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## Notice of Funding Opportunity

**Title:** Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation – WaterSMART Drought Response Program: Drought Resiliency Projects for Fiscal Year 2022

**Website:** <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?opId=335035>

**Funding:** Total: \$16,500,000. Maximum awards: \$500K-\$2M, depending on project.

**Dates:** Application Submission Deadline: October 5, 2021 at 4PM MDT

**Summary:** The U.S. Department of the Interior's (Department) WaterSMART (Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow) Program provides a framework for Federal leadership and assistance to stretch and secure water supplies for future generations in support of the Department's priorities. Through WaterSMART, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) leverages Federal and non-Federal funding to work cooperatively with States, Tribes, and local entities as they plan for and implement actions to increase water supply reliability through investments in existing infrastructure and attention to local water conflicts. The objective of this NOFO is to invite eligible applicants to leverage their money and resources by cost sharing with Reclamation on Drought Resiliency Projects that will increase the reliability of water supplies; improve water management; and provide benefits for fish, wildlife, and the environment to mitigate impacts caused by drought.

### Project Topic Areas:

#### Task A—Increasing the Reliability of Water Supplies through Infrastructure Improvements

Even small investments in infrastructure can improve resiliency to drought conditions by increasing water management flexibility and providing alternative sources of water supply. For example, constructing new surface water intakes and new conveyance system components—such as pipes or pumping plants—can provide water managers with much needed options to deliver water from alternative sources or support voluntary transfers of water during drought. Likewise, aquifer recharge facilities can support water banking in wet years for use in dry years and sustainable conjunctive use programs. Task A projects include, but are not limited to the following: System modifications or improvements. Projects that will increase flexibility of water conveyance and deliveries, facilitating access to water supplies in times of drought; Storing water and/or recharging groundwater supplies. Projects that enable the capture or storage of additional water supplies that can be made available during drought; and Developing alternative sources of water supply including water treatment. Projects that develop alternative water supplies to build resiliency to the impacts of drought.

#### Task B—Projects to Improve Water Management through Decision Support Tools, Modeling, and Measurement

Task B Projects are intended to help provide entities with water use information and tools to monitor the onset of drought, detect different levels of drought that may trigger certain drought mitigation and response actions and identify potential strategies to address drought. Task B Projects also includes developing tools that facilitate water marketing between willing buyers and sellers to redistribute water supplies to meet other existing needs or uses (e.g., agricultural, municipal, or dedication to in-stream flows). Task B Projects include, but are not limited to the following: Developing water management, water marketing, and modeling tools to help communities evaluate options and implement strategies to address drought; Installing water measurement equipment and monitoring instrumentation devices to accurately track water supply conditions (e.g., water service meters, stream flow measurement structures, flow meters, well level instruments, reservoir level monitors). Projects that primarily install meters or other water measurement devices are considered routine water management activities and are, therefore, not eligible for funding under this program as a standalone project. However, meters or other measuring devices are eligible as a necessary sub-component of another eligible Drought Resiliency Project as described in Tasks A-B (e.g., meters could be coupled with developing an online consumptive use website for consumers to see and adjust their habits).

### Funding:

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The President's FY 2022 budget includes \$16.5 million for the Drought Response Program. Reclamation will determine the final amount of funding available for award under this NOFO once final FY 2022 appropriations are made. The amount of funding available for awards under this NOFO is dependent on the demand for funding under this and other elements of the Drought Response Program. Applications submitted under this NOFO may also be considered if other funding becomes available in FY 2023 or subsequently. Multiple applications for funding may be submitted for consideration (for example, an applicant may submit a proposal for funding under Funding Group I and a separate proposal under Funding Group II). However, no more than \$2,000,000 will be awarded in any fiscal year (FY) to any one applicant under this NOFO. The Federal share (Reclamation's share in addition to any other sources of Federal funding) of any one proposed project shall not exceed 50 percent of the total project costs. Generally, the non-Federal share of project costs must be expended at the same or greater rate as the Federal share of project costs. Applicants must be capable of cost sharing 50 percent or more of the total project costs.

Applicants are invited to submit proposals under the following funding groups:

Funding Group I: Up to \$500,000 in Federal funds provided through this NOFO will be available for projects that generally should be completed in two years.

Funding Group II: Up to \$2,000,000 in Federal funds provided through this NOFO will be available for larger projects that may take up to three years to complete. Projects in this group may be funded on an annual basis, and if so, funding for the second and third years of the project is contingent upon future appropriations.

### **Project Requirements:**

To be eligible for funding under this funding opportunity, the proposed resiliency project should improve the ability of water managers to continue to deliver water and power during a drought. The proposed project should decrease vulnerabilities and costs of drought by giving water managers flexibility in times of low water supply. In addition, the proposed project must be beyond routine water management activities or activities required by state law for conservation and efficiency. The proposed resiliency project should also help avoid the need for emergency response actions, such as water hauling programs and temporary infrastructure. Projects funded under this funding opportunity must have ongoing benefits to build long-term resilience to drought, even if they also address an immediate drought concern. Under this funding opportunity, Reclamation will prioritize projects supported by an existing drought planning effort. Drought contingency planning efforts frequently identify potential projects or needs to improve resiliency to drought. These can include mitigation actions or tools that will improve water management flexibility or improve access to critical water supply information that will help water managers build resiliency and avoid a crisis during drought. Applicants that demonstrate that the proposed project meets a need or project identified in an existing drought plan will be prioritized. These projects are generally in the final design stage—environmental and cultural resources compliance may have been initiated, and the non-Federal funding, necessary permits, and other required approvals have been secured. Applicants must also be located in one of the following states or territories: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

### **Eligible Applicants:**

Category A applicants: States, Tribes, irrigation districts, and water districts; State, regional, or local authorities, the members of which include one or more organizations with water or power delivery authority; and other organizations with water or power delivery authority.

Category B applicants: Nonprofit conservation organizations that are acting in partnership with and with the agreement of an entity described in Category A. Category B applicants must include with their application a letter from the Category A partner, stating that they are acting in partnership with the applicant and agree to the submittal and content of the proposal.