Grant Submission Form and Cover Page**. All proposals received by the deadline will be reviewed by the Hansen Research Advisory Committee and the HAREC Director. In addition, the UCCE Ventura County Advisory Board will review the proposals for relevance to Ventura County priority areas. We expect that successful applicants will be notified of awards by Monday, April 15, 2024. The award start date will be July 1, 2024 or later.

6. Award

The anticipated amount available for the 2024 THF Grant Program is \$150,000. No less than 60% will be made available to fund research projects. Funds will be awarded for performance periods of up to two years. Cost Sharing or Matching is encouraged but not required.

A progress report is due no later than 30 days after the end of each year for multiyear projects. Second-year funding will be released upon evidence of sufficient progress. A final report is due no later than 90 days from completion of the project.

Questions?

Contact Brandy McCarthy (THFProgram@ucanr.edu) with questions about submission, content or program requirements. Forms can be found on the [THF Competitive Grant Program Website](#).