

Drought Response Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is Reclamation's Drought Response Program

A. The new Drought Response Program supports a proactive approach to drought. It will provide assistance to water users for drought contingency planning, including consideration of climate change information and to take actions that will build long-term resiliency to drought. "Drought resiliency" refers to the capacity of a community to cope with and respond to drought.

Q. How is it different than what Reclamation was doing before?

A. Previously, Reclamation's drought funding was used almost exclusively for emergency response actions, including the construction of temporary facilities, hauling water and drilling wells. Under the new program, funding will be used for contingency planning, projects that mitigate the impacts of drought in advance of a crisis and emergency response.

Drought Contingency Planning

Q. What is drought contingency planning?

A. Drought contingency planning is defined by the National Drought Mitigation Center as "actions taken by individual citizens, industry, government, and others before drought occurs to reduce or mitigate impacts and conflicts arising from drought." The drought contingency planning process is structured to address the three following questions:

- How will we recognize the next drought in the early stages?
- How will drought affect us?
- How can we protect ourselves from the next drought?

Q. How will funding for drought contingency planning be allocated?

A. Reclamation will provide financial assistance on a competitive basis for applicants to develop a drought contingency plan or to update an existing plan.

Q. Where can I find the funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for drought contingency planning?

A. Please visit www.grants.gov and search for funding opportunity number R15AS00047.

Q. When will the funding opportunity close?

A. The deadline for applicants to submit proposals under the FOA is June 25, 2015 at 4:00 p.m..

Q. How long will we have to develop a drought contingency plan if we receive funding?

A. Two years from the date that the funding is awarded (approximately September 30, 2017).

Q. How much Federal funding can we request to develop or update a contingency plan?

A. Applicants may request up to \$200,000 in Federal funding per plan or plan update.

Q. Is a non-Federal cost share required for contingency plans?

A. Yes, a 50% non-Federal cost share contribution is required (including non-Federal funds, donations, contributions, and/or in-kind services). In limited cases, a cost-share reduction or waiver may be granted. Also, funds received by a Tribe under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, P.L. 93-638, may be used to meet the cost share requirement.

Q. What are the requirements for completing a drought contingency plan under the program?

A. Plans must address six required elements, including: (1) Drought monitoring; (2) vulnerability assessment, including consideration of climate change impacts; (3) mitigation actions; (3) response actions; (5) operational and administrative framework; and (6) plan update process. For more information about the requirements for drought contingency plans, please see section I.C. of the FOA.

Drought Resiliency Projects

Q. What are drought resiliency projects?

A. These are projects that increase water management flexibility, making water supplies more resilient to drought and climate change. Projects must meet one of the following goals:

- Increase the reliability of water supply and sustainability
- Improve water management and increase operational flexibility
- Implement systems to facilitate voluntary sale, transfer or exchange of water
- Provide benefits for fish and wildlife and the environment to mitigate the impacts of drought

Q. How will the funding be allocated?

A. Reclamation will provide financial assistance on a competitive basis for drought resiliency projects.

Q. Where can I find the FOA for drought resiliency projects?

A. Please visit www.grants.gov and search for funding opportunity number R15AS00046.

Q. When will the funding opportunity close?

A. The deadline for applicants to submit proposals under the FOA is June 25, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

Q. How long will we have to complete our project if we receive funding?

A. Two years from the date that the funding is awarded (approximately September 30, 2017).

Q. How much Federal funding can we request for a drought resiliency project, and is a non-Federal cost share required?

A. Applicants may request up to \$300,000 in Federal funding per project. Yes, a 50% non-Federal cost share contribution is required (including non-Federal funds, donations, contributions, and/or in-kind services). Also, funds received by a Tribe under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, P.L. 93-638, may be used to meet the cost share requirement. Applicants may submit multiple proposals but may only receive a total of up to \$300,000 per applicant.

Q. Do I need a drought contingency plan?

A. No, however, to be competitive, you must demonstrate that your proposed project is supported by an existing drought contingency plan. This may include a drought plan prepared by someone other than the applicant (e.g., an existing State, county, or municipal plan), so long as it relates to the project location.

Emergency Drought Funding

Q. What are emergency response actions?

A. They include temporary construction activities and other actions and other non-construction actions, including water purchases and use of Reclamation facilities to convey and store water, for example. (Funding to drill wells will be considered only under the Drought Resiliency Projects FOA.)

Q. Will you continue to fund emergency Response actions?

Reclamation will consider some emergency response actions, contingent on available funding. To be eligible, entities must be within a State or Tribe that has a current declaration of drought, or which has a drought plan on file with Congress.

For more information please visit www.usbr.gov/drought or contact Avra Morgan at 303-445-2906 or aomorgan@usbr.gov.