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# WaterSMART: Applied Science Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity Webinar

# Getting Started

- A copy of the slides and a recording will be available on our website after the webinar:  
[www.usbr.gov/watersmart/](http://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/)
- Attendees' cameras and microphones are muted

- Questions and comments can be posted through the Q&A icon at the top of the Teams event.



# Current Funding Opportunity

- Reclamation posted on grants.gov on March 5
  - R25AS00280
- First Round: Applications due July 8, 2026
- Second Round: Applications due April 13, 2027

## WaterSMART: Applied Science Grants



**Agency:** Bureau of Reclamation

[Assistance Listings](#): 15.557 -- Applied Science Grants

Last Updated: March 6, 2026

[View version history on Grants.gov](#)

### Description

[Jump to all documents](#)

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 and implement actions to increase water supply and hydropower reliability. The WaterSMART Program demonstrably advances Trump administration priorities, such as those identified in Presidential Executive Order 14154 (January 20, 2025): Unleashing American Energy (E.O. 14154) and Secretarial Order 3418, and aligns with other priorities and requirements, such as those identified in Presidential Executive Order 14332 (August...

▼ Show full description

**Closing:** July 8, 2026

First application July 8, 2026, at 5:00pm MDT  
Second application : April 13, 2027, 5:00PM MDT

#### Application process

This site is a work in progress. Go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) to apply, track application status, and subscribe to updates.

[View on Grants.gov](#)



# Applied Science Grants: *Overview*

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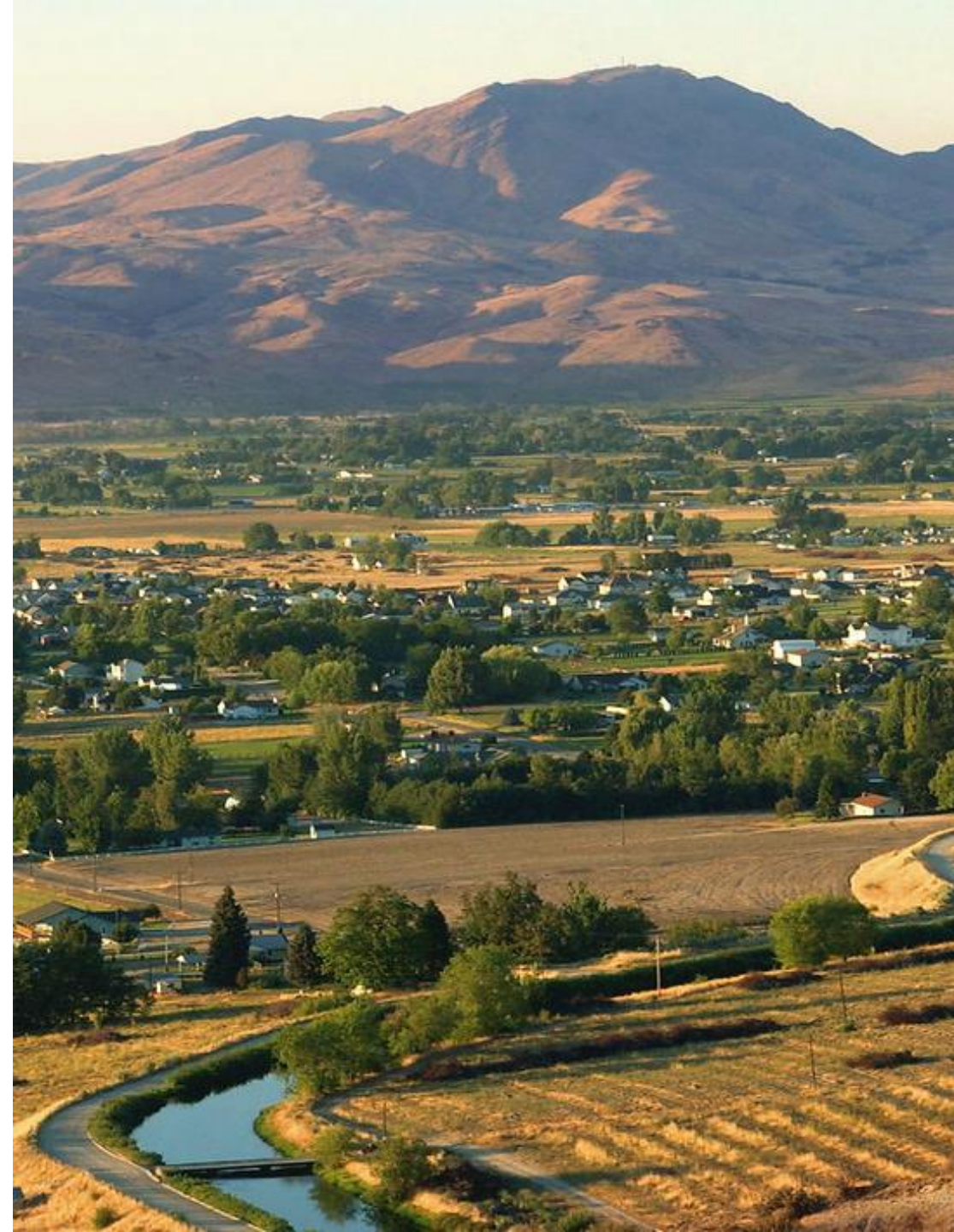
- **Program Purpose:** Cost-shared financial assistance for projects to develop hydrologic information, improve modeling, and enhance water supply forecasts
- **Program Objective:** Results from these projects will be used by water managers to increase water supply reliability, provide flexibility in water operations, and improve water management



# Applied Science Grants: *Award Information*

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- Up to \$400,000 in Federal funding per project
- Completed within 2 years
- 50% non-Federal cost share is required
- Anticipate approximately 7-15 awards per round, depending on the amount requested by each applicant and the amount of funding available



# Applicant Eligibility

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## 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.
  - 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 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

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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

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- Federal Governmental Entities
- Individuals
- Commercial / Industrial organizations
- Private entities



# Applied Science Grants: *Project Eligibility*

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## 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 management objectives:***

- Increase water yield
- Ensure water supply reliability
- Improve water deliveries
- Improve drought management
- Flexibility in water operations
- Enhance water supply forecast skill
- Improve watershed health

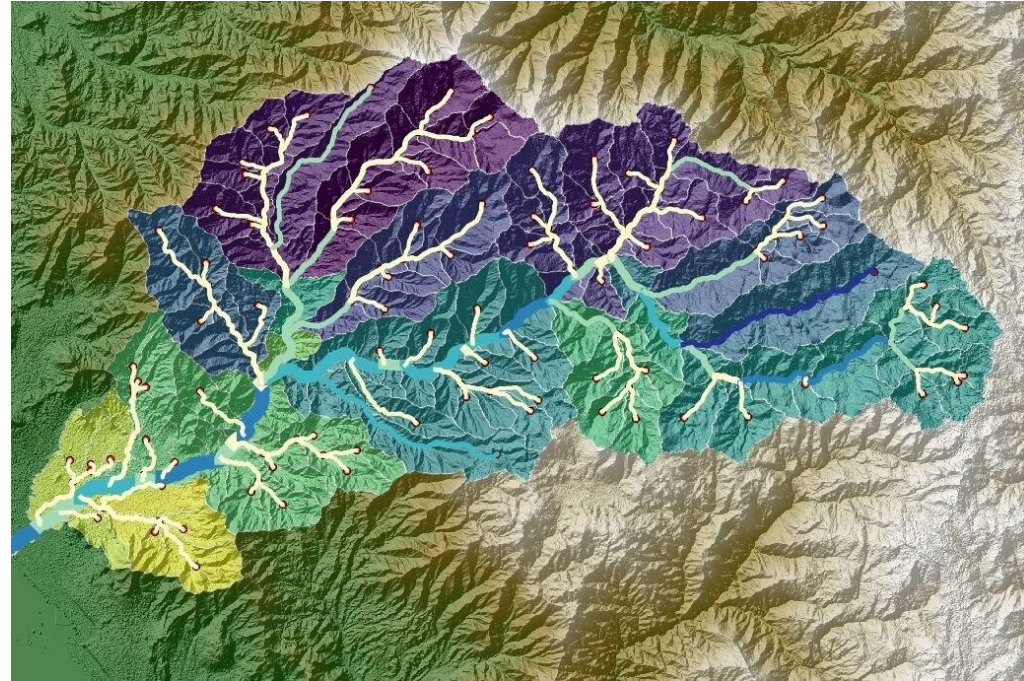


# Applied Science Grants – *Project Type 1*

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## Modeling

- Enhance models 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



# Applied Science Grants – *Project Type 2*

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## Forecasting

- Projects to develop, improve, or adapt forecasting tools and technologies to enhance management of water supplies and reservoir operations



# Applied Science Grants – *Project Type 3*

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## Enhancing Water Supply Forecasting with Snow Measurement Data

- Enhancements of water supply forecasts using snow monitoring technologies.
- Use of information from snow measurement technologies, such as aerial light detection and ranging (LiDAR) snow surveys, in snowpack volume estimation and water supply forecasting.
- Projects could include but are not limited to integration of snow survey data into hydrological or statistical forecast models.
- Must demonstrate how the forecast or data will be used to enhance management of water supplies.



# Applied Science Grants – *Project Type 4*

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## Data

- 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.
- Improve data delivery to make data available to a broader audience.



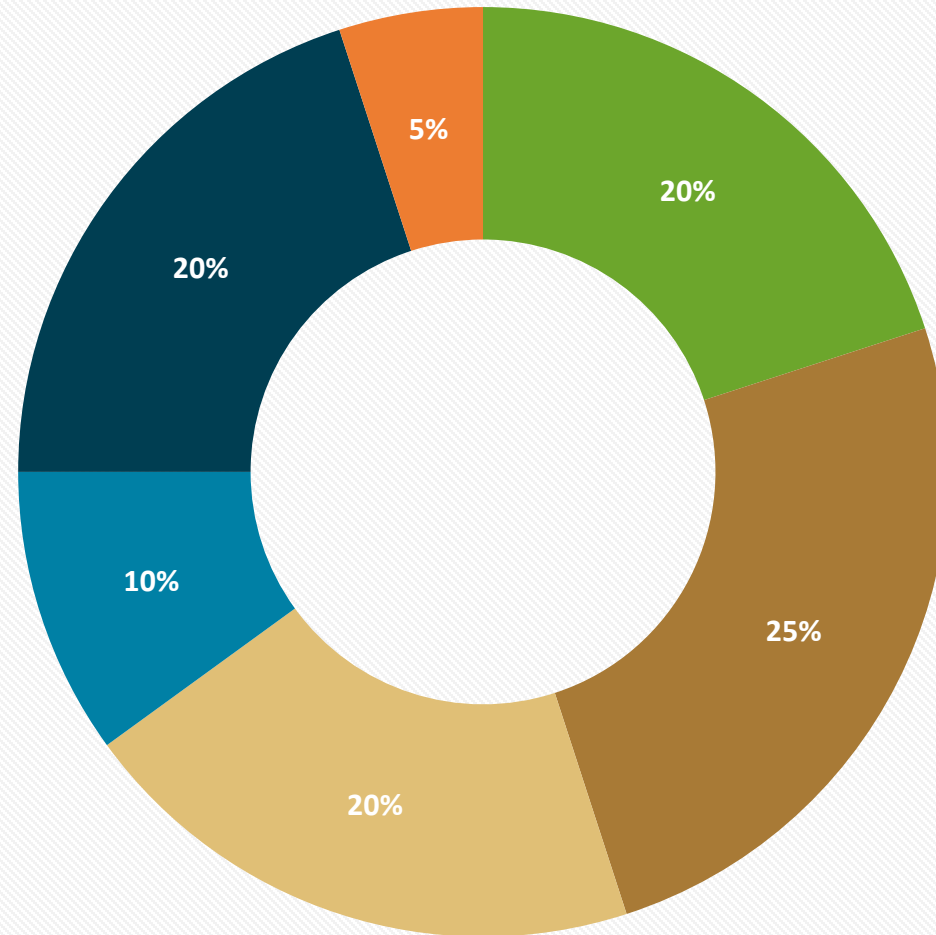
# Applied Science Grants – *Ineligible Projects*

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- 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;
- Projects funded under other federal grants
- Conducting and collecting new snow measurements, such as aerial LiDAR surveys (however, this is eligible under Reclamation’s Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program funding opportunity – R25AS00210)



# Merit Review Criteria



■ Criterion A. Water Management Challenge

■ Criterion C. Project Implementation

■ Criterion E. Presidential and Department of Interior Priorities

■ Criterion B. Project Benefits

■ Criterion D. Dissemination of Results

■ Criterion F. Cost-Share Priority



# Evaluation Criterion A

## Water Management Challenge (20 points)

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- Describe the water management problem that the proposed project is trying to address. Describe in detail the problem that is occurring within your project area.
- Describe the severity of the problem to be addressed with supporting qualitative and quantitative details.
- What are the consequences if the problem remains unaddressed.



# Evaluation Criterion B

## Project Benefits (25 points)

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- How will the project improve water management decisions?
- Describe, in detail, the benefits that can be expected to occur upon completion and implementation of the project and provide qualitative and quantitative support for your responses.
- Describe if the results of your project will be applicable elsewhere.
- Explain how your project complements other similar efforts in the area where the project is located.
- Describe how the benefits will be assessed and verified.
- Provide an estimate of the cost per acre-foot of water created, conserved, or delivered as a result of the proposed activity, if applicable.



# Evaluation Criterion C

## Project Implementation (20 points)

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- Describe and 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.
- Provide information on quality assurance / quality control practices that will be used to ensure the technical and scientific integrity of the tools or products.
- Who will be involved in the project as project partners and what are the roles?
- Identify staff with appropriate experience and describe their qualifications.



# Evaluation Criterion D

## Dissemination of Results (10 points)

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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 & Department of Interior Priorities (20 points)

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- Advances the Trump Administration's priorities, including E.O. 14154: Unleashing American Energy, justifies alignment with priorities and requirements in E.O. 14332: Improving Oversight in Federal Grantmaking;
- Includes primary project elements that develop, demonstrate, and or implement artificial intelligence (AI) technologies that advance the Trump Administration and Department of Interior's priorities for AI, including OMB M-25-21 Accelerating the Use of AI through Innovation, Governance, and Public Trust; S.O. 3444: Leading Interior's Path to Artificial Intelligence Transformation;
- Aligns with Secretary Burgum's strategic objectives, including those identified in S.O.s 3417: Addressing the National Energy Emergency, 3418 Unleashing American Energy, 3419 Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis;
- Aligns with goals and objectives in the U.S. Department of the Interior FY 2026-2030 Strategic Plan;
- Supports water management and enhanced operational flexibility in Reclamation States, with priority given to the Colorado River Basin, which is experiencing long-term drought conditions.

**Please address only those priorities that are applicable to your project. All priorities will be given equal consideration.**



# Evaluation Criterion F

## Cost Share Priorities (5 points)

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- Points may be awarded to proposals that include non-Federal cost share contributions exceeding the statutory minimum (50%) by at least 5 percent. Projects with a higher non-Federal cost share may be awarded more points.
- $\text{Non-Federal Funding} / \text{Total Project Cost} = \%$
- See Cost Sharing Requirement and Budget Narrative for more information on cost-share requirements and eligible costs.



# Applied Science Grants – *Required Project Components*

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- 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.





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# WaterSMART Application Tips



# Application Tips

## *General Considerations*

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- 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.
  - Look at past successful applications at [www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART](http://www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART)
- Do not assume the Application Review Committee knows you.
  - Committee is comprised of Reclamation staff from throughout the Western states.



# Application Tips

## *Evaluation Criteria*

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- 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
- **Application Tip:** Well-supported responses to the evaluation criteria are the key to writing a competitive proposal



# Application Tips

## *Environmental and Cultural Resource Compliance*

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- All projects funded through WaterSMART funding opportunities must comply with Federal environmental and cultural resources laws and regulations. This compliance must occur prior to any ground-disturbing activities taking place.
- We highly recommend you discuss your project with compliance staff at your local Reclamation regional or area office. If you are uncertain who to contact, please contact the Program Coordinator.





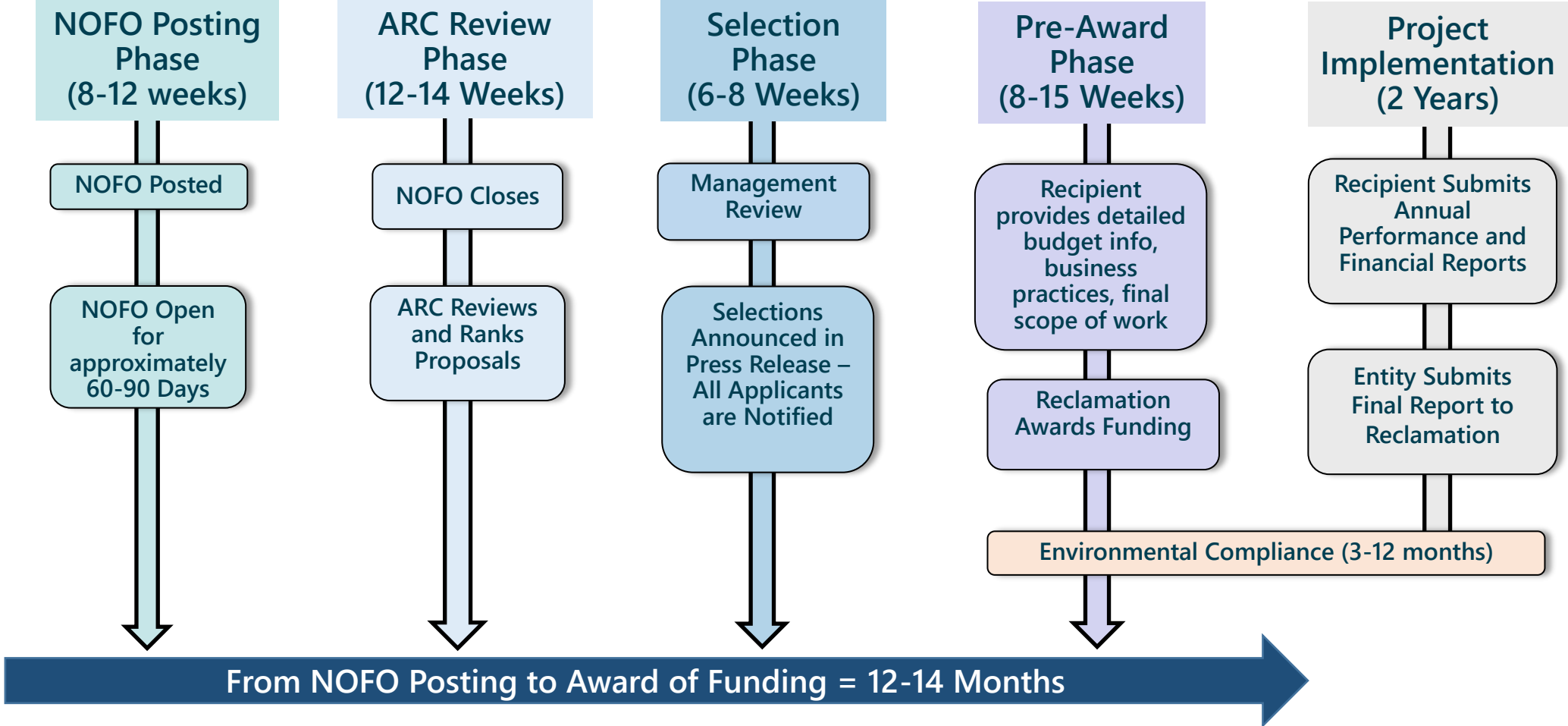
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# Overview of Reclamation's WaterSMART Process

*From NOFO to Selection*

# WaterSMART Selection Process

## Sample schedule



# Important Dates

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	<b>NOFO Deadline</b>	<b>Announcement</b>	<b>Award</b>
<b>Round 1:</b>	July 8, 2026	December 2026	July 2027
<b>Round 2:</b>	April 13, 2027	September 2027	April 2028





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# WaterSMART Financial Assistance Requirements

# Pre-award Documentation

*What to expect if selected for funding*

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You may be asked to provide:

- Additional budget clarifications
- Pre-award system survey (if no audit is required) or single audit if not available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse
- Cost-share documentation
- Explanation of requested pre-award costs
- All reports up to date on other Reclamation awards



# Financial Assistance (FA) Office

## *Primary Role of the FA Office*

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- Answer questions about financial assistance requirements during the application process
- Conduct Initial Screening and remove applications that do not meet the completeness, eligibility and timeliness for submission requirements of the NOFO.
- Notify Applicants of Application status based on the contact information provided on the SF-424 Form



# Before you Begin

*Register in SAM.gov*

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## Account Set Up

- “Sign Up” in Sam.gov (Login.gov)
- Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- [Register Entity in SAM.gov](#)
- [Entity Registration Checklist](#)
- If you have difficulties – document communications with help desk.
- Include communications with your application

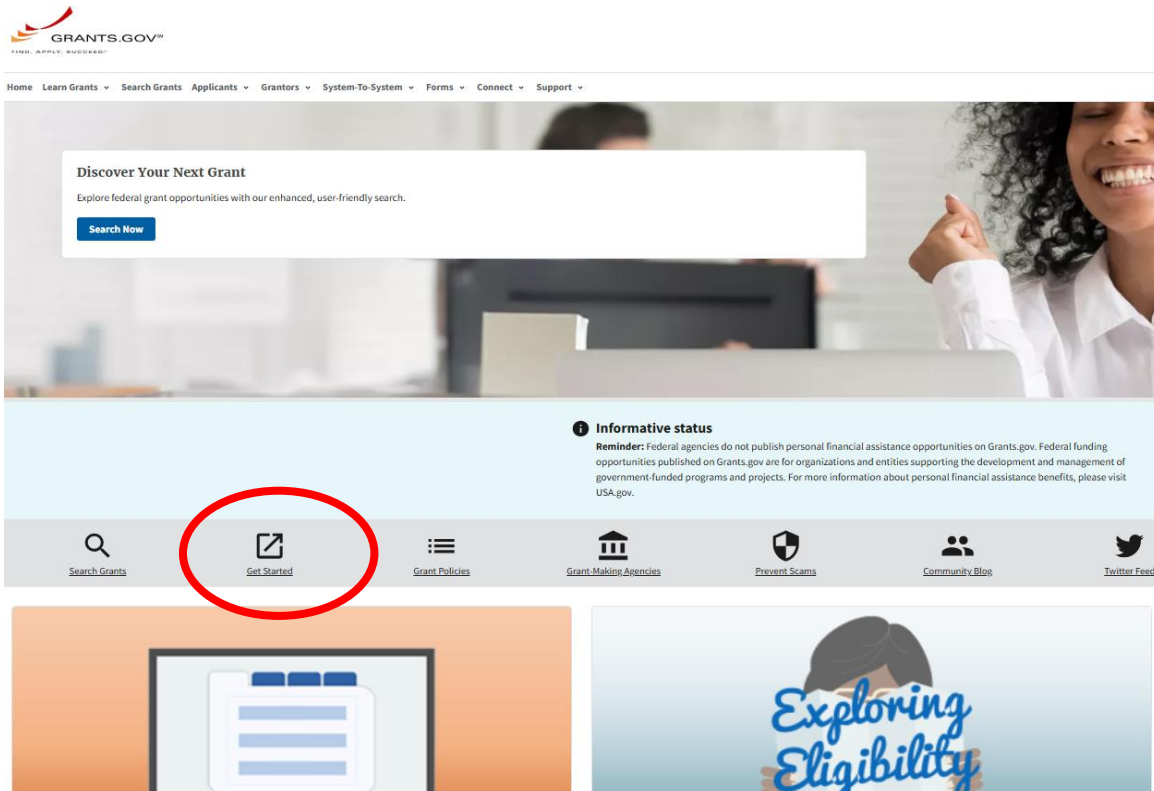
NOTE: For all new registrants, creating the account with SAM.gov may take up to several weeks for the account to be approved and considered as ACTIVE!



# Before you Begin

## Register in Grants.gov

- [Get Started | GRANTS.GOV](#)
- [Applicant Registration | GRANTS.GOV](#)



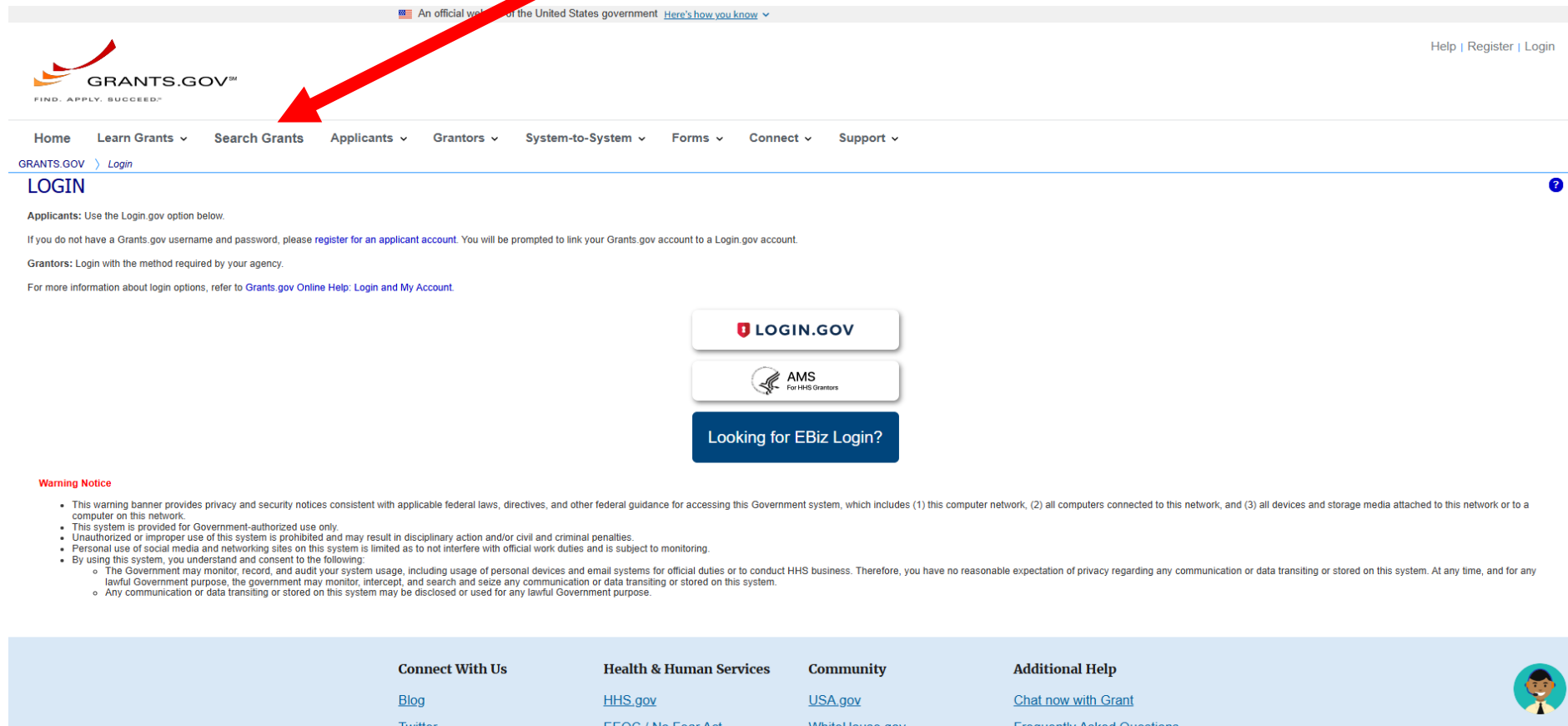
The screenshot shows the Grants.gov homepage. At the top left is the logo with the tagline "FIND. APPLY. SUCCEED.". A navigation menu includes links for Home, Learn Grants, Search Grants, Applicants, Grantors, System-To-System, Forms, Connect, and Support. The main content area features a "Discover Your Next Grant" section with a search bar and a "Search Now" button. Below this is an "Informative status" section with a reminder about personal financial assistance. The footer contains several icons: Search Grants, Get Started (circled in red), Grant Policies, Grant-Making Agencies, Prevent Scams, Community Blog, and Twitter Feed. At the bottom, there are two large banners: one with a calendar icon and another titled "Exploring Eligibility" with a person's head and shoulders.



# How to Apply

Start at [www.GRANTS.gov](http://www.GRANTS.gov)

Select the search feature, you will be rerouted to [Simpler.Grants.gov](http://Simpler.Grants.gov)



An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) ▾

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GRANTS.GOV > Login

## LOGIN

Applicants: Use the Login.gov option below.

If you do not have a Grants.gov username and password, please [register for an applicant account](#). You will be prompted to link your Grants.gov account to a Login.gov account.

Grantors: Login with the method required by your agency.

For more information about login options, refer to [Grants.gov Online Help: Login and My Account](#).

**LOGIN.GOV**

**AMS**  
For HHS Grantors

Looking for EBiz Login?

**Warning Notice**


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- This system is provided for Government-authorized use only.
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- Personal use of social media and networking sites on this system is limited as to not interfere with official work duties and is subject to monitoring.
- By using this system, you understand and consent to the following:
  - The Government may monitor, record, and audit your system usage, including usage of personal devices and email systems for official duties or to conduct HHS business. Therefore, you have no reasonable expectation of privacy regarding any communication or data transiting or stored on this system. At any time, and for any lawful Government purpose, the government may monitor, intercept, and search and seize any communication or data transiting or stored on this system.
  - Any communication or data transiting or stored on this system may be disclosed or used for any lawful Government purpose.

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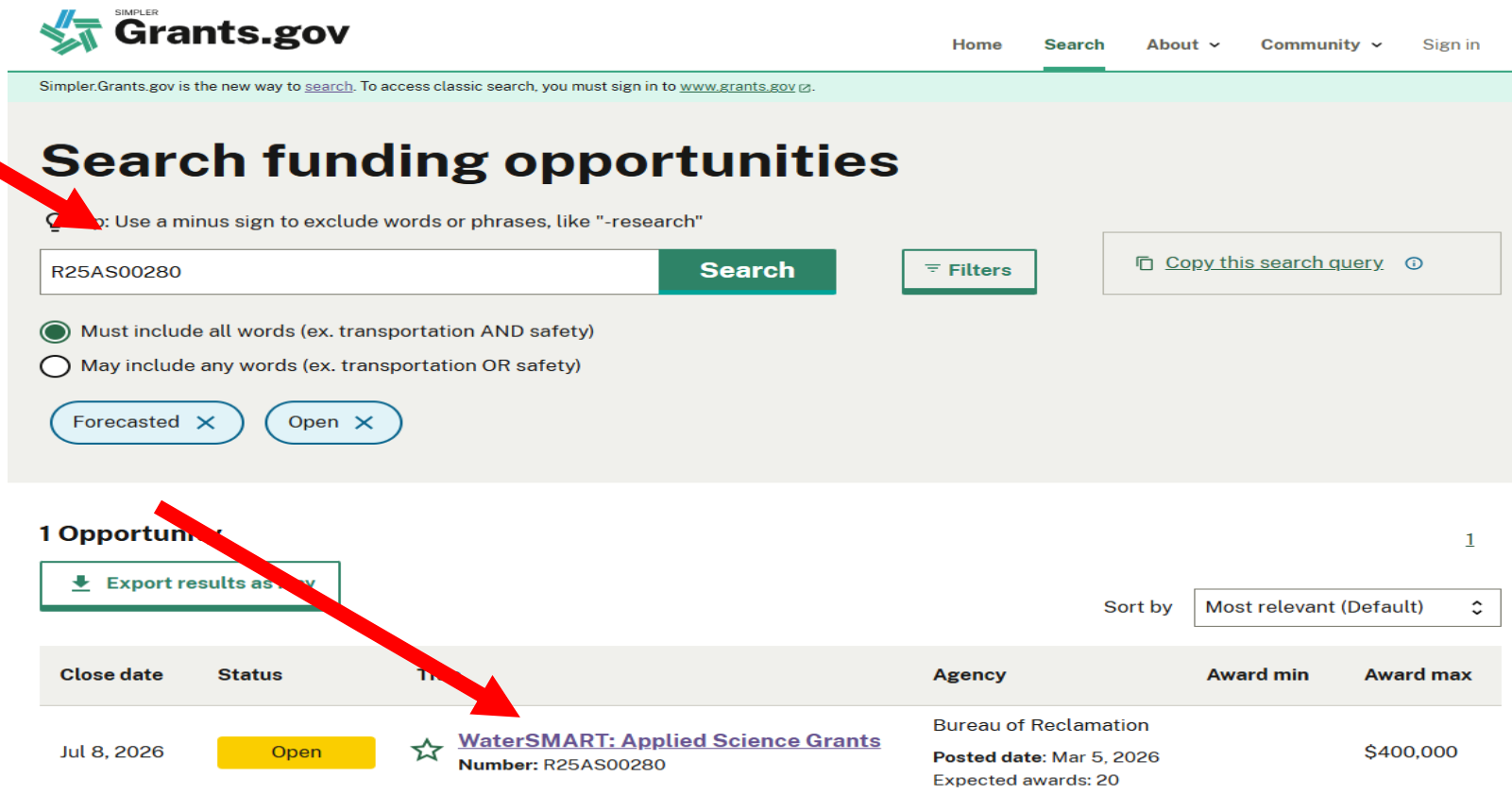
**Community**  
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# View Grant Opportunity

Search R25AS00280



**Simpler Grants.gov** Home Search About Community Sign in

Simpler.Grants.gov is the new way to [search](#). To access classic search, you must sign in to [www.grants.gov](#).

## Search funding opportunities

Tip: Use a minus sign to exclude words or phrases, like "-research"

**Search** **Filters** [Copy this search query](#)

Must include all words (ex. transportation AND safety)  
 May include any words (ex. transportation OR safety)

[Forecasted](#) [Open](#)

### 1 Opportunity

[Export results as CSV](#) Sort by [Most relevant \(Default\)](#)

Close date	Status	Title	Agency	Award min	Award max
Jul 8, 2026	Open	<a href="#">★ WaterSMART: Applied Science Grants</a> Number: R25AS00280	Bureau of Reclamation Posted date: Mar 5, 2026 Expected awards: 20		\$400,000



# View Grant Opportunity

Select the View on Grants.gov link



## WaterSMART: Applied Science Grants



Agency: Bureau of Reclamation

Assistance Listings: 15.557 -- Applied Science Grants

Last Updated: March 6, 2026

[View version history on Grants.gov](#)

### Description

[Jump to all documents](#)

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 and implement actions to increase water supply and hydropower reliability. The WaterSMART Program demonstrably advances Trump administration priorities, such as those identified in Presidential Executive Order 14154 (January 20, 2025): Unleashing American Energy (E.O. 14154) and Secretarial Order 3418, and aligns with other priorities and requirements, such as those identified in Presidential Executive Order 14332 (August...

Show full description

Closing: July 8, 2026

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#### Application process

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## VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

R25AS00280

WaterSMART: Applied Science Grants

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Reclamation

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**SYNOPSIS** **VERSION HISTORY** RELATED DOCUMENTS PACKAGE

**Version History**  
Click on Version Name to view previous versions of this grant opportunity. Modifications from the previous version are highlighted with a light gray background. For more information on versions, see Online Help.

**Synopsis History:**

Version	Modification Description	Updated Date
<a href="#">Synopsis 2</a>	Update to Point of Contact details	Mar 06, 2026
<a href="#">Synopsis 1</a>		Mar 05, 2026



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## VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

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File Description	File Name	Last Updated Date/Time	File Size
Folder: Full Announcement - Full Announcement	<a href="#">R25AS00280-Full Announcement - Full Announcement.zip</a>	Mar 05, 2026 05:40:09 PM EST	184.5 KB
Foa_Content_of_R25AS00280_3.2.26 v2.FINAL.pdf	<a href="#">Foa_Content_of_R25AS00280_3.2.26 v2.FINAL.pdf</a>	Mar 05, 2026 05:39:32 PM EST	200.0 KB
Folder: Other Supporting Documents - Other Supporting Documents	<a href="#">R25AS00280-Other Supporting Documents - Other Supporting Documents.zip</a>	Mar 05, 2026 05:40:42 PM EST	773.7 KB
Attachment A - Budget_Detail_and_Narrative_template_v2025_March.xlsx	<a href="#">Attachment A - Budget_Detail_and_Narrative_template_v2025_March.xlsx</a>	Mar 05, 2026 05:39:50 PM EST	71.9 KB
Attachment B - Budget_Narrative_Guidance_v2025_March.docx	<a href="#">Attachment B - Budget_Narrative_Guidance_v2025_March.docx</a>	Mar 05, 2026 05:39:59 PM EST	221.6 KB
General NOFO FAQ.pdf	<a href="#">General NOFO FAQ.pdf</a>	Mar 05, 2026 05:40:24 PM EST	
Submission Instructions & Tips.pdf	<a href="#">Submission Instructions &amp; Tips.pdf</a>	Mar 05, 2026 05:40:42 PM EST	



## Select Grant Opportunity Package

### PLEASE READ BEFORE APPLYING!

If you view and complete your application package using Grants.gov downloadable PDF forms, you MUST have Adobe Reader installed. You may receive a validation error using incompatible versions of Adobe Reader. To prevent a validation error, it is now recommended you uninstall any earlier versions of Adobe Reader and install the latest compatible version of Adobe Reader. If more than one person is working on the PDF forms, ALL applicants must be using the same Adobe Reader version. [Click for more information on Adobe Reader Compatibility.](#)

### Opportunity Package(s) Currently Available for this Funding Opportunity:

Assistance Listing Number	Competition ID	Competition Title	Opportunity Package ID	Opening Date	Closing Date	Actions
15.507	R25AS00279	Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects	PKG00292059	Mar 05, 2026	Jun 02, 2026	<a href="#">Preview</a>   <a href="#">Apply</a>

### Opportunity Package Details

Agency Contact Information: Christina Munoz

Who Can Apply: Organization Applicants

#### PACKAGE FORMS:

##### Mandatory Forms

(Click to Preview)

Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) [V4.0]  
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) [V1.0]  
Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) [V1.1]  
Project Narrative Attachment Form [V1.2]  
Budget Narrative Attachment Form [V1.2]

Attachments [V1.2]  
Project Abstract Summary [V2.0]  
Grants.gov Lobbying Form [V1.1]  
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) [V2.0]

Close

### Mandatory Forms are:

SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance

Budget Information for Non-Construction (SF-424A)

Assurances for Non-Construction (SF-424B)





# 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.



# Application Tips

*Before you Submit*

---

## Verify that your Application is Complete!

- SAM.gov Registration is ACTIVE
- Grants.gov Registration account set up
- SF-424 (remember signature)
- SF-424A
- SF-424B
- Technical Proposal
- Budget Narrative



# Financial Assistance – First Level Screening

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All application packages will be screened to ensure:

- The applicant meets the completeness, eligibility, and timeliness requirements
- The applicant meets the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM registration requirements
- The application meets the content requirements
- The application contains completed mandatory forms



# Financial Assistance – Selection Notification

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- Once Initial screening is complete,
  - Ineligible applicants will be notified by the Grants Officer, and
  - Eligible applicants will move on to the Merit Review
- All successful applications will be notified by the Grants Officer of selection.
- The Financial Assistance Office will reach out to the applicant regarding next steps for entering into a Financial Assistance award.



# Intellectual Property, Intangible Property, and Data Availability References

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- 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





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For Questions relating to the Application Process,  
SF-424 and Application Forms, Grants.gov, and SAM  
Registration,  
please reach out to the  
Reclamation Financial Assistance Contact:

**[bor-sha-fafoa@usbr.gov](mailto:bor-sha-fafoa@usbr.gov)**

**\*\*Please include the NOFO number in the subject of your  
email.\*\***



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# Additional Opportunities, Tools and Resources

# WaterSMART Program Resources

For General Information:

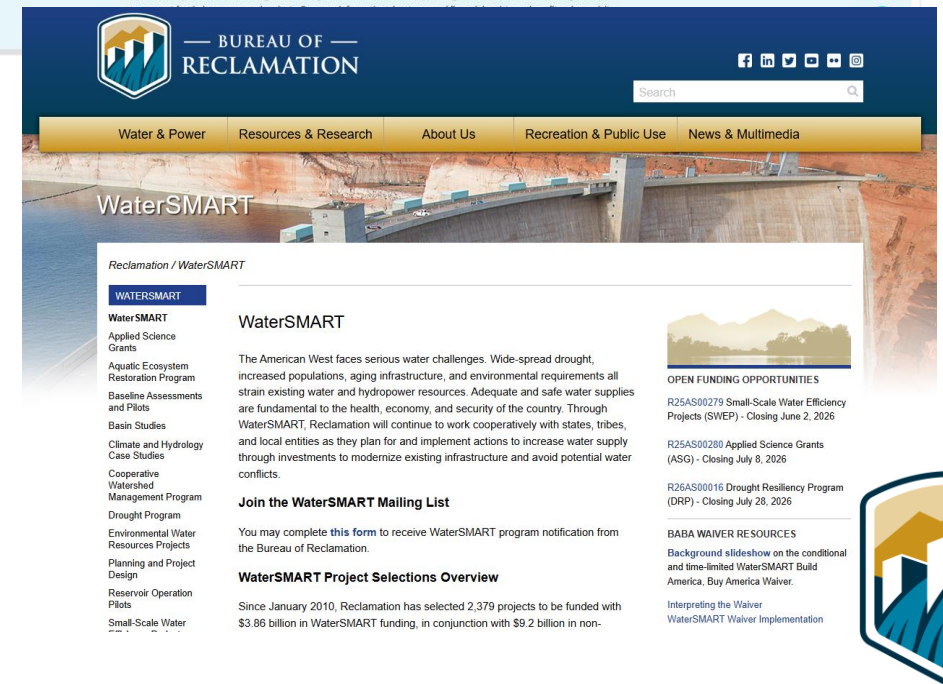
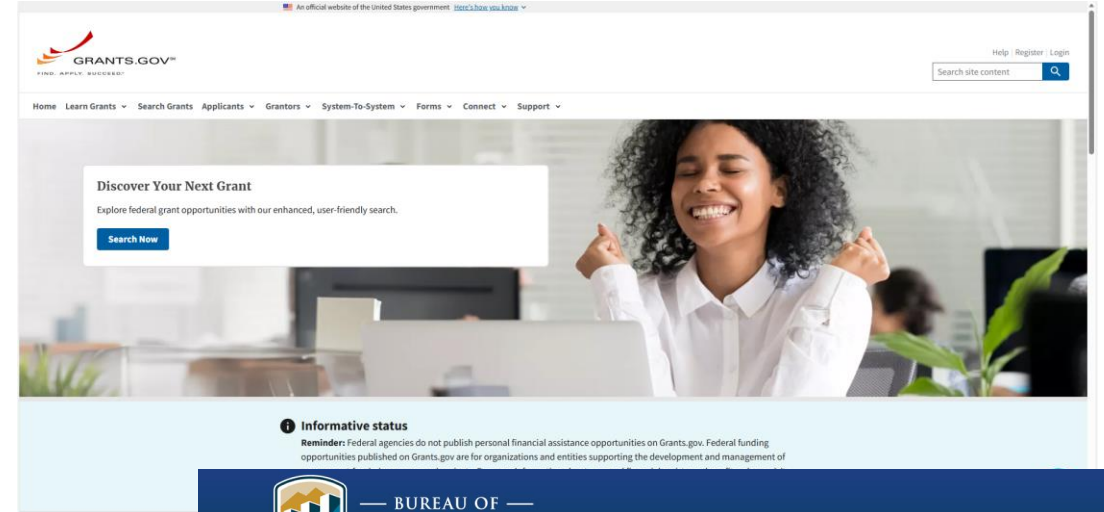
<https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/>

- Previously funded applications
- WaterSMART Dashboard
- Recent announcements

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](http://www.grants.gov)



# 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

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**Grants Management Specialist:** Questions regarding budgets and system requirements

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