

Bureau of Reclamation

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Small Surface Water and Groundwater Storage Projects (Small Storage Program)

Funding Opportunity Number

R25AS00270

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BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: R25AS00270

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.074

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$43,500,000

Expected Number of Awards: 7

Award Ceiling: \$30,000,000

Award Floor: \$0

Cost Sharing Required?

Yes

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m., MDT, on the listed application due date.

Have Questions?

For questions regarding application and submission, contact the NOFO team at bor-sha-fafoa@usbr.gov. Staff availability on the day of the NOFO closing will be limited.

For questions regarding applicant and project eligibility, contact Austin Olah, aolah@usbr.gov or 303-445-3240.

Please include the NOFO number R25AS00270 in the subject line of any email correspondence.

Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) administers a competitive grant program for small water storage and groundwater storage projects, authorized by Section 40903 of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (2021), Public Law 117-58. Reclamation administers the Small Surface and Groundwater Storage Program (Small Storage Program) to enhance water storage opportunities for future generations in support of the Department's priorities.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Reclamation supports stakeholder efforts to stretch scarce water supplies and avoid conflicts over water in the 17 western states, Alaska, and Hawaii. Reclamation invites sponsors of small surface water and groundwater storage projects to request cost-shared funding for the planning, design, and/or construction of those projects.

Water storage projects are an important part of Reclamation and the Department's priorities. The Secretary of the Interior gives priority to proposals that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Projects that will provide a more reliable water supply for States, Indian Tribes, and local governments.
- Projects that will increase water management flexibility and reduce impacts on environmental resources from projects operated by Federal and State agencies.
- Projects that are regional in nature.
- Projects with multiple stakeholders.
- Projects that will provide multiple benefits, including water supply reliability, ecosystem benefits, groundwater management and enhancements, and water quality improvements.

The Small Storage Program's objective is to enhance water storage opportunities for future generations by funding small surface water and groundwater storage projects. The program funds

up to a 25% Federal cost-share to plan, design, and construct surface and groundwater storage projects between 200 and 30,000 acre-feet that will increase water storage or move water to or from a storage project. To be eligible, proposals must:

- Have water storage capacity between 200 acre-feet and 30,000 acre-feet;
- Increase yield to identified beneficiaries;
- Increase surface water or groundwater storage, or convey water to or from surface water or groundwater storage; and
- Submit a small storage feasibility study to Reclamation for review by February 13, 2026.

The small storage feasibility study must be found by Reclamation to meet the requirements of [CMP TRMR-127](#) prior to initiation of the Merit Review.

Eligible recipients of the Small Storage Program funding are identified under the 1902 Act. They must be located in the 17 western United States (Reclamation State) as identified in the Reclamation Act of 1902, as amended or Alaska or Hawaii. Eligible recipients include:

- State, regional, or local water authorities;
- Indian tribes or tribal organizations; or
- Other entities such as a water conservation or conservancy district, wastewater district, rural water district.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

State governments

County governments

City or township governments

Special district governments

Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)

Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)

Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education

Others (see text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility" for clarification)

Additional Information on Eligibility

Joint powers authorities organized pursuant to state law are eligible entities for this funding opportunity.

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

Yes

Applicants must be capable of cost sharing 75 percent or more of the total project cost. The total project cost is defined as the total allowable costs incurred under a Federal award and all required cost share and voluntary committed cost-share contributions, including third-party contributions.

Applicants may cost share through cash, costs contributed by the applicant, or third-party in-kind contributions. Third-party in-kind contributions are the value of non-cash contributions of property or services that benefit the Federally assisted project and are contributed by non-Federal third parties, without charge. The applicant should secure cost-share funding from sources outside the applicant's organization (e.g., loans or State grants) and ensure that the funding is available prior to award.

Other sources of Federal funding received by the applicant for the project may not be counted towards the required non-Federal cost share. This requirement is exempted where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for a program can be applied to matching or cost-sharing requirements of other Federal programs, such as awards to tribal organizations under PL 93-638, as amended. If Reclamation determines that the Federal funding cannot be applied towards the non-Federal cost share, the work associated with the funding may be removed from the proposed project or the Federal funding will be counted toward the 25 percent Federal cost share for the project. Please identify any other Federal funding received for the project

GET READY TO APPLY

Required System Registrations

Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Before applying, all **applicants** except individuals applying as a natural person **must be registered in SAM.gov**. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

The SAM.gov registration process can take several months. If your organization is not already registered in SAM.gov, begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To register in SAM.gov, go to the [SAM.gov website](#) and use the available resources to complete registration.

- **Financial assistance registrants** must review and certify compliance with the SAM.gov “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications”.
- **Already registered?** You already have a Unique Entity ID. Before applying, check that your “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications” on SAM.gov is complete. Remember to renew your registration every year to keep it active while you have an award or application in progress. You can update your registration whenever you need, including during renewal.
- **Need help?** For additional information and contact information on the [SAM.gov Help page](#).

Refer to Attachment – Submission Instructions & Tips.

GRANTS.GOV

This program accepts applications through [Grants.gov](#) so once you receive your UEI return to Grants.gov to [register](#) with Grants.gov. Please allow 30 days to register and set up a Workspace in Grants.gov. See [Submission Instructions](#) section below for additional details.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- The Small Storage Program's objective is to enhance water storage opportunities for future generations by providing up to a 25% Federal cost-share in small surface water and groundwater storage projects. The Department recognizes the need for additional water storage to stretch scarce water supplies and avoid conflicts over water. The Department, consistent with the statutory requirements, prioritizes projects that increase reliability, flexibility, and water quality; that reduce the need to mitigate for environmental impacts; that are regional in nature; and that have multiple stakeholders. Reclamation will evaluate proposals for their contributions to water supply reliability, water management flexibility, rural communities, stakeholder support, and economic benefits.

Program Description

The U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, administers the Small Surface and Groundwater Storage Program (Small Storage Program) to promote Federal assistance to enhance water storage opportunities for future generations in support of the Department's priorities. Reclamation leverages Federal and non-Federal funding to support stakeholder efforts to stretch scarce water supplies and avoid conflicts over water.

Congress enacted the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) on November 15, 2021, with Title IX—Western Water Infrastructure to address water storage infrastructure critical to the Nation's economic growth, health, and competitiveness. Section 40903 authorizes Reclamation to provide funding for small surface water storage and groundwater storage projects.

Water storage projects are an important part of Reclamation and the Department's priorities. Surface water and groundwater storage are essential tools in stretching the limited water supplies in the Western United States. Water storage projects enhance and increase the reliability of municipal and irrigation water supplies, provide opportunities to enhance groundwater management and provide water quality improvements and ecosystem benefits. These projects will provide Western communities with new sources of water and increase water management flexibility.

The objective of this NOFO is to invite sponsors of small surface water and groundwater storage projects to request cost-shared funding for the planning, design, and/or construction of those projects.

Certified Local Governments are encouraged to prioritize projects in support of the celebration of America's 250th birthday (American250). This may include, but is not limited to, preservation planning, interpretation, public engagement, and rehabilitation projects that recognize and honor the nation's founding, history, and cultural heritage.

Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects

This program has Federal funding for infrastructure projects. Buy America preferences apply to Federal awards for infrastructure projects in the United States. Reference [2 CFR Part 184 - Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Project](#) for further guidance.

For further information on the Buy America preference, please visit www.doi.gov/grants/BuyAmerica.

Legislative Authority

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is issued under the authority of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA), Section 40903 of Title IX—Western Water Infrastructure, Public Law 117-58.

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through CA (Cooperative Agreement), G (Grant).

Recipient should expect the Federal agency to have substantial involvement in the project.

Under cooperative agreements, the successful applicant should expect Reclamation to have substantial involvement in the project, including:

- collaboration and participation with the successful applicant in the management of the project and close oversight of the successful applicant's activities to ensure that the program objectives are achieved, and
- possible oversight, including review, input, and approval at key interim stages of the project.

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Application Content and Format

Pre-Application Requirements

Prior to applying, applicants should review presidential actions found at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/> and DOI Secretary's Orders found at: <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order>. By applying in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity, the applicant certifies awareness and compliance with all currently effective and applicable executive orders and secretary's orders, including but not limited to the Executive Order titled Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the Executive Order and Secretary's order titled Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their proposed activities are consistent with the intent and requirements of these directives.

Application Documents

Applicants must submit the following forms with their application as specified below. Instructions for accessing and submitting application forms are provided in the [Submission Instructions](#) section of this document below. For instructions on completing form fields, see the form instructions on the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#).

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying	Required from all applicants

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required from all applicants
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds <u>and</u> the applicant has used or plans to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award purpose, • Activities to be performed, • Expected deliverables or outcomes, • Intended beneficiaries, Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)	Required from all applicants

Project Narrative

The project proposal must be no longer than 125 pages, with a typeface no smaller than 11-point, and have at least 1-inch margins on all sides. The 125-page limit includes all text, figures, references, and vitae, but does not include the Budget Detail (Attachment B).

Application narrative requirements may include:

Title Page

The title page should provide a brief and descriptive title for the proposed work that indicates the nature of the project. Include the name and address of the applicant, and the name, address, e-mail address, and telephone of the project manager.

Table of Contents

The table of contents should include all major sections of the project proposal.

Executive Summary

The executive summary should include:

- the date, applicant name, city, county, and State,
- a one-paragraph project summary that briefly describes the work for which the applicant requests funding, including how funds will be used to accomplish specific project activities.
- the length of time and estimated completion date for the proposed project (month/year), and
- whether or not the proposed planning efforts are focused on a Federal facility or will involve Federal land.

Project Location

The project location should provide specific information on area in which the applicant will work including a map showing the geographic location and a brief narrative. For example: the {project} is located in {state and county} approximately {distance} miles {direction, e.g., northeast} of {nearest town} in {township, range, and section}. The project latitude is {##°##'N} and longitude is {###°##'W}. Provide at least one map with sufficient project details to understand the location of all elements of the proposal. Multiple maps may be necessary to accurately depict the proposal in its entirety. Recommended guidance on useful features to include on the project map(s) is included in Appendix A. If selected for funding, Reclamation may request additional detail regarding the applicant's project location.

Project Schedule

The project schedule should provide sufficient information on the project activities and shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including the major tasks, milestones, and dates. Clearly and concisely convey the schedule using a table, Gantt chart, or another applicable visual format.

Project Description

The project description should describe the work for which the funding will be used, including any specific activities the work will accomplish. This section is an opportunity for the applicant to provide a clear description of the technical nature of the project and to address any aspect of the project that reviewers may need additional information to understand. Include enough detail on the proposed project to permit a comprehensive evaluation of the proposal. Illustrative photographs may be useful in communicating aspects of the project.

The description should also describe the technical approach the applicant plans to conduct under the project. Include enough detail on the proposed technology or approach to allow a comprehensive evaluation of the proposal. Reclamation will establish the applicant's understanding not only by the proposed approach, but also by identifying potential challenges that the project may face throughout the proposed testing, and the mitigation strategies for these potential challenges.

Describe in detail the project tasks. For each task, describe planned activities and expected outcomes and milestones.

Describe the staff levels and expertise, the number of staff hours, and the schedule for completing each task.

The sole intention of this section is to provide an understanding of the technical aspects of the project. Please note: if the work for which the applicant is requesting funding is a phase of a larger project, please only describe the work reflected in the budget and exclude description of other activities or components of the overall project. Please do not duplicate information.

Evaluation Criteria

The Merit Review section provides a detailed description of each criterion and sub-criterion and points associated with each. The evaluation criteria portion of your application should thoroughly address each criterion and sub-criterion in the order presented to assist in the complete and accurate evaluation of your proposal.

Copying and pasting the evaluation criteria and sub-criteria in Merit Review section into your applications is suggested to ensure that all necessary information is adequately addressed.

Budget Narrative

Applicants must describe and justify items and costs listed in their budget. The budget narrative must identify the following cost items: total estimated costs, non-Federal cost share, third-party contributions, and any pre-award costs. Total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including required and voluntary cost share and third-party contributions.

Budget items must be:

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Compliant with [2 CFR §200 Subpart E](#) cost principles

Indirect Costs: Applicants must indicate in their budget narrative how they will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- De Minimis Rate: If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).
- Negotiated Rate: State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

The budget narrative provides a written description of the costs included in each budget category on the SF-424A and how they were estimated. While the SF-424A gives the total cost for each category of the budget, the budget narrative gives the item by item breakdown for each category and shows the calculations used to derive the costs. The budget description serves two purposes: 1) it explains how the costs were estimated, and 2) it justifies the need for the cost. See Attachment A for Budget Narrative Guidance. Attachment B is a suggested format for capturing budget details to support the Narrative.

Pre-award costs (defined at [2 CFR 200.458](#)) are allowed, subject to Grant Officer approval. To be eligible, pre-award costs must be incurred after the posting date of this NOFO. Pre-award costs are at the applicant's risk. Successful applicants may submit requests for approval of pre-award costs to the awarding Grant Officer.

Environmental and Regulatory Compliance Costs include costs in the budget for completing compliance activities for Federal environmental and cultural resources laws and regulations. Applicants may contact their [local Reclamation office](#) to discuss the compliance requirements and potential costs. If the project is selected for award, these costs will be reviewed for accuracy and adjusted as needed. See "Administration and National Policy Requirements" for additional detail.

Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures:

If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per [2 CFR 1402.112](#). Refer to [2 CFR 200.112](#) Conflict of Interest and [2 CFR 200.113](#).

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:

Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal proposal or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping proposal was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

Other Required Information

Letters of Commitment or Support

Applicants should include letters of commitment from third-party cost share sources. Letters of commitment should identify the amount of funding committed, the date the funds are available, time constraints on the availability of funds, and any other funding contingencies. Letters of support from interested stakeholders supporting the proposed project are encouraged, if applicable. Reclamation will not consider letters of support received after the application deadline for this NOFO in evaluating an applicant's proposed project. These letters do not count within the 125 page-maximum.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Address to Request Application Package

Grants.gov contains a complete application kit to submit a full application in response to this NOFO. Instructions for the Grants.gov application process are [available here](#). Contact Devin Baez at bor-sha-fafoa@usbr.gov if you are unable to access the application materials electronically.

Proposals received after the application deadline will not be considered unless it can be determined that the delay was caused by Reclamation or there were technical issues with Grants.gov. To document a delay due to a technical issue in Grants.gov, you must furnish a Grants.gov helpdesk ticket number to the NOFO team that validates the delay. Difficulties related to an applicant's Grants.gov profile (e.g., incorrect organizational representative), uploading documents to Grants.gov, or an applicant's SAM.gov registration are not considered technical issues with the Grants.gov system.

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 04/17/2026

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m., MDT, on the listed application due date.

Submission Instructions

Apply Through Grants.gov

To apply through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), please follow the instructions in the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Before applying, ensure that at least one person at your organization is registered and has the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only the AOR can submit the application. If you need more users, they must create their own Grants.gov account. Follow these steps below to apply:

- *Create a Workspace:* Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- *Complete a Workspace:* Invite participants to the workspace so you can collaborate on the application. Required applications forms are included in the Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Package and can be completed in the Workspace, unless noted otherwise in the Required Forms table above. Check for errors before submission.
- *Submit a Workspace:* An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab
- *Track a Workspace Submission:* After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application.

The system generates a date and time stamp and sends it to the applicant's AOR via email as proof of submission. Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password-protect any files. Only registered individuals in SAM as both a user and an AOR can submit applications. Please allow 30 days to register in Grants.gov.

Application System Technical Support: For Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms, and application packages, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or by email at Support@grants.gov.

Applicants can submit a hard copy application by U.S. Mail or express delivery to the addresses below.

By mail or United States Postal Service overnight services:

Bureau of Reclamation
Financial Assistance Operations Section
Attn: NOFO Team
P.O. Box 25007, MS 84-27133
Denver, CO 80225

By all other express delivery and courier services:

Bureau of Reclamation mail services
Attn: NOFO Team
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 67, Rm. 152
6th Avenue and Kipling Street
Denver, CO 80225

Please notify the Reclamation Financial Assistance Contact listed in the “Basic Information” section by 2:00 PM MT on the submission date to confirm the hard copy submission.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Eligibility Review

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see [Application Documents](#) above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. The Federal agency may remove an application if it does not pass the eligibility review.

The Grants Officer will remove an application if it does not include:

- Completed SF-424 and SF-424A forms
- SAM.gov registration, with a valid UEI (unless an exemption at [2 CFR 25.110](#) applies)
- A project narrative
- A budget narrative

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see [2 CFR 25.200](#) and [2 CFR 25.110](#)) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer [2 CFR 25.205](#) for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, the Federal agency will notify the applicant in writing.

Merit Review

An Application Review Committee (ARC), made up of experts in relevant disciplines, will review the technical merit of the application, based on the following evaluation criteria: The evaluation criteria total 100 points as shown in the following table.

Evaluation Criteria Scoring Summary	Points
Evaluation Criterion 1—Water Supply Reliability	35
Evaluation Criterion 2—Water Management Flexibility	16
Evaluation Criterion 3—Benefits to Rural Communities	12
Evaluation Criterion 4—Stakeholder Support	12

Evaluation Criterion 5—Economic Benefits	25
Total	100

Evaluation Criterion 1—Water Supply Reliability (35 points)

Sub-criterion No. 1a— Enhanced Water Supplies (20 points)

Reclamation will award points based on the extent to which the project is expected to secure and stretch reliable water supplies. Reclamation will give consideration to the amount of water expected to be made available by the project (in acre-feet), which communities the project will serve, and the extent to which the project will reduce demands on existing water supplies and/or facilities.

1. How much additional storage capacity does the project add to the system (relative to current system capacity)? How many additional acre-feet of water will the project make available, on average, each year upon completion? What percentage of the service area's overall water supply will the project's water provide upon completion? Use the total average project water production over the anticipated life of the project.
2. Will the project reduce or eliminate the reliance on imported water or other sources of surface water supplies that are less reliable? Explain.
3. Will the project reduce groundwater overdraft and positively contribute to the sustainable yield of a groundwater basin or local aquifer? Explain.
4. Will the project alleviate pressure on existing water supplies and/or facilities? If so, please identify the supplies and/or facilities and explain how they will benefit from the project, including quantifications where applicable. Please include a description of the conditions that exist in the area and projections of the future with, and without, the project.
5. What performance measures and monitoring will be used to quantify and track actual benefits upon completion of the project?

Sub-criterion No. 1b— Contributions to Water Supply (15 points)

Reclamation will award points for projects that contribute to a more drought resilient water supply.

1. Explain the role of the project in addressing any of the below concerns and the extent to which the project will address them. Consider the number of acre-feet of water that the project will make available and the severity of the concerns addressed. Specific concerns may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. water supply shortages,
 - b. water supply reliability,

- c. groundwater depletion,
 - d. water quality issues,
 - e. natural disasters (including wildfires and floods) that may impact water supply infrastructure,
 - f. heightened competition for water supplies,
 - g. availability of alternative supplies, and
 - h. increasing cost of water supplies
2. Reclamation is focused on increasing water supply and drought resilience to protect water supplies throughout the Western United States.
- a. Will the project address observed or anticipated hydrologic variability in the service area? Explain.
 - b. Will water made available by this project be resilient into the future? Particularly in consideration of alternative water supply options that exist in the service area, to what extent does the project represent a drought resilient alternative? Explain.
 - c. Does the project contribute to water supply resiliency in other ways not described above? Explain.
3. The severity of actual or potential drought impacts that the project will address is an important consideration in assessing its contribution to water supply resiliency. Describe recent, existing, or potential drought conditions in the project area, including the severity of actual or potential drought impacts that the project will address.
- a. Will the project help create additional flexibility to address drought? Will water made available by this project continue to be available during periods of drought? To what extent is the water made available by this project more drought resistant than alternative water supply options? Explain.
 - b. Has the United States Drought Monitor identified the area served by the project as experiencing extreme (D3) or exceptional (D4) drought for at least 1 consecutive year in the last 4 years? Explain.
 - c. Has the State designated the area served by the project as a drought disaster area in the last 4 years? Explain.

Evaluation Criterion 2—Water Management Flexibility (16 points)

Reclamation will award points based on the extent to which the project will improve surface water or groundwater flexibility including benefits to non-listed species and federally listed threatened or endangered species.

Sub-criterion No. 2a— Operational Flexibility (10 points)

- 1. Will the project help create additional operational flexibility to improve the management of water supplies? If so, how?
- 2. Will the project protect or improve the quality of surface water or groundwater? If so, explain how the project will accomplish this and the extent to which the project will do this.
- 3. Will the project take steps to minimize the environmental impacts of source water acquisition (intakes or groundwater pumping) as part of the project? If so, explain.
- 4. Will the project provide water or habitat for non-listed species? If so, how?

Sub-criterion No. 2b— Legal and Contractual Water Supply Obligations (6 Points)

Reclamation will award points to projects that help to meet Reclamation's legal and contractual obligations, including how the project relates to Reclamation's mission or serves a Federal interest. Note that a project may help Reclamation fulfill its obligations or reduce its impacts even if the project sponsor is not a Reclamation contractor. Reclamation will also consider indirect benefits under this criterion.

1. Does the project help fulfill any of Reclamation's legal or contractual obligations such as providing water for Tribes, water right settlements, river restoration, minimum flows, legal court orders, or other obligations? Explain.
2. Will the project provide water or habitat for, or otherwise help protect, Federally listed threatened or endangered species? If so, how?
3. Does the local area depend in whole or in part on imported water from the Colorado River Basin or other basins experiencing comparable levels of long-term drought? If so, will the project reduce reliance on imports specifically from the Colorado River or other basin experiencing severe drought? Explain.

Evaluation Criterion 3—Benefits to Rural Communities (12 points)

Reclamation will award points based on the extent to which the project provides benefits to rural small communities throughout the service area. For the purposes of this funding opportunity, a rural community is defined as an incorporated or unincorporated community with fewer than 50,000 people.

1. Does the project provide benefits to at least one rural community? Explain and discuss to what extent the project serves rural communities.
2. For example, will the proposed project provide any additional benefits (such as economic growth opportunities, increases to short or long-term local employment, water quality, etc.)? If so, please identify these communities and discuss the extent to which the project will realize these additional benefits. Please be sure to indicate whether the project will provide water supply to a Federally Recognized Tribe.

Evaluation Criterion 4—Stakeholder Support (12 points)

Reclamation will award points based on the extent to which the project demonstrates support from multiple stakeholders. In responding to the questions below, applicants should highlight efforts to foster relationships during planning and design of the project and initiatives to continue respectful partnerships after project completion among the multiple stakeholders with potentially competing interests and/or values.

1. Does the project promote collaborative partnerships to address water and related issues? Please describe these partnerships and the nature of the collaboration.
2. Does the project implement a regional or State water plan or an integrated resource management plan? Explain.
3. Does the project include outreach and opportunities for the public to learn about the project beyond what environmental compliance requires? Please describe these opportunities, including future opportunities, at the following phases of the project:
 - a. planning and design,
 - b. construction, and
 - c. implementation.
4. How has the project addressed competing or conflicting interests from either affected stakeholders and/or the public?

5. Does the project have documented support from Tribes? If so, please identify these Tribes and describe the nature of their support for the project.

Evaluation Criterion 5—Economic Benefits (25 points)

Sub-criterion No. 5a—Cost Effectiveness (15 points)

Reclamation will award points based on the cost per acre-foot of water that the applicant expects the project to deliver upon completion and how the cost of the project compares to other potential water supply options. Applicants should provide costs for the entire project described in the Reclamation-approved feasibility study.

1. Reclamation will calculate the cost per acre-foot of water produced by the project using information provided by project sponsors. Please provide the following information for this calculation:
 - a. the total estimated construction costs, by year, for the project (include all previous and planned work) as shown in the following table.

Calendar Year	Construction Cost	Calendar Year	Construction Cost
1.		6.	
2.		7.	
3.		8.	
4.		9.	
5.		10.	

- b. the total estimated or actual cost to plan and design the project.
- c. the average annual (rather than total) operation and maintenance costs for the life of the project. Please do not include periodic replacement costs in the operation and maintenance costs. Please provide any periodic replacement costs separately in response to Question f), below.
- d. the year the project will begin to deliver water.
- e. the projected life (in years) that the project is expected to last, starting from the time the project starts delivering water.
- f. all estimated replacement costs by year as shown in the following table. If there are multiple replacement costs in one year, or at the same interval, please total them and put them on one line with the year or interval.

Description of Replacement Requirement	Year	Cost
--	------	------

g. The maximum volume of new water (in acre-feet) available for delivery annually upon completion of the project. This volume of water must correspond to the costs provided above.

2. Reclamation will calculate the cost per acre-foot for the project using the information requested in the Sub-criterion No. 5a—Cost Effectiveness section, Question 1, and compare it to any other water supply options identified by the applicant as potential alternatives to evaluate the cost effectiveness of the project. Please provide the following information for this comparison:

- a. the cost per acre-foot of other water supply alternatives that the non-Federal project sponsor could implement in lieu of the project.
- b. if available, the cost per acre foot of one water supply project with similar characteristics to the project. This information can provide another point of comparison to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the project.
- c. discussion of the degree to which the project is cost-effective, including, where applicable, a discussion of why the project may be cost effective even if the overall project cost appears to be high.

Sub-criterion No. 5b— Economic Analysis and Project Benefits (10 points)

Reclamation will award points based on the analysis of the project’s benefits relative to the project’s costs. Please use costs related to the entire project. Reclamation will award additional points for projects with multiple project benefits. Proposals containing a well-supported and detailed description of both quantifiable and qualitative benefits will receive the most points

1. Summarize the economic analysis performed for the project, including information on the project’s estimated benefits and costs. Describe the methodologies used for the analysis. Reclamation will award points based on a comparison of the benefits and costs of the project. The summary should include:

- a. quantified and monetized project costs, including capital costs and operations and maintenance costs.
- b. quantified and monetized project benefits. This includes benefits that can be quantified and expressed as a monetized benefit per acre-foot. This may include but is not limited to: benefits related to water supply quantity and water supply reliability, recreational benefits, ecosystem benefits, water quality, flood risk mitigation, and energy efficiency. Benefits may also include the avoided costs of no action (i.e., the costs that would be incurred if the project were not implemented), and the willingness of users or customers to pay for a benefit or to avoid a negative outcome (i.e., the willingness of households to pay for a water supply system that would reduce the chance of a drought emergency within a locality or State).
- c. if quantified and/or monetized information for these benefits is not available, applicants may address them in response to Question 2, below.
- d. A comparison of the project's quantified and monetized benefits and costs. Note: applicants must include information in the proposal to be considered. Reclamation will not base scores on information provided in the project's feasibility study if applicants do not include the information in the proposal.

2. Describe any economic benefits of the project that are difficult to quantify or monetize. Provide a qualitative discussion of the economic impact of these benefits. Reclamation will award points based on the potential economic impact of the project-related benefits. Some examples of benefits may include but are not limited to: benefits to habitat or species, local impacts on residents and/or businesses, job creation, and regional impacts. Applicants may also include benefits listed in the Sub-criterion No. 5a—Cost Effectiveness section, Question 1, if the benefits have not been monetized (e.g., water supply reliability, water quality, recreation, flood risk mitigation, etc.).

3. Reclamation will evaluate projects based on whether the proposed project would provide multiple benefits, including water supply reliability, ecosystem benefits, groundwater management and enhancement, and water quality improvements. Does the project provide multiple benefits, or is it a single purpose facility? Explain.

The ARC will also review the application to ensure that the project is eligible and meets the objective of this NOFO. During ARC review, Reclamation may contact applicants to request clarifications to the information provided, if necessary.

Review and Selection Process

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct
- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs
- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly
- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, DOI may choose to not make an award.

Initial Review: Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO (program determination); and (5) the proposed project is in compliance with all applicable executive and secretary orders, including the President’s executive order on Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the executive order and Secretary order on Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History. If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered nonresponsive and eliminated from further review.

After the merit review, Reclamation conducts a “red-flag” review of top-ranking applications. During this review, Reclamation identifies any reasons a project would not be feasible or advisable, including environmental or cultural compliance, permitting, legal, financial, performance or other concerns. After the red-flag review, Reclamation conducts a “managerial review” of top-ranking applications. The managerial review prioritizes applications for selection based on the objectives of the NOFO. Geographic dispersion and project types may be considered during this review. Selections are finalized once these reviews are complete, and all applicants are notified.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the program assesses the risk posed by the applicant per [2 CFR 200.206](#). If an award will be made, the program may apply special conditions corresponding to the risk assessed. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), the program reviews eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant’s SAM.gov records per [2 CFR 200.206\(a\)](#). The program also assesses financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential challenges.

A Reclamation Grants Officer conducts a detailed budget analysis and a business evaluation and responsibility determination. During this evaluation, the Reclamation Grants Officer will consider several factors, such as:

- Allowability, allocability, and reasonableness of proposed costs
- Financial strength and stability of the applicant
- Past performance, including satisfactory compliance with all terms and conditions of previous awards, such as environmental compliance, reporting requirements, and audit compliance
- Adequacy of personnel practices, procurement procedures, and accounting policies and procedures.

AWARD NOTICES

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per [2 CFR 200.211](#). The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the program allows pre-award costs per [2 CFR 200.458](#), beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

Anticipated Project Start Date: 10/01/2026

Anticipated Project End Date: 10/31/2029

Reclamation anticipates contacting potential award recipients and unsuccessful applicants in April 2026, subject to the timing and amount of final appropriations. Reclamation will contact award recipients individually to discuss the time frame for the completion of their agreement. A webinar will be held for successful applicants within 30 days following their notice of selection to review next steps and pre-Financial Assistance Agreement procedures.

Reclamation may post successful applications on a Reclamation website, after necessary redactions, in consultation with the successful applicant.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and National Policy Requirements

For award administration and national policy requirements, see the [DOI General Terms and Conditions](#). Infrastructure projects require the use of American iron, steel, manufacture products, and construction materials per [2 CFR 184](#).

Automated Standard Application for Payments Registration

All recipients must be registered with and willing to process all payments through the Department of Treasury Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system. All recipients with active financial assistance agreements with Reclamation must be enrolled in ASAP under the appropriate Agency Location Code(s) and UEI Number prior to the award of funds. If a recipient has multiple UEI numbers, they must separately enroll within ASAP for each unique UEI Number and/or Agency. If your entity is currently enrolled in the ASAP system with an agency other than Reclamation, you must enroll specifically with Reclamation in order to process payments. All of the information on the enrollment process for recipients, will be sent to you by ASAP staff if selected for award.

Approvals and Permits

Recipients shall adhere to Federal, State, Territorial, Tribal, and local laws, regulations, and codes, as applicable, and shall obtain all required approvals and permits. Recipients shall also coordinate and obtain approvals from site owners and operators.

Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance

The recipient must comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local environmental, cultural, and paleontological resource laws and regulations. Data collections supporting compliance efforts must follow separate compliance procedures. All projects will require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) before any ground-disturbing activity may begin.

Recipients are prohibited from any ground-disturbing activities (e.g., biological or water quality surveys, grading, clearing, excavation, and other preliminary or construction activities) on a project before environmental and cultural resources compliance is complete. A recipient that proceeds before environmental and cultural resources compliance is complete risks forfeiting funding. The Grant Officer will issue a Notice to Proceed that explicitly authorizes work to proceed once environmental and cultural resource compliance is complete.

Geospatial Data

If you receive financial assistance from the Department of the Interior (DOI), recipient must follow these rules for geospatial data:

Follow Federal Standards: All geospatial data you collect or create must meet the standards set by the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) or the Department of the Interior. This is required by the Geospatial Data Act of 2018, which is part of Public Law 115-254, specifically in Subtitle F (Geospatial Data), sections 751-759C (codified at [43 U.S.C. §§ 2801–2811](#)).

Include Metadata: Your Geographic Information Systems (GIS) files must include complete metadata. Metadata is information that describes the data, such as where it came from, how accurate it is, and how it should be used. This is to ensure that anyone using the data understands its context and quality.

Check for Existing Data: Before you start collecting new geospatial data, you need to check GeoPlatform.gov. This is to see if there is already existing geospatial data from federal, state, local, or private sources that can meet your needs and is available for free. If such data is available, you should use it instead of gathering new data.

These rules help ensure that geospatial data is reliable, high-quality, and that resources are used efficiently.

Intangible Property

Title to intangible property acquired under this agreement vests upon acquisition with the Recipient, however Reclamation reserves the right to obtain, publish, reproduce, or otherwise use and authorize others to use for Federal purposes in accordance with [2 CFR Part 200.315](#).

Real Property

Real property, equipment, and intangible property that is acquired or improved with a Federal award must be held in trust by the recipient as trustee for the beneficiaries of the project or program under which the property was acquired or improved, per [2 CFR §200.316](#). Title to real property acquired or improved under a Federal award will vest upon acquisition in the recipient. Except as otherwise provided by Federal statutes or by the Federal awarding agency, real property will be used for the originally authorized purpose as long as needed for that purpose, during which time the recipient must not dispose of or encumber its title or other interests. When real property is no longer needed for the originally authorized purpose, the recipient must obtain disposition instructions from the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity.

Wage Rate Requirements (Davis-Bacon Act)

Section 41101 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, otherwise known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) requires that all laborers and mechanics employed by contractors or

subcontractor in the performance of construction, alteration, or repair work on a project assisted in whole or in part by funding made available under the BIL shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on similar projects in the locality, as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with Subchapter IV of Chapter 31 of Title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Davis-Bacon Act).

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Please note that any application submitted for funding under this NOFO may be subjected to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request (5 U.S.C. §552, as amended by P.L. No. 110-175), and as a result, may be made publicly available.

In response to a FOIA request for research data relating to published research findings produced under a Federal award that were used by the Federal Government in developing an agency action that has the force and effect of law, the Federal awarding agency must request, and the recipient must provide, within a reasonable time, the research data so that they can be made available to the public through the procedures established under the FOIA.

Reporting

The recipient's Notice of Award will detail all reporting requirements, including frequency, due dates, and instructions for requesting extensions. In general, but not limited to, recipients must:

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting,
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation through SAM.gov and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts, and consortiums over \$30,000 to the [FFATA Subaward Reporting System \(FSRS\)](#).
- Report any required mitigation to lessen environmental impacts of the project.

- Recipients of Reclamation awards must include the following information in performance reports:
 - a comparison of actual accomplishments to the milestones established by the financial assistance agreement for the period,
 - the reasons why the project did not meet established milestones, if applicable,
 - the status of milestones not met from the previous reporting period, if applicable,
 - whether the project is on schedule and within the original cost estimate,
 - any additional pertinent information or issues related to the status of the project, and
 - photographs documenting the project (appreciated, although not required). Note: Reclamation may print photos with appropriate credit to the recipient.
 - Final reports are public documents and may be made available on Reclamation's website.

Other Information

Informational webinars will be held in Summer or Fall 2025. The webinar will provide general information about the Small Surface Water and Groundwater Storage Projects (Small Storage Program) NOFO, and individuals will have the opportunity to ask questions. Please see www.usbr.gov/smallstorage for more information.

Appendix A: Project Location Map Guidance

Provide at least one map with sufficient details to understand the location of all proposed project elements. Multiple maps may be necessary to accurately depict the proposal in its entirety. Maps should preferably be a USGS 7.5-minute topographic map; additional illustrative maps, depicting specific features not depicted on USGS maps, may also be submitted.

Clear, detailed maps of the project proposal will help reviewers understand the project, potential environmental constraints, and costs for environmental compliance. The following list of features are recommended for inclusion in project location maps, where applicable. Note, however, that inclusion of this information will not influence the applicant's eligibility or scoring. If you are selected for funding, Reclamation may request additional detail regarding the project location. Maps should include the following information:

- a. project boundary
- b. location of all proposed ground-disturbance and project elements (preferably depicted as points and polygons) including, but not limited to:
 1. proposed infrastructure/improvements,
 2. access routes (e.g., nearest public roads and travel routes for proposed activities),
 3. monitoring areas,
 4. staging areas,
 5. borrow areas,
 6. existing ancillary facilities/ infrastructure related to the proposal (e.g. electrical, water, sewer),
 7. rights-of-ways needed.

- c. point(s) for referenced latitude and longitude coordinates (if UTM's, provide in NAD83)
- d. Public Land Survey System (PLSS) information (township, range, and section) (either on the map or in narrative form)
- e. north arrow, scale, and legend
- f. state and county
- g. land ownership
- h. date of map/aerial photo (if applicable)
- i. existing rights-of-way, easements, etc. associates with proposal
- j. geographic details, such as nearby cities, river basins, watersheds, rivers, streams, wetlands and floodplains, roads, important landmarks
- k. GIS (.shp, .gdb, etc.) or Google Earth (.kmz) files, if available