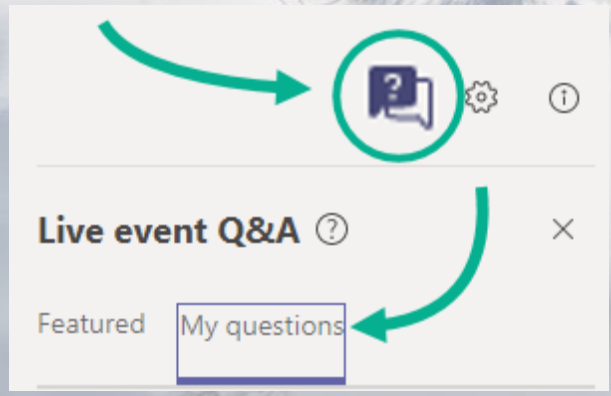
WaterSMART: Applied Science Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity Webinar

Getting Started

- To watch the recording, use the same link: Join Live Teams Event
- Attendees' cameras and microphones are muted
- A copy of the slides will be available on our website:

https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/appliedscience/

- Questions and comments can be posted in the Q&A icon on the bottom of the menu bar

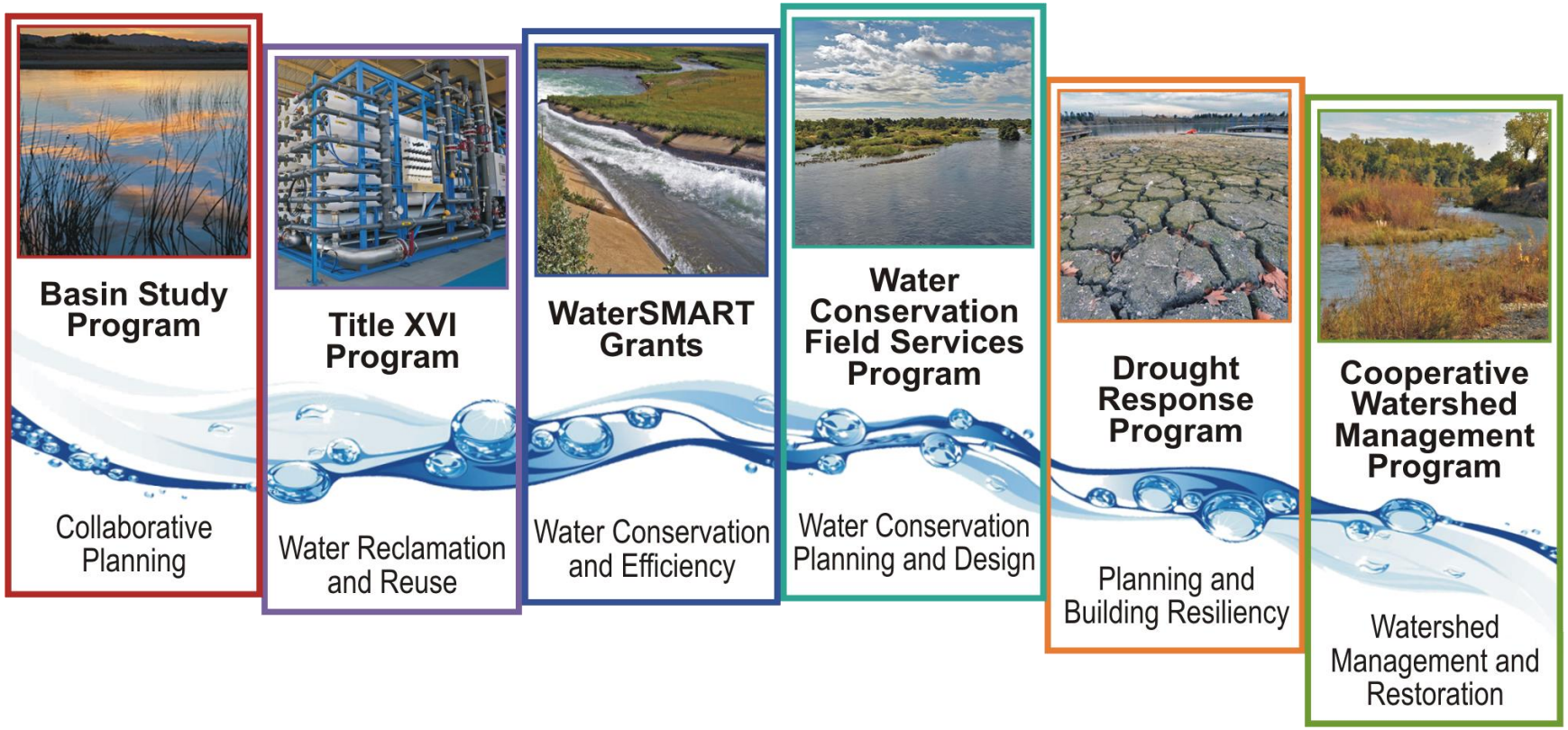


Agenda Overview

- WaterSMART Program Overview
- Basin Study Program Overview
- Applied Science Grants
  - Eligible Applicants and Eligible Project Types
  - Required Project Components
  - Evaluation Criteria
- Application Tips
- Financial Assistance
- Resources

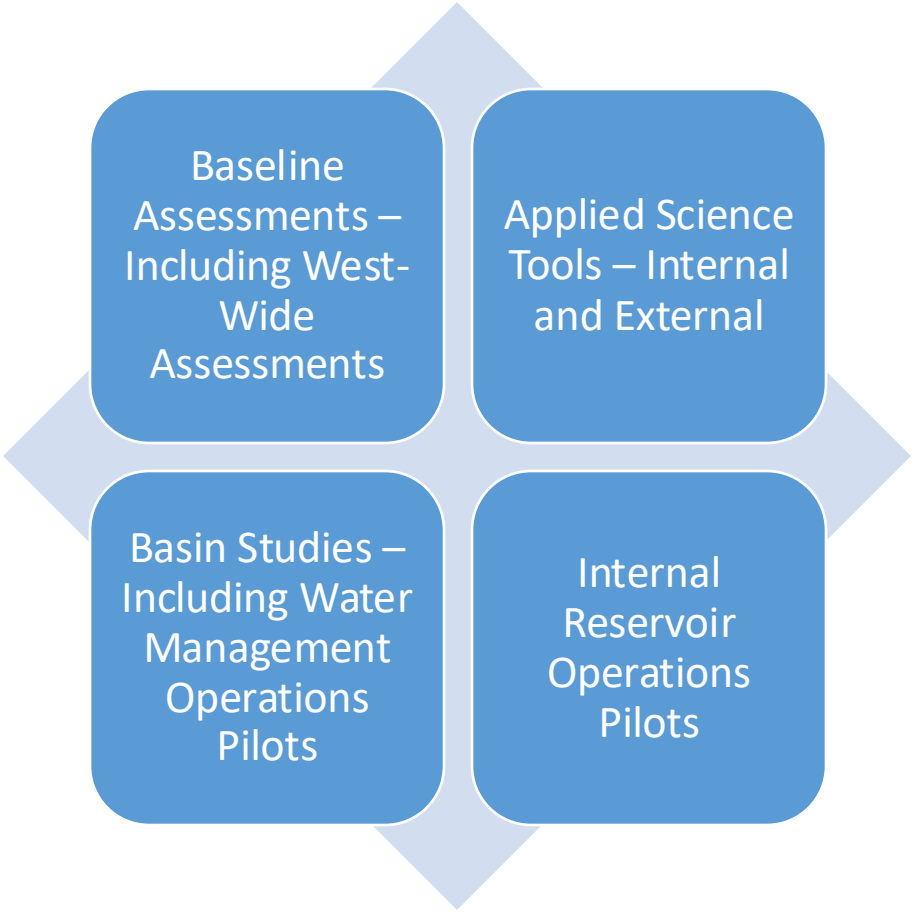
WaterSMART Program Overview

Provides a framework for Reclamation to support water supply reliability for multiple water users.



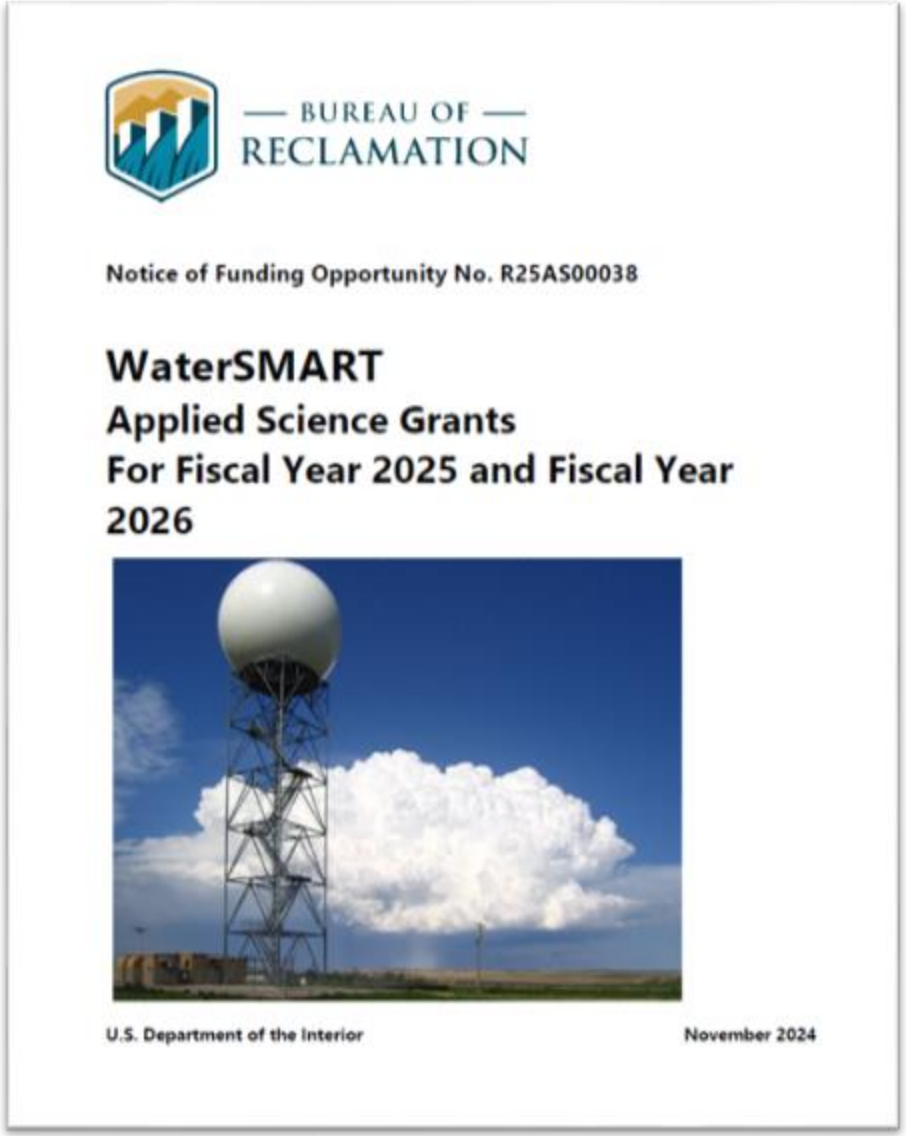
WaterSMART Basin Study Program

- Supports stakeholder-driven efforts to address imbalances between water supply and demand
- Provides applied science tools, guidance, and information to support water management planning throughout the West



Current Funding Opportunity

- Posted on grants.gov on December 12, 2024
  - R25AS00038
- First Round: Applications due March 11, 2025
- Second Round: Applications due February 10, 2026



Applied Science Grants – *Overview*

- Program Purpose: Cost-shared financial assistance for projects to develop hydrologic information, improve modeling and forecasting capabilities, and improve conditions of a natural or nature-based feature

- Program Objective: Results from these projects will be used by water managers to increase water supply reliability, provide flexibility in water operations, and improve water management

Applied Science Grants – *Award Information*

- Up to $400,000 in Federal funding per project
- Completed within 2 years
- 25% to 50% non-Federal cost share is required, depending on project type
- Anticipate approximately 15-25 awards, depending on the amount requested by each applicant and the amount of funding available

Cost-Share Requirements (Section C.2)

Projects that fit one of the eligible project types AND meet the requirements listed in this section are eligible for up to a 75-percent Federal cost-share contribution. To qualify for this cost share, the application must demonstrate that the project meets the following requirements:

a) Increasing water supply reliability for ecological values (e.g., improving the timing or quantity of water available or improving water quality or temperature);

b) Is being developed as part of a collaborative planning process that includes consideration of ecological values (note: If there is not a project-specific plan, the applicant may refer to an existing local, state or regional plan with a nexus to the project to satisfy this requirement).

This does not exclude projects that benefit ecological values AND agricultural, municipal, tribal, or recreational water uses

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

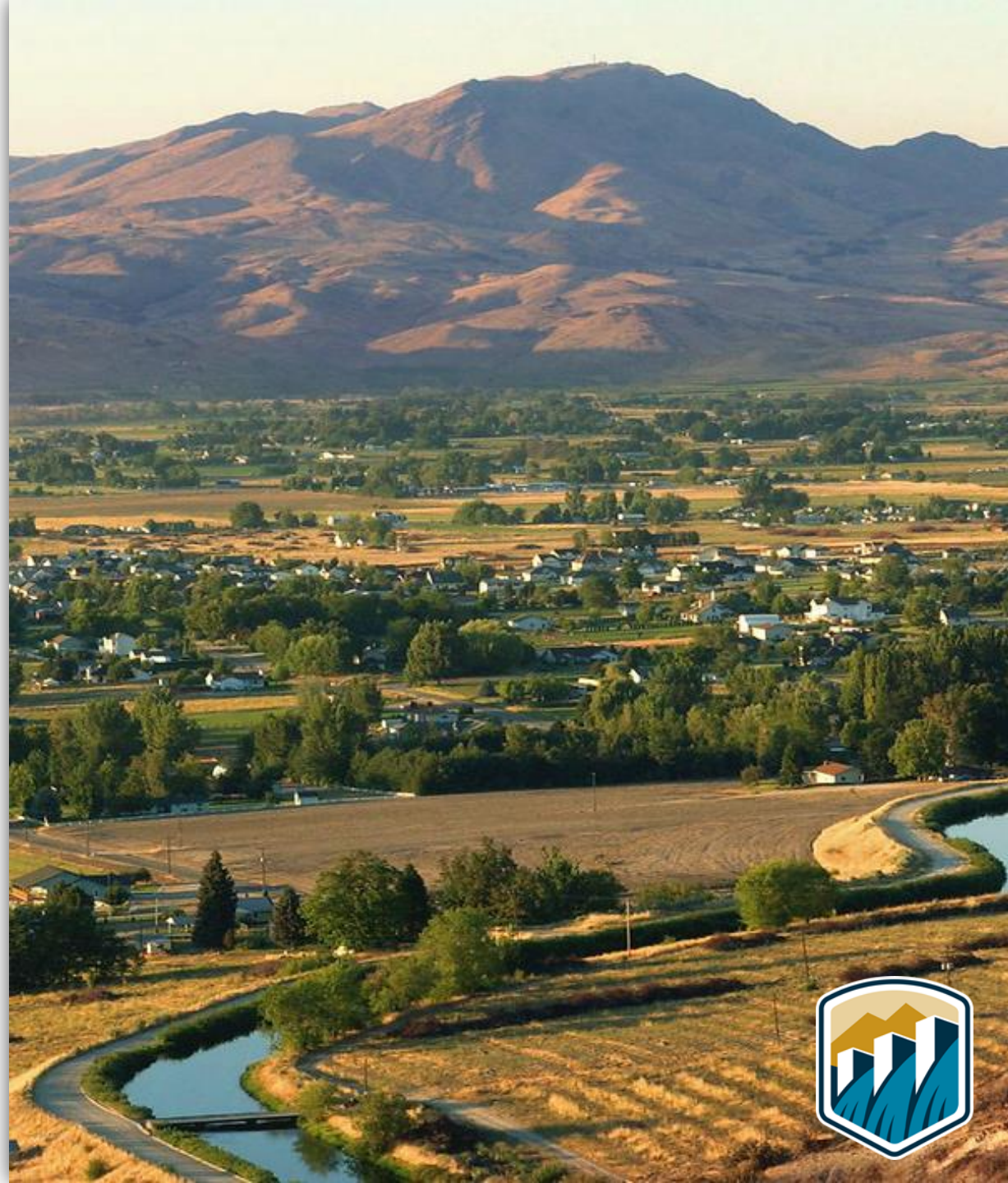
The Category A applicants must be located in the 17 Western States, Alaska, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, or Puerto Rico.

Category A

- States, Counties, Tribes, irrigation districts, and water districts;
- State, regional, or local authorities, whose members include one or more organizations with water or power delivery authority; and
- Other organizations with water or power delivery authority.

Category B

- Universities, nonprofit research institutions, nonprofit organizations, and federally-funded research and development centers that are acting in partnership and with the agreement of an entity described in Category A.
- All Category B applicants must be in the United States or the specific Territories identified above.
- 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.



Category B – Partnership Letter

Category B applicants should include with their application a letter from the Category A partner, stating that the Category A partner:

1. Is acting in partnership with the applicant;
2. Agrees to the submittal and content of the application; and
3. Intends to participate in the project in some way, for example, by providing input, feedback, or other support for the project.

Note: Partners do not necessarily need to contribute cost share funding.

Ineligible Applicants

- Federal Governmental Entities
- Individuals
- Commercial/industrial organizations
- Private entities
- 501(c)(6) Organizations

Applied Science Grants – *Project Eligibility*

Eligible Projects:

- To be eligible, projects must:
  - Be designed *for use* by water managers
  - Based on known and *available (mature) technologies, not* new or novel methods or technologies

- ***Support one or more water management objective(s):***
  - water supply reliability,
  - improved management of water deliveries,
  - water marketing activities,
  - drought management activities,
  - conjunctive use of ground and surface water,
  - water rights administration,
  - ability to meet endangered species requirements,
  - watershed health,
  - restore a natural features or use a nature-based feature to reduce water supply and demand imbalances or the risk of drought or flood, conservation and efficiency,
  - other improvements to water supply reliability

Applied Science Grants – *Project Type 1*

- Projects to enhance modeling capabilities to improve water supply reliability and increase flexibility in water operations
  - Improve hydrologic models, reservoir operations models, or groundwater models
  - Improve the spatial and temporal resolution of a model, model calibration, or improve interactivity to allow the model to answer specific questions
  - Modeling improvements help water managers meet requirements (e.g., endangered species, administrative, or water delivery requirements)
    - E.g., to improve water availability information, the Gulf Coast Water Authority will enhance their model to simulate streamflow losses, include drought curtailment triggers and incorporate delivery requirements.

Applied Science Grants – *Project Type 2*

- Projects to improve or adapt forecasting tools and technologies to enhance management of water supplies and reservoir operations
  - Develop or adapt forecasting tools to meet the needs of water managers.
    - E.g., with the Arkansas River Colors of Water Tool, the Colorado Water Conservation Board combined modeling and forecast information to create a communications platform showing water users the "color" (use or purpose) of water in the river in real-time and forecasted in the near term.
  - Adapt or improve existing forecasts to better meet operational needs.
    - Texas A&M University will improve seasonal streamflow forecasts for irrigation districts by incorporating remotely-sensed soil moisture data in areas lacking soil moisture monitoring networks.

Applied Science Grants – *Project Type 3*

- Projects to improve access to and use of water resources data, or to develop new types of data to inform water management decisions.
  - Improve data acquisition, data analysis and data delivery - i.e., incorporate or develop new or previously unavailable data such as remote sensing imagery, or paleo reconstructions of naturalized flows.
  - Develop hydrologic databases or decision support tools that resource managers can use to query or analyze data.
    - The City of Sierra Vista is developing a web-based hydrologic information portal to make data more accessible and useful to decision-makers.
  - Improve data delivery to make data available to a broader audience.

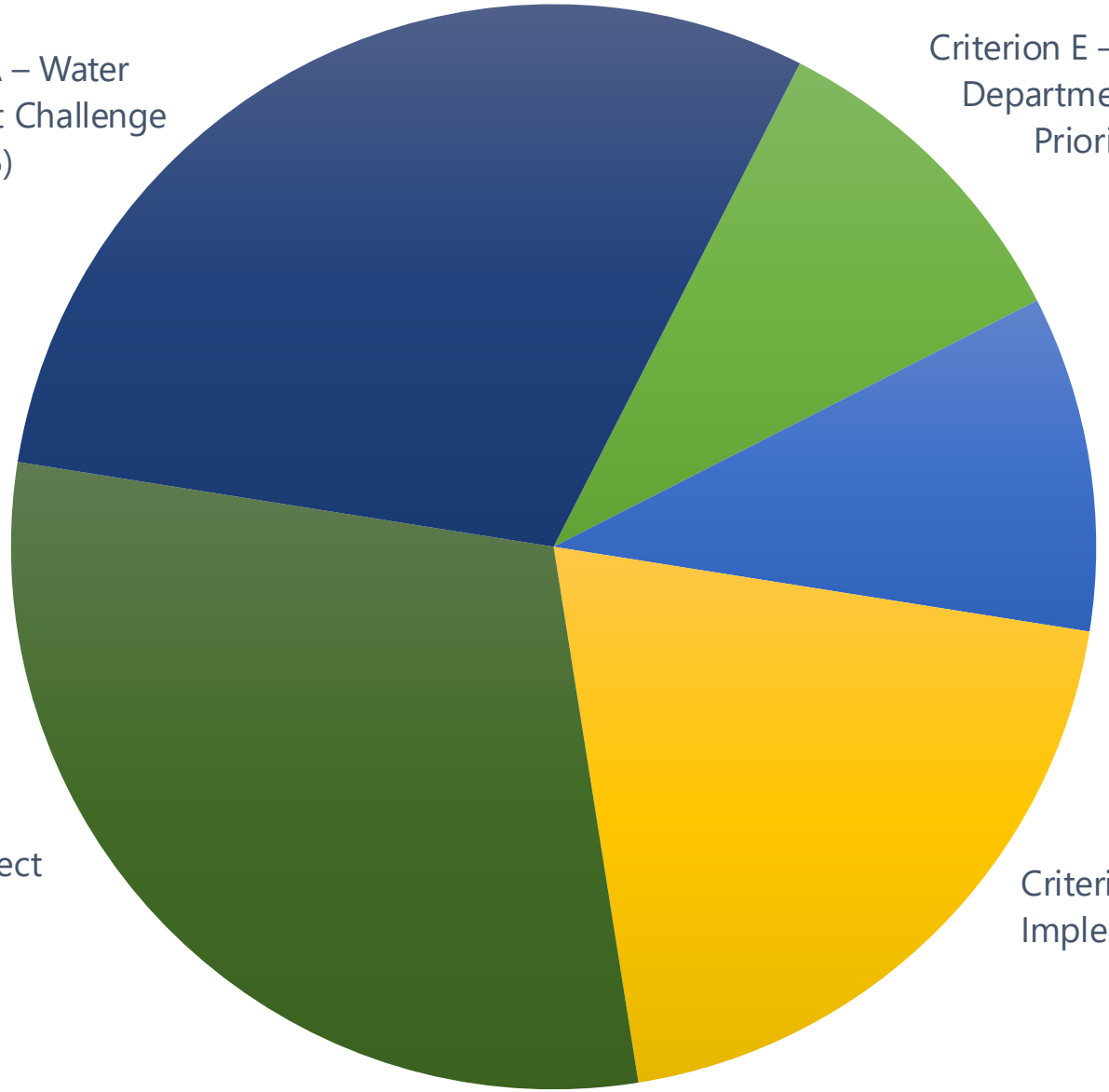
Applied Science Grants – *Project Type 4*

- **Projects to develop hydrologic information, water management tools, improve modeling and forecasting capabilities to increase water supply reliability as well as improving decision making for the implementation of nature-based solutions.**
- **Nature-based solutions are sustainable environmental management and practices that weave natural features or processes into the built environment to promote adaptation and resilience.**
  - In-stream restoration techniques like beaver dam analogs, large woody debris, artificial riffles, boulder placements, or post-assisted logs that mimic organic watershed elements to strategically improve flow regime or channel morphology.
  - Bank stabilization including grading or planting with native riparian vegetation to bolster a floodplain and increase thermal refugia to benefit aquatic life.
  - Upland wetlands restoration and stream re-channeling to increase aquifer recharge, sequester carbon, and promote longer watershed storage time.

Applied Science Grants – *Ineligible Projects*

- Projects to develop new and novel methods or technologies, i.e., “research” projects
- Planning studies such as feasibility studies, appraisal investigations, water strategies planning and drought contingency plans
- Water reuse, water recycling and desalination projects
- Construction projects to improve water management
- Projects considered normal operations, maintenance, and replacement (OM&R);
- Projects funded under other federal grants

Evaluation Criteria



Evaluation Criterion A – Water Management Challenge (25 points)

- Describe the water management challenge(s). Describe in detail the water management challenge is occurring within your project area.
- Describe the severity of the challenge to be addressed with supporting details.
- Describe the concerns or outcomes if this water management challenge is not addressed?
- What water management objectives does this project support and how?

Evaluation Criterion B – Project Benefits (25 points)

- Describe how the project was identified. Was the proposed project identified using a collaborative process with input from multiple and diverse stakeholders?
- Who will use the tool or data developed under this proposal and who will benefit from the project and how? Support could include but is not limited to letters from stakeholders expressing support for the project and explaining how they will benefit.
- How will the project improve water management decisions?
- Describe if the results of your project will be applicable elsewhere. What additional work would need to be done to make the project results transferable to others?
- Explain how your project complements other similar efforts in the area where the project is located.

Evaluation Criterion C – Project Implementation (20 points)

- Provide support for the chosen approach and methodology.
- Describe the work plan for implementing the proposed scope of work including schedule with milestones broken out for each task, start and end dates, and budget identifying costs for each task.
- Provide a summary description of the products that are anticipated to result from the project.
- Who will be involved in the project as project partners? What will each partner or stakeholder's role in the project be?
- Identify staff with appropriate experience and describe their qualifications.

Evaluation Criterion D – Dissemination of Results (15 points)

- Explain how project results will be disseminated, including:
  - Describe how the tools, frameworks, or analyses developed under the proposed scope of work will be disseminated, communicated, or made available to water resources managers who may be interested in the results.
  - Explain how the project results will be communicated internally or externally to interested stakeholders and interested water resources managers in the area, if appropriate.
  - Describe how the project results will be shared with other water managers in the West that could use the information to support water management objectives.

Evaluation Criterion E – Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (15 Points)

- Points will be awarded based on the extent that the project demonstrates support for the Biden-Harris Administration's priorities, including E.O. 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* and the President's memorandum, *Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to Nation Relationships*.
- Climate Change – Describe how project addresses climate change and increases in resilience.
- Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities – Describe how the project benefits those disadvantaged communities identified using the tool.
- Tribal Benefits - Describe how the project directly serves and/or benefits a Tribe, supports Tribally led conservation and restoration priorities.

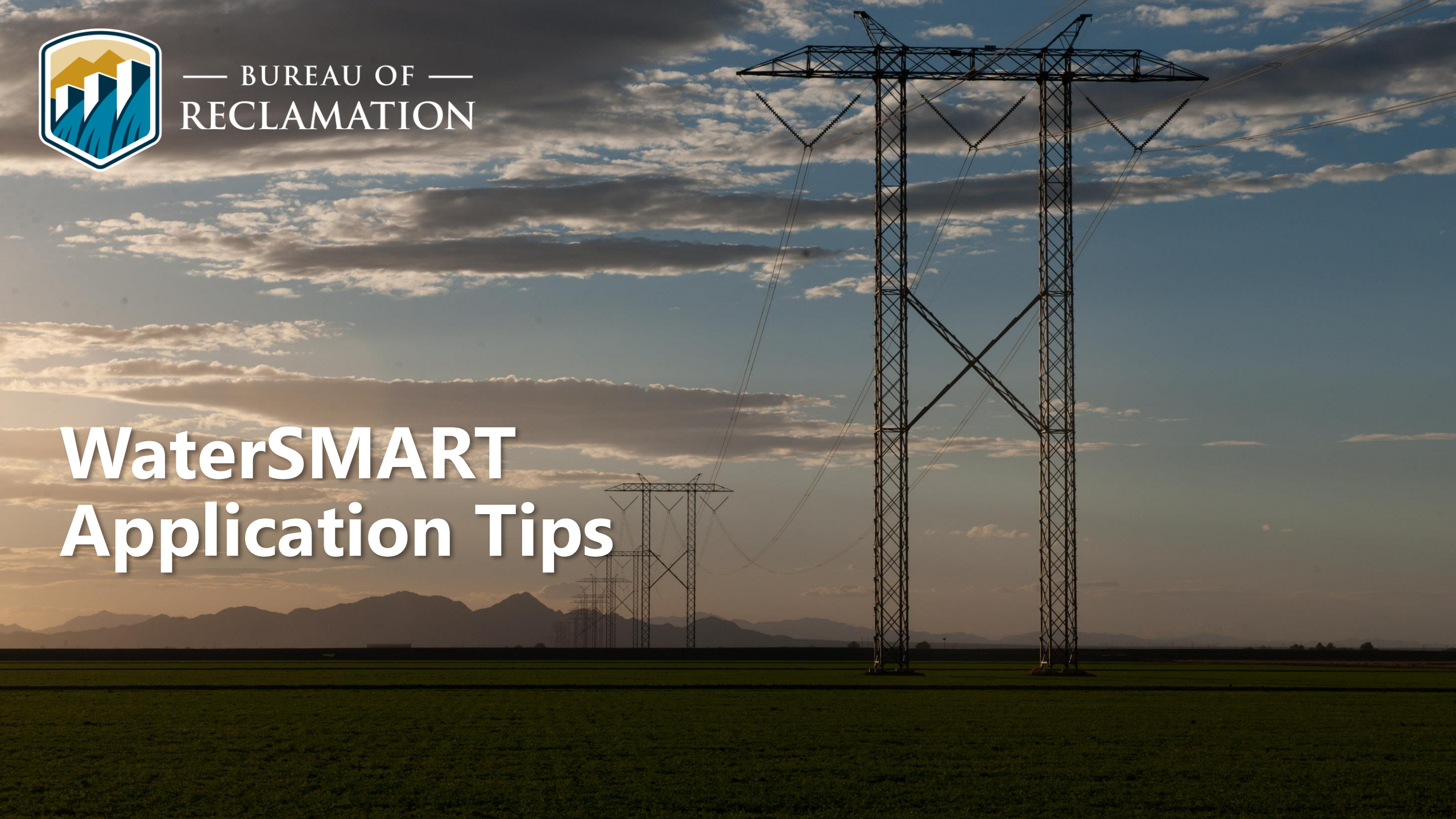
Note: *We urge applicants to utilize the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool to discover how communities in their project area may be classified as disadvantaged or underserved.* Explore the map - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (geoplatform.gov)

Applied Science Grants – *Required Project Components*

- Recipients are required to submit a final project report describing project accomplishments, final results of identified tasks, and any lessons learned.

- Recipients may be asked to participate in a Reclamation-sponsored webinar.

- Webinar may be open to the public as a webinar and may be made available on the WaterSMART website.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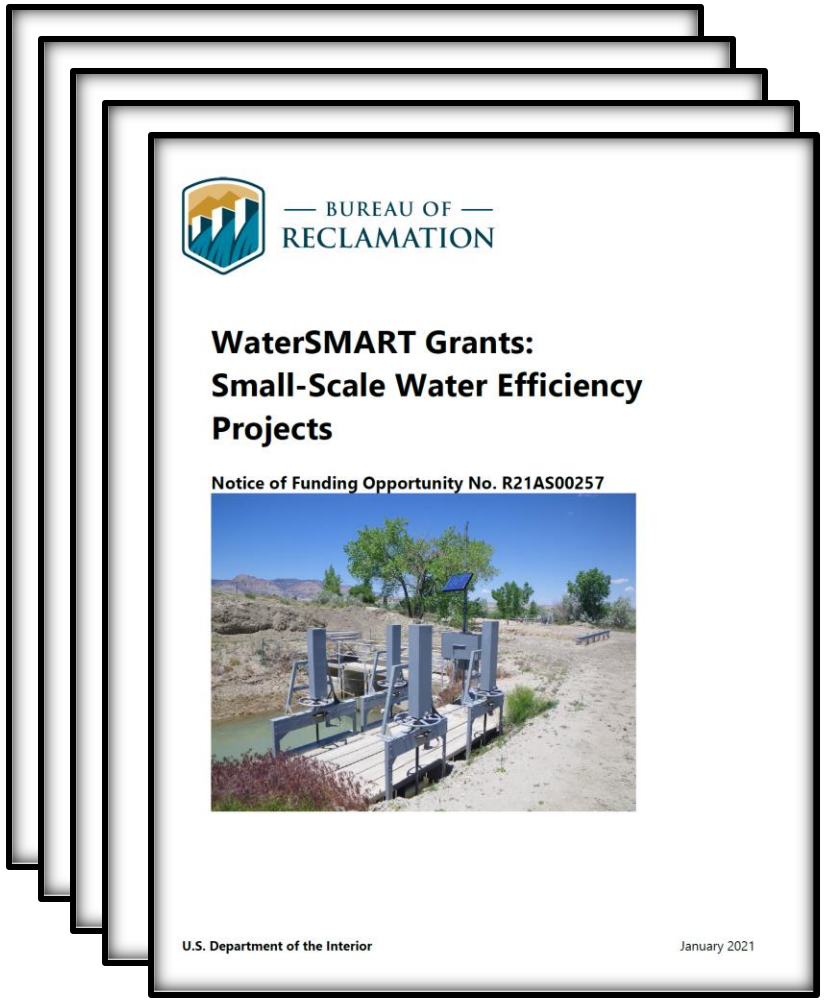
Application Tips

General Application Tips

- The most successful projects are those that fit well with the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
- Review the objective of the NOFO, the eligible project types and the evaluation criteria carefully to choose the right NOFO.
- <u>Suggested Pre-Application Actions:</u>
  - Contact the Program Coordinator to discuss any questions about your project fit or applicant eligibility.
  - Look at past successful applications at www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART



Application Tips

General Considerations

- Important: Read ***everything*** in the NOFO!
  - Ask questions if something does not make sense.
- Give yourself plenty of time to write and submit the proposal.
- Do not assume the Application Review Committee knows you.
  - Committee is comprised of Reclamation staff from throughout the Western states.
- If your application is not awarded, ask for a debriefing to help prepare better proposal next year.

Application Tips

Evaluation Criteria

- Make sure you respond to every criterion and every sub-criterion
- Your responses should:
  - Directly respond to the criterion – We recommend you copy and paste the criteria directly into your proposal and place your response immediately below each criterion/sub-criterion
  - Provide support in the form of quantification or citations to reference documents
  - Make the case for how your project meets the criterion – general statements without explanation or support will not score well
- <u>Application Tip:</u> Well-supported responses to the evaluation criteria are the key to writing a competitive proposal

Application Tips

Environmental and Cultural Resource Compliance

- All projects funded through this opportunity must comply with Federal environmental and cultural resources laws and regulations. Reclamation regional and area office staff will ensure compliance. This compliance must occur prior to any ground-disturbing activities taking place.

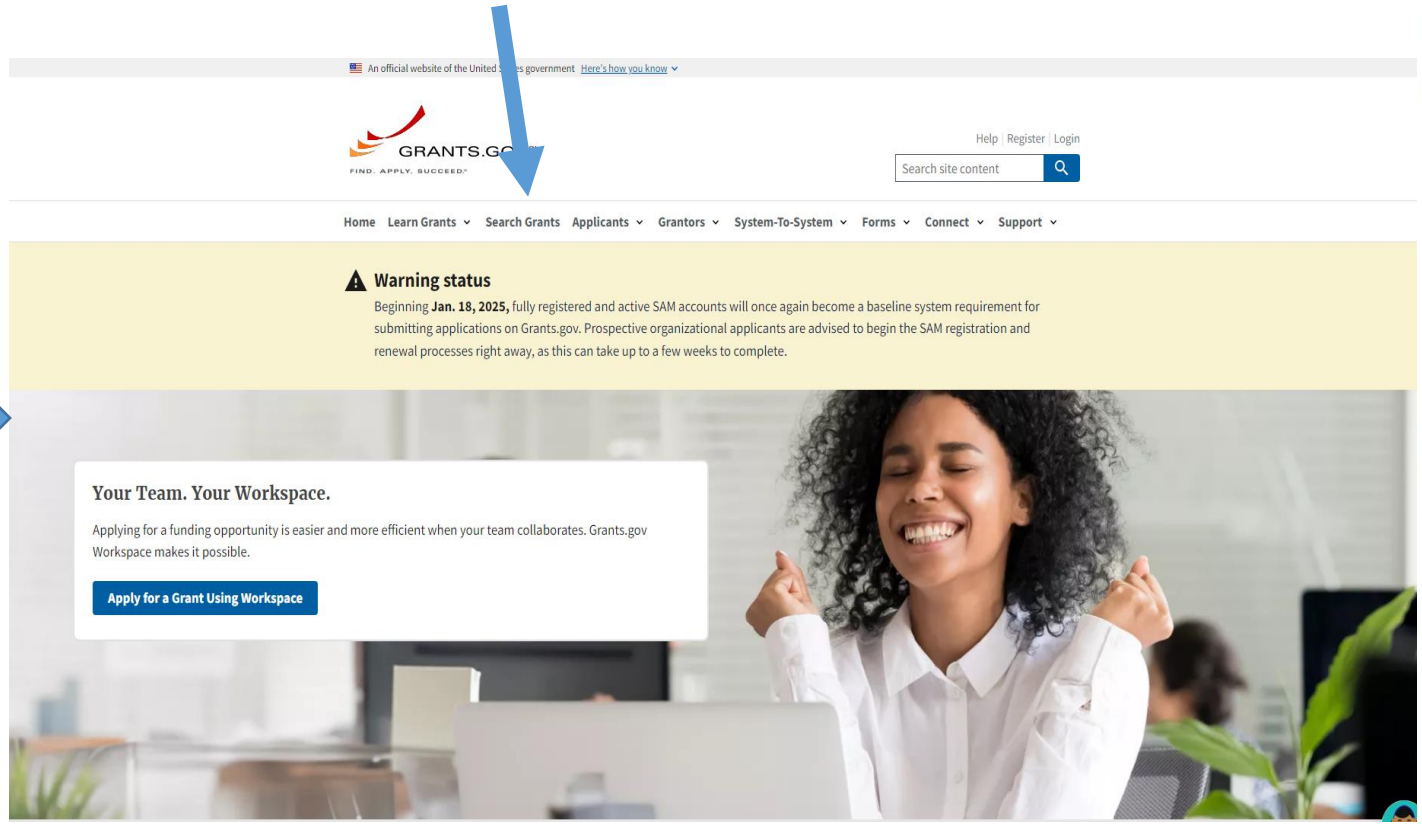
WaterSMART Financial Assistance Requirements

Application Tips

Where to Start

Start at www.grants.gov

Search for opportunity R25AS00038



Reclamation partnered with grants.gov to bring you this webinar to help familiarize yourself with the site and to provide an overview of how to submit a grant application. View the Powerpoint

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R25AS00038

WaterSMART Applied Science Grants

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Reclamation

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SYNOPSIS | VERSION HISTORY | RELATED DOCUMENTS | PACKAGE

General Information

Document Type:	Grants Notice	**Version:**	Synopsis 2
Funding Opportunity Number:	R25AS00038	**Posted Date:**	Dec 12, 2024
Funding Opportunity Title:	WaterSMART Applied Science Grants	**Last Updated Date:**	Dec 16, 2024
Opportunity Category:	Discretionary	**Original Closing Date for Applications:**	Feb 10, 2026 Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m., MST, on the listed application due date.Applications must be submitted no later than this due date and time. 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 the Grants.gov application system. Note that difficulties related to an applicant's Grants.gov profile
Opportunity			

Financial Assistance – Role

Role of Financial Assistance staff

- Answer questions about financial assistance requirements during the application process (e.g., registration in ASAP, UEI and SAM.GOV, budget requirements, etc.)
- Conduct Initial Screening and remove applications that do not meet the objective of this NOFO.
- Notify Applicants of Application status based on the contact information provided on the SF-424

Financial Assistance – Initial Screening

Per the NOFO Initial Screening requirements in Section E.2.1, all application packages will be screened to ensure that:

- The applicant meets the completeness and eligibility requirements stated in this NOFO.
- The applicant meets the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM registration requirements stated in this NOFO.
- The application meets the content requirements of the NOFO package, including submission of a technical proposal, responses to the evaluation criteria, budget proposal, and budget narrative.
- The application contains properly executed mandatory forms SF-424, Application for Financial Assistance and SF-424B/D, Assurances Form, a completed SF-424A/C, Budget Information Form, and Certification Regarding Lobbying.

Financial Assistance – Selection Notification

- *Once Initial screening is complete, Ineligible applicants will be notified and Eligible applicants will move on to the Merit Review*
  - An applicant that has submitted an application that is determined to be ineligible for funding will be notified along with other applicants, or sooner, if possible.
- *After the applicant is informed of being selected, Reclamation and the applicant will enter into a financial assistance agreement*
  - The financial assistance agreement (Grant or Cooperative) will document the project scope of work, budget, milestones, and reporting requirements.

Budgets

- Project scope and budget should align! Reviewers will consider whether the budget is reasonable to complete the scope described in the technical project description.
- A Descriptive Budget Narrative must also be submitted with application showing both Federal and non-Federal Costs.
- Consider inflation when developing your budget.

Intellectual Property, Intangible Property, and Data Availability References

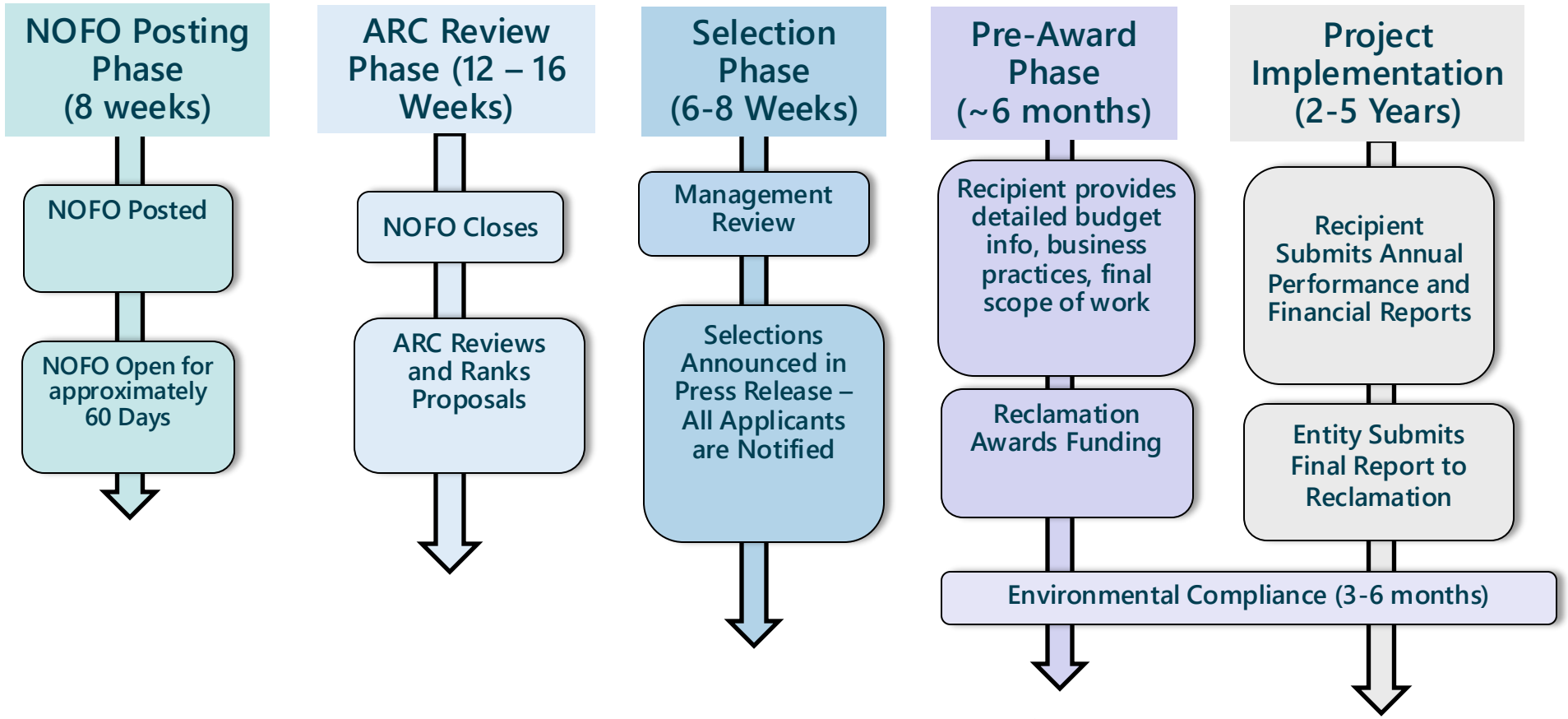
- Intellectual Property, Intangible Property, and Data Availability are possible factors in projects selected for Applied Science Grants
- Software, models, and other products developed within a Federal Agreement retain a Federal interest in those products
- Data Availability is that data produced with a Federal Agreement requires the data to be available to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under a Federal award as well as authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for Federal purposes
- Intangible Property and Data Availability 2 CFR 200.315
- 35 USC Ch. 18 Patent Rights in Inventions made with Federal Assistance
- Intellectual Property 2 CFR 200.448

Overview of Reclamation's WaterSMART Process

From NOFO to Selection

WaterSMART Selection Process

Sample schedule



From NOFO Posting to Award of Funding = 12 - 14 Months

Important Dates

NOFO Deadline:

Round 1: March 11, 2025

Round 2: February 10, 2026

Anticipated Announcement Timeframe:

Round 1: August 2025

Round 2: July 2026

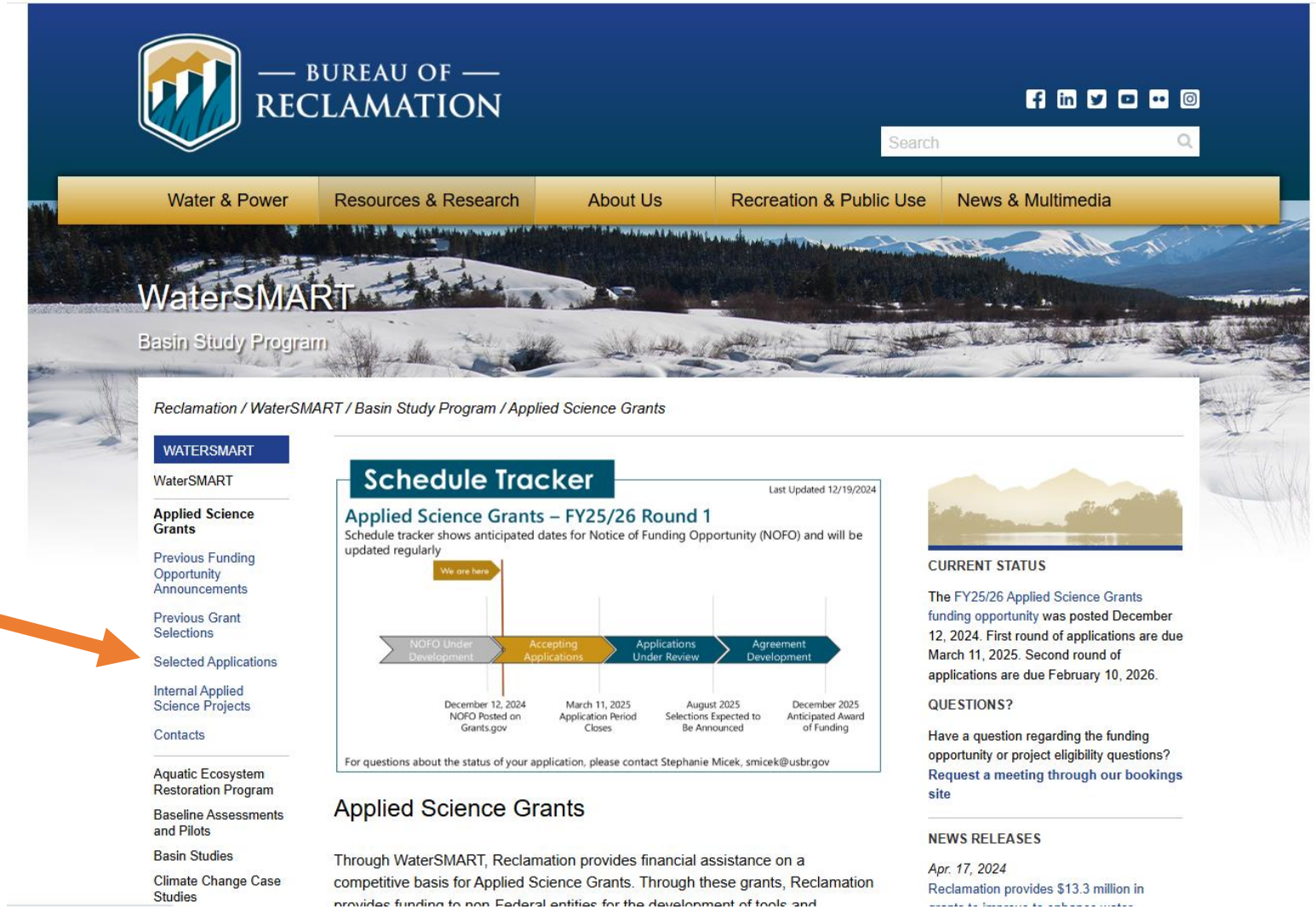
Anticipated Award Date:

Round 1: December 2025

Round 2: November 2026

Additional Opportunities, Tools and Resources

View Successful Applications Online



Helpful Tools

WaterSMART Program Data Portal

- On the portal, you can find information about recently awarded projects, BIL Funding, useful data visualizations, and interactive maps.

WaterSMART Data Portal:

https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/bf5c5357e7044e0c80d5a55788d1db34/

WaterSMART Data Visualization Tool:

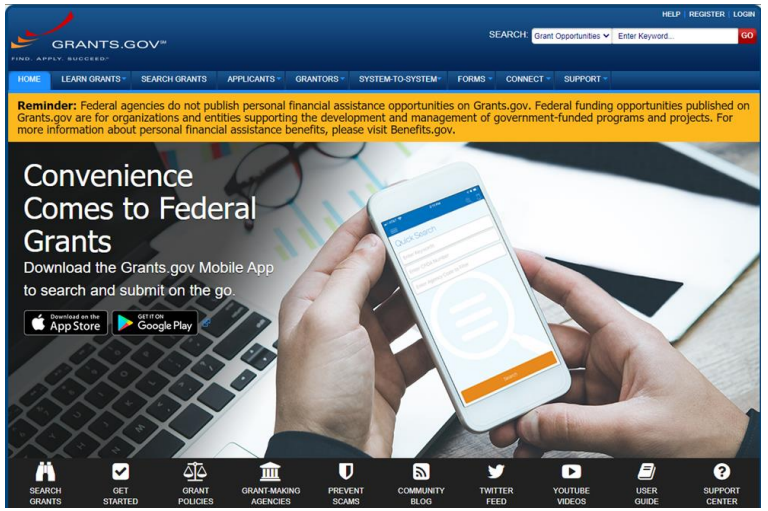
http://arcg.is/1TcT68S

WaterSMART Program Resources

For General Information and for help using grants.gov: https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/

For information about upcoming WaterSMART Funding Opportunities, you may sign up for our mailing list .

To find and apply for Funding Opportunities: www.grants.gov



Additional Resources

Climate Mapping and Resilience and Adaptation: https://resilience.climate.gov/

Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool: https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5

Thank you!

If you have questions regarding applicant and project eligibility, program requirements, or the evaluation criteria, click here and select Applied Science Inquiry to schedule a time to talk with the program coordinators.

Program Contacts: Questions regarding project and applicant eligibility

Stephanie Micek; smicek@usbr.gov; (720)799-3158

Drew Manning; amanning@usbr.gov; (303)445-2730

Grants Management Specialist: Questions regarding budgets and system requirements

Nate Moeller; nmoeller@usbr.gov; (208)378-5211

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