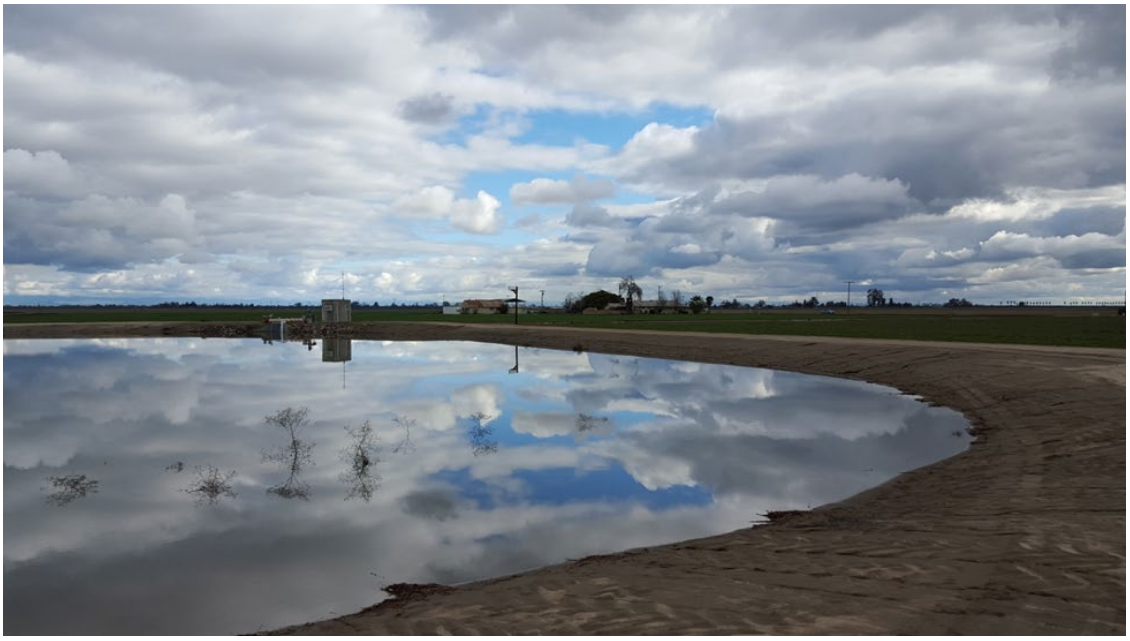
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

WaterSMART:

Environmental Water Resources Projects,
Drought Resiliency Projects, and
Water and Energy Efficiency Grants

Draft Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria for Review and Comment



Department of the Interior **May 2021**

Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Opportunity to Comment

Reclamation invites other Federal agencies, the public, not-for-profit organizations, or States, Tribes and local governments to *comment on the draft eligibility and evaluation criteria for WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects (Attachment A); Drought Resiliency Projects (Attachment B), and Water and Energy Efficiency Grants (Attachment C), by June 4, 2021.*

UPDATE: THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINE HAS BEEN EXTENDED. PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS BY JUNE 18, 2021.

Comments may be submitted electronically to Ms. Sheri Looper at slooper@usbr.gov

For questions regarding WaterSMART or this opportunity to comment, please contact Ms. Sheri Looper at (916) 612-7816 or slooper@usbr.gov.

Contents

Background

As part of continuing efforts to improve the WaterSMART Program, incorporate revisions to the SECURE Water Act (Title IX, Subtitle F of P.L. 111-11), and implement priorities identified in Presidential Executive Order 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (E.O. 14008) and aligned with other priorities, such as those identified in Presidential Executive Order 13985: *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (E.O. 13985), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is proposing several changes to the WaterSMART Program for fiscal year (FY) 2022. Reclamation is also working to ensure that existing programs support the goals of the Interagency Drought Relief Working Group established in March 2021. Changes include the revisions to the Water and Energy Efficiency Grants and Drought Resiliency Projects funding opportunities and development of a new category of funding for Environmental Water Resources Projects. Other programs within WaterSMART may be revised later this year.

Reclamation is seeking comments on the eligibility and draft criteria for the three funding opportunities listed above, which are anticipated to be finalized and posted on grants.gov during the July-August timeframe.

For additional information on the WaterSMART Program, please see Reclamation's website at: https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/index.html

Summary of Changes

Environmental Water Resources Projects (Attachment A)

Reclamation uses a series of WaterSMART funding opportunities to invite eligible entities to seek cost-shared funding for projects and activities intended to have a wide array of benefits. To date, Reclamation has been limited to providing no more than 50% of the cost of any project identified for funding. Recent amendments to the SECURE Water Act provide Reclamation with the authority to contribute up to 75% of the cost of certain projects. Among other requirements, projects that are focused on environmental benefits and that have been developed as part of a collaborative process to help carry out an established strategy to increase the reliability of water resources may be eligible for up to 75% Federal funding.

As part of its overall plan to implement statutory changes and to align WaterSMART Reclamation is developing this new category of funding. Sponsors of Drought Resiliency Projects, Water and Energy Efficiency Grants, or Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase II projects that are focused on environmental benefits and that meet other requirements described in Attachment A will be directed to this new funding opportunity.

Please see Attachment A for detailed information regarding eligible applicants, cost share requirements, project types, and evaluation criteria.

Drought Resiliency Projects (Attachment B)

The Drought Resiliency Projects funding opportunity will continue to provide funding for projects that build long-term resilience to drought and reduce the need for emergency response actions during times of water scarcity. The Drought Resiliency Projects funding opportunity prioritizes projects that decrease vulnerabilities and costs of drought by giving water managers flexibility in times of low water supply. Revisions to this funding opportunity are intended incorporate changes to the SECURE Water Act (Public Law [P.L.] 111-11) and to implement Presidential priorities such as those outlined in E.O. 14008 and E.O. 13985. Other priorities of consideration in this funding opportunity include tribal benefits and projects that add ecological value in the project area. Significant revisions include the following:

- For the WaterSMART program to be more responsive to environmental drought projects, projects that primarily provide protection for fish, wildlife, and the environment will be funded through the new Environmental Water Resources Projects funding opportunity. Previously, these were categorized as Task C Projects: Projects that Provide Protection for Fish, Wildlife, and the Environment. Recognizing that several projects can have multiple beneficiaries, projects that have an ecological component can still be submitted under the Drought Resiliency Projects funding opportunity and will be prioritized as outlined in the revised criteria. Please see and Draft Evaluation Criterion F within Attachment B, below for detailed information.
- Applicant eligibility requirements have been updated to implement revisions to the SECURE Water Act, including the addition of Puerto Rico. Please see Attachment B: Eligibility for detailed information.
- The Department of Interior and Reclamation priorities criterion is updated to reflect current Presidential and Department of the Interior priorities. Please see Attachment B: Draft Evaluation Criterion for detailed information.

Water and Energy Efficiency Grants (Attachment C)

Water and Energy Efficiency Grants will continue to focus on on-the-ground improvement projects that address water conservation and efficiency and result in quantifiable water savings. The goal of these revisions is to incorporate amendments to the SECURE Water Act and to implement Presidential priorities such as those outlined in E.O. 14008 and E.O. 13985. Significant revisions from the FY 2021 Water and Energy Efficiency Grants funding opportunity include the following:

- Applicant eligibility requirements have been updated to implement revisions to the SECURE Water Act, including the addition of Puerto Rico. Please see Attachment C: Eligible Applicants for detailed information.

- Eligible projects types will now include installing high-efficiency indoor appliances and fixtures that can provide water savings for municipal water entities. Please see Attachment C: Eligible Projects for detailed information.
- Projects that primarily provide ecological benefits and value should be submitted under the Environmental Water Resources Projects funding opportunity (see Attachment A). Eligible project types have been revised to broaden the types of renewable energy components that can be proposed for funding. Please see Attachment C: Eligible Projects for detailed information.
- Evaluation criteria have been revised to incorporate priorities in E.O. 14008 and E.O. 13985, along with amendments to the SECURE Water Act (P.L. 111-11). Criterion C: Sustainability Benefits is expanded to align with these priorities and to provide applicants a full opportunity to explain the water management challenges faced and the ways the project will help to address them. Please see Attachment C: Evaluation Criteria for detailed information.

Attachment A: Proposed New FY 2022 Funding Opportunity: WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects

Attachment A: Proposed New FY 2022 Funding Opportunity: WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects

A.1.Eligibility Information and Cost Sharing Requirements

Eligible Applicants:

Applicants eligible to receive an award under this NOFO include:

Category A applicants:

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

Category B applicants:

- Nonprofit conservation organizations, including watershed groups as defined in the Cooperative Watershed Management Act, Section 6001, that are acting in partnership with and with the agreement of an entity described in Category A.[1] Category B applicants must 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 proposal; 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.*

Category C applicants:

- Nonprofit conservation organizations submitting an application for a project to improve the condition of a natural feature such as wetlands on Federal land without a Category A

[1] A watershed group is eligible to apply for 50% cost-shared funding without other partners but must include a Category A partner to be eligible for 75% Federal funding.

partner must demonstrate that any Category A applicants in the service area have been notified and do not object to the project.

Application Location

Applicants must also be located in one of the following states or territories: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Ineligible Applicants

Those applicants **not eligible** include, but are not limited to, the following entities:

- Individuals
- Commercial/industrial organizations
- Private entities
- 501(c)(4) Nonprofit organizations
- 501(c)(6) Organizations

Eligible Projects:

To be eligible under this funding opportunity, one of the primary purposes of the project must be to benefit ecological values that have a nexus to water resources management, including projects that benefit plant and animal species, fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and ecosystems that are supported by rivers, streams, and other water sources, or that are directly influenced by water resources management. This may include, but is not limited to: projects that improve the timing or quantity of water available; improve water quality and temperature; or that improve stream or riparian conditions for the benefit of plant and animal species, fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and ecosystems. This does not exclude projects that include benefits to multiple sectors, including projects that benefit ecological values AND agricultural, municipal, tribal, or recreation water uses.

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

1. **Water conservation and efficiency projects that result in quantifiable and sustained water savings and benefit ecological values.** Please note that for projects including an improvement to conserve irrigation water, and agreement will not be awarded unless the applicant agrees to the terms of Section 9504(a)(3)(B) of Public Law 111-11. See Section F.2.3. Requirements for Agricultural Operations under Public Law 111-11, Section 9504(a)(3)(D).

   These projects may include but are not limited to:

   - Canal lining or piping
   - Irrigation flow measurements
   - Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition Automation
   - Other conservation and efficiency projects that result in quantifiable and sustained water savings and benefit ecological values.

2. **Water management or infrastructure improvements to mitigate drought-related impacts to ecological values**. To be eligible under this category, projects must provide benefits directly related to the impacts of drought or potential drought. These projects include, but are not limited to:

    - Installing and/or modifying fish screens, ladders, bypasses, and modifications to water intakes (e.g., selective or lowered intakes).
    - Improving fish hatcheries (e.g., coolers, holding pens, transport, disease control, or prevention).
    - Water management changes or infrastructure improvements that will improve water supply reliability and habitat during drought, conditions (e.g., develop tools to evaluate water supplies and stream conditions in real time for improved timing of releases, upgrading a headgate to improve water supply reliability, new diversion location downstream of critical temperature control points, treating return flows during low flow events to improve water quality, water storage for subsequent release to improve streamflow);
    - Salinity or temperature control projects benefitting ecological values (e.g., salinity barriers, temperature curtains, dam temperature shutters, or powerplant bypass structures), and to aerate ecologically sensitive areas where dissolved oxygen levels are low.

3. **Watershed management or restoration projects benefitting ecological values that have a nexus to water resources or water resources management.** To be eligible under this category, projects must have a nexus to water resources or water resources management. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

    - Improving stream channel structure and complexity;
    - Improving channel/floodplain connectivity;
    - Protecting and stabilizing stream and riverbanks;
    - Reducing erosion;
    - Removing invasive species and restoring vegetation;
    - Watershed management or restoration projects influencing water temperature or improving the timing or volume of available flows at particular locations to improve aquatic conditions;
    - Restoring backwater/floodplain areas (for larval and juvenile fish and other wildlife species) to enhance and maintain rearing as well as feeding and foraging habitats.
    - Restoring natural wetlands, construction or improving wetlands for treatment of irrigation water or stormwater flows, or improving other natural features to reduce water supply and demand imbalances or the risk of drought or flood; and
    - Other watershed management projects that will address water supply needs, water quality concerns, and restoration needs in the watershed.

Note: Projects may include some monitoring, mapping, and modeling activities to support the primary on-the-ground project components. However, costs for these activities should not exceed 30 percent of the total project cost.

A.2. Cost-Sharing Requirements

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

- The project must increase water supply reliability for ecological values. This may include projects that improve the timing or quantity of water available; improve water quality or temperature; or that improve stream or riparian conditions for the benefit of plant and animal species, fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, or ecosystems. This does not exclude projects expected to result in benefits to multiple sectors, such as projects or project components that benefit ecological values AND agricultural, municipal, tribal, or recreational water uses.

- The project must be developed as part of a collaborative process by: (1) a watershed group (as defined in section 6001 of the Cooperative Watershed Management Act); or (2) by a water user and one or more stakeholders with diverse interests; and,

- The majority of project benefits must be for the purpose of advancing one or more components of an established strategy or plan to increase the reliability of water supply for consumptive and non-consumptive ecological values.

Applications who meet these requirements must be capable of cost sharing **25 percent or more** of the total project costs. 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.

For projects that do not meet the requirements necessary to qualify for 75% Federal cost-share contribution, applicants must be capable of cost sharing 50 percent or more of the total project costs. Applicants will be notified prior to selection if their project is being considered for award but does not qualify for 75% Federal cost-share contribution. Such applicants will be given an opportunity to commit to a 50% non-Federal cost-share contribution or withdraw their application.

A.3. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria portion should be addressed in the technical proposal section of the application. Applications should thoroughly address each criterion and any sub-criterion in the order presented below. It is suggested that applicants copy and paste the below criteria and subcriteria into their applications to ensure that all necessary information is adequately addressed.

Information provided in response to these criteria will also be used to make determination whether the proposed project qualifies for up to 75% Federal cost-share contribution based on the requirements described above.

Evaluation Criteria: Scoring Summary	Points
A. Project Benefits	35
B. Planning	25
C. Stakeholder Support	15
D. Readiness to Proceed	10
E: Performance Measures	5
F: Department of the Interior and Reclamation Priorities	10
Total	***100***

Applications will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria listed above. If the work described in your application is a phase of a larger project, only discuss the benefits that will result directly from the work discussed in the technical project description and that is reflected in the budget, not the larger project.

Evaluation Criterion A—Project Benefits (35 points)

Up to **35 points** may be awarded based on the evaluation of the benefits that are expected to result from the proposed project. This criterion evaluates the extent to which the project will benefit ecological values that have a nexus to water resources or water resources management. Other benefits will also be considered for projects that have multiple benefits.

Sub-Criterion A.1—Benefits to Ecological Values

Please provide a general description of how your project will benefit ecological values by responding to the bullets listed below. *Note: More detailed information and support for specific project benefits, and the extent (quantification) of those benefits, by project type are addressed under Sub-Criterion A.2. Your responses to A.1. should include brief narrative responses; calculations of specific project benefits should be included in your responses to A.2, below.*

- Please explain how the project will **benefit ecological values that have a nexus to water resources or water resources management,** including benefits to plant and animal species, fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and ecosystems that are supported by rivers, streams, and other water sources, or that are directly influenced by water resources management.
    - In your response, please identify the specific ecological values benefitted and how those ecological values depend on, or are influenced by, water resources or water resources management.

  - Please also explain whether the project will increase water supply reliability for ecological values by improving the timing or quantity of water available; improving water quality and temperature; or improving stream or riparian conditions for the benefit of plant and animal species, fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and ecosystems, or through similar approaches.

- If the project will benefit multiple water uses (i.e., benefits to ecological values AND benefits to other water uses, e.g., municipal, agricultural, or tribal water uses), please explain how the project benefits other water uses.

Sub-Criterion A.2—Quantification of Specific Project Benefits by Project Type

Explain the extent of project benefits. Please respond to the following questions for each project type included in your proposal (i.e., please only respond to the section(s) of this sub-criterion that are relevant to your project):

Project benefits for water efficiency projects that result in quantifiable and sustained water savings or improved water management—and which increase water supply reliability for ecological values.

- Describe the amount of estimated water savings (in acre-feet per year) that are expected to result directly from the project. Please include a specific quantifiable water savings estimate; do not include a range of potential water savings. Describe the support/documentation for this estimate, including a detailed explanation of how the estimate was determined, including all supporting calculations.
- Explain where the water that will be conserved is currently going (e.g., back to the stream, spilled at the end of the ditch, seeping into the ground) and how the water is currently being used. For example, are current losses returning to the system and being used by others? Are current losses entering an impaired groundwater table becoming unsuitable for future use? Are there any known benefits associated with where the current losses are going? For example, is seepage water providing additional habitat for fish or animal species?
- Explain in detail how water conserved as a result of the project will be used to increase water sustainability for ecological values. Will the project commit conserved water to remain instream? If so, please provide detailed support for that commitment. Will a formal mechanism (e.g., collaboration with a state agency or nonprofit organization, or other mechanisms allowable under state law) be used? Or, if a formal mechanism will not be used, please describe the arrangement proposed to contribute conserved water for ecological benefits. Please explain the roles of any partners in the process and attach any relevant supporting documents.
- Describe the benefits that are expected to result from increased instream flows. Will increased instream flows assist in reducing basin-wide water supply and demand imbalances or in complying with an interstate compact? Will increased instream flows result in benefits to fish and wildlife? If so, please describe the species and expected benefit of the project. Will the increased instream flows result in benefits to habitat or other ecological benefits? If so, describe these benefits. Will the flows specifically benefit federally designated critical habitat?

Project Benefits for Drought Resiliency Projects Related to Fish and Wildlife

- What are the types and quantities of environmental benefits provided, such as the types of species and their numbers benefited; acreage of habitat improved, restored, or protected; or the amount of flow provided? How was this estimate calculated?
- If the project will make more water available, or make water available at a more advantageous time or location, how much additional water will be made available? Describe the amount of estimated water (in acre-feet per year) expected to be made available directly from the project. Please include a specific quantifiable water contribution estimate and describe the support/documentation for this estimate, including a detailed explanation of how the estimate was determined.
- How is the species or habitat impacted by drought?
- If the proposed project will benefit federally listed threatened or endangered species please consider the following elements:
    - Is the species subject to a recovery plan or conservation plan under the ESA? What is the relationship of the species to water supply?
    - What is the extent of the proposed project that would reduce the likelihood of listing, or would otherwise improve the status of the species?
    - Is the species adversely affected by a Reclamation project?

Project Benefits for Watershed Management Projects

- If the project will result in long-term improvements to water quality (e.g., decrease sediment or nutrient pollution, improve water temperature, or mitigate impacts from floods or drought) please explain the extent of those benefits (i.e., magnitude and geographic extent). Please estimate expected project benefits to water quality and provide documentation and support for this estimate, including a detailed explanation of how the estimate was determined.
- If the project will benefit aquatic or riparian ecosystems within the watershed (e.g., by reducing flood risk, reducing bank erosion, increasing biodiversity, or preserving native species), please explain the extent of those benefits (i.e., magnitude and geographic extent). Please estimate expected project benefits to ecosystems and provide documentation and support for this estimate, including a detailed explanation of how the estimate was determined.
- If the project will benefit specific species and habitats, please describe the species and/or type of habitat that will benefit and the status of the species or habitat (e.g., native species, game species, federally threatened or endangered, state listed, and whether critical habitat has been designated). Please describe the extent (i.e., magnitude and geographic extent) to which the project will benefit the species or habitat, including an estimate of expected project benefits and documentation and support for the estimate.
- Are there project benefits not addressed in the preceding questions? If so, what are these benefits?

Project benefits for multi-benefits projects: If applicable, please describe the extent to which the project will benefit multiple water uses. Please do not repeat information included in your prior responses.

- Please describe the extent to which the project will benefit agricultural, municipal, tribal, or recreation uses? Please explain how your estimate of benefits to multiple uses was calculated and provide support for your response.
- Will the project reduce water conflicts within the watershed?
- Will the project provide benefits to other water uses not mentioned above? If so, how and to what extent?

Evaluation Criterion B—Collaborative Project Planning (25 points)

Up to **25 points** may be awarded based on the extent to which the proposed project was developed as part of a collaborative process and advances an existing plan or strategy. Reclamation will use the following criteria to prioritize proposals based on the extent to which the specific project proposed in your application was developed collaboratively. Please attach a copy of the applicable strategy or plan as an appendix to your application, or provide a link, **and identify the sections relevant to the project**. These pages will not be included in the total page count for the application.

- Was the proposed project described in your application developed as part of a collaborative process by:
    - A watershed group, as defined in section 6001 of the Cooperative Watershed Management Act? Or
    - A water user and one or more stakeholders with diverse interests (i.e., stakeholders representing different water use sectors such as agriculture, municipal, tribal, recreational, or environmental)?
- Describe the strategy or plan that supports your proposed project.
    - When was the plan or strategy prepared and for what purpose?
    - What types of issues are addressed in the plan? For example, does the plan address water quantity issues, water quality issues, and/or issues related to ecosystem health or the health of species and habitat within the watershed?
    - Is one of the purposes of the strategy or plan to increase the reliability of water supply for ecological values?
    - Does the project address an adaptation strategy specifically identified in a completed WaterSMART Basin Study or Water Management Options Pilot (e.g., a strategy to mitigate the impacts of water shortages resulting from climate change, drought, increased demands, or other causes).
- Was your strategy or plan developed collaboratively?
    - Who was involved in preparing the plan? Was the plan prepared with input from stakeholders with diverse interests (e.g., water, land, or forest management interests; and agricultural, municipal, tribal, environmental, recreation uses)? What was the process used for interested stakeholders to provide input during the planning process?

  - If the plan was prepared by an entity other than the applicant, explain why it is applicable.
- Describe how the plan or strategy provides support for your proposed project.
  - Does the proposed project implement a goal or need identified in the plan?
  - Describe how the proposed project is prioritized in the referenced plan or strategy.

Evaluation Criterion C—Stakeholder Support (15 points)

Up to **15 points** may be provided based on the level of stakeholder support for the proposed project and the extent to which the project will complement, and not duplicate, other ongoing efforts. Proposals which demonstrate support for the project from a diverse array of stakeholders, and which will complement other ongoing activities, will receive the most points under this criterion.

- Please describe the level of stakeholder support for the proposed project. Are letters of support from stakeholders provided? Are any stakeholders providing support for the project through cost-share contributions, or through other types of contributions to the project?
- Please explain whether the project is supported by a diverse set of stakeholders (appropriate given the types of interested stakeholders within the project area and the scale, type, and complexity of the proposed project). For example, is the project supported by entities representing agricultural, municipal, tribal, environmental, or recreation uses?
- Is the project supported by entities responsible for the management of land, water, fish and wildlife, recreation, or forestry within the project area? Is the project consistent with the policies of those agencies?
- Will the proposed project complement other ongoing water management activities by state, Federal, or local government entities, non-profits, or individual landowners within the project area? Please describe other relevant efforts, including who is undertaking these efforts and whether they support the proposed project. Explain how the proposed project will avoid duplication or complication of other ongoing efforts.
- Is the project completely or partially located on Federal land or at a Federal facility? If so, explain whether the agency supports the project, whether the agency will contribute toward the project, and why the Federal agency is not completing the project.
- Is there opposition to the proposed project? If so, describe the opposition and explain how it will be addressed. Opposition will not necessarily result in fewer points.

Evaluation Criterion D—Readiness to Proceed (10 points)

Up to **10 points** may be awarded based upon the extent to which the proposed project is capable of proceeding upon entering into a financial assistance agreement. Applicants that describe a detailed implementation plan (e.g., estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates, and a detailed budget) will receive the most points under this criterion.

- Describe the implementation plan for the proposed project. Please include an estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates. This may include, but is not limited to, the following: design, environmental and cultural resources compliance, permitting, and construction/installation.

- The project budget outlining costs for specific tasks should identify costs associated with the tasks in your project schedule and all contractor costs should be broken out to identify the specific tasks included in those costs.
- Describe any permits and agency approvals that will be required, along with the process and timeframe for obtaining such permits or approvals.
- Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of the proposed project, or that will be performed as part of the project. Priority will be given to projects that are further along in the design process and ready for implementation.
- Does the applicant have access to the land or water source where the project is located? Has the applicant obtained any easements that are required for the project? If so, please provide documentation. If the applicant does not yet have permission to access the project location, please describe the process and timeframe for obtaining such permission.
- Has the applicant included an amount equal to 5 percent of the total project costs in their project budget to cover costs associated with environmental and cultural resource compliance?
- Describe any new policies or administrative actions required to implement the project.

Note: Proposed projects must not include activities or costs for the purchase of water or land, or to secure a permanent easement. Costs associated with these activities are not eligible project costs and cannot be used to meet the non-Federal cost-share requirement.

Evaluation Criterion E—Performance Measures (5 points)

Up to **5 points** may be provided based on the extent to which the proposal describes a plan to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the project once complete.

Note: program funding may be used to establish a monitoring and data management plan or to install necessary equipment to monitor progress. However, program funding may not be used to measure performance once the project is completed (these costs are considered normal operation and maintenance costs and are the responsibility of the applicant).

- Please describe the performance measures that will be used to quantitatively or qualitatively define actual project benefits upon completion of the project. Include support for why the specific performance measures were chosen.
- All applicants are required to include information about plans to monitor improved streamflows, aquatic habit, or other expected project benefits. Please describe the plan to monitor the benefits over a five-year period once the project has been completed. Provide detail on the steps to be taken to carry out the plan.

Evaluation Criterion F—Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (10 points)

Up to **10 points** may be awarded based on the extent that the project demonstrates support for the Biden-Harris Administration's priorities, including Presidential Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (E.O. 14008) and Executive

Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (E.O. 13985). Consideration under this criterion is also given for tribal benefits.

Please address only those priorities that are applicable to your project. It is not necessary to address priorities that are not applicable to your project. A project will not necessarily receive more points simply because multiple priorities are addressed. Points will be allocated based on the degree to which the project supports one or more of the priorities listed, and whether the connection to the priority(ies) is well supported in the proposal. **Without repeating benefits already described in previous criteria, describe in detail how the proposed project supports a priority(ies) below.**

1. **Climate Change:** E.O. 14008 emphasizes the need to prioritize and take robust actions to reduce climate pollution; increase resilience to the impacts of climate change; protect public health; and conserve our lands, waters, oceans, and biodiversity.

   - How will the project build long-term resilience to drought? How many years will the project continue to provide benefits? Please estimate the extent to which the project will build resilience to drought and provide support for your estimate.
   - In addition to drought resiliency measures, does the proposed project include other natural hazard risk reductions for hazards such as wildfires or floods?
   - Does the proposed project include green or sustainable infrastructure to improve community climate resilience such as reducing the urban heat island effect, lowering building energy demands, or reducing the energy needed to manage water? Does this infrastructure complement other green solutions being implemented throughout the region or watershed?
   - Will the proposed project establish and utilize a renewable energy source?
   - Does the proposed project seek to reduce or mitigate climate pollutions such as air or water pollution?
   - Will the proposed project reduce greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering carbon in soils, grasses, trees, and other vegetation?
   - Does the proposed project have a conservation or management component that will promote healthy lands and soils or serve to protect water supplies and its associated uses?
   - Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?

2. **Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities:**
E.O. 14008 and E.O. 13985 affirm the advancement of environmental justice and equity for all through the development and funding of programs to invest in disadvantaged or underserved communities.

   - Will the proposed project serve or benefit a disadvantaged or historically underserved community? Benefits can include, but are not limited to, public health and safety through water quality improvements, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities.

- If the proposed project is providing benefits to a disadvantaged community, provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the community meets the applicable state criteria or meets the definition in Section 1015 of the Cooperative Watershed Act, (i.e., defined as a community with an annual median household income that is less than 100 percent of the statewide annual median household income for the state).
- If the proposed project is providing benefits to an underserved community, provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the community meets the underserved definition in E.O. 13985, which includes populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

3. **Tribal Benefits:** The Department of the Interior is committed to strengthening tribal sovereignty and the fulfillment of Federal tribal trust responsibilities. The President's memorandum, "Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships," asserts the importance of honoring the Federal government's commitments to Tribal Nations.

- Does the proposed project support tribal resilience to climate change and drought impacts or provide other tribal benefits such as improved public health and safety through water quality improvements, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities?
- Does the proposed project support Reclamation's tribal trust responsibilities or a Reclamation activity with a Tribe?

Attachment B: Drought Resiliency Projects

Attachment B: Drought Resiliency Projects

Significant revisions to the Drought Resiliency Projects funding opportunity included changes to eligibility and selection criteria, namely the selection criterion F regarding Departmental and Reclamation priorities. The applicable sections of the funding opportunity are presented below.

B.1. Eligibility Information and Cost Sharing Requirements

Eligible Applicants

Under P.L. 111-11, Section 9502, applicants eligible to receive an award under this funding opportunity include:

Category A applicants:

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

Category B applicants:

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

Applicant Location

Applicants must also be located in one of the following states or territories: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Ineligible Applicants

Those not eligible include, but are not limited to, the following entities:

- Federal governmental entities
- Institutions of higher education
- Individuals
- 501(c)4 organizations
- 501(c)6 organizations

Eligible Projects

Reclamation will provide funding for projects that build long-term resilience to drought and reduce the need for emergency response actions through this Drought Resiliency Projects Grants funding opportunity. Drought resiliency can be defined as the capacity of a community to cope with and respond to drought. Under this funding opportunity, Reclamation will fund projects that will build resiliency to drought by:

- Increasing the reliability of water supplies.
- Improving water management.

To be eligible for funding under this funding opportunity, the proposed resiliency project should improve the ability of water managers to continue to deliver water and power during a drought. The proposed project should decrease vulnerabilities and costs of drought by giving water managers flexibility in times of low water supply. In addition, the proposed project must be beyond routine water management activities or activities required by state law for conservation and efficiency. The proposed resiliency project should also help avoid the need for emergency response actions, such as water hauling programs and temporary infrastructure. Projects funded under this funding opportunity must have ongoing benefits to build long-term resilience to drought, even if they also address an immediate drought concern.

Under this funding opportunity, Reclamation will prioritize projects supported by an existing drought planning effort. Drought contingency planning efforts frequently identify potential projects or needs to improve resiliency to drought. These can include mitigation actions or tools that will improve water management flexibility or improve access to critical water supply information that will help water managers build resiliency and avoid a crisis during drought. Applicants that demonstrate that the proposed project meets a need or project identified in an existing drought plan will be prioritized.

Tasks A and B, below, describe project categories eligible for funding under this funding opportunity. Applications may include any one, or a combination, of the types of projects described in Tasks A and B. In general, if you are seeking funding for multiple projects (for example, a Task A project and a Task B project) and the projects are interrelated or closely related, they should be combined in one application. One phase of a larger project may be eligible for funding under this program, so long as the phase proposed for funding will generate benefits to address drought resiliency, independent of completing additional phases.

Other projects that are similar to those tasks listed below may be submitted for consideration and will be allowed to the extent that they are consistent with program authorization and goals.

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

Even small investments in infrastructure can improve resiliency to drought conditions by increasing water management flexibility and providing alternative sources of water supply. For example, constructing new surface water intakes and new conveyance system components—such as pipes or pumping plants—can provide water managers with much needed options to deliver water from alternative sources or support voluntary transfers of water during drought. Likewise, aquifer recharge facilities can support water banking in wet years for use in dry years and sustainable conjunctive use programs.

Task A projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- **System modifications or improvements:** Projects that will increase flexibility of water conveyance and deliveries, facilitating access to water supplies in times of drought. Projects include, but are not limited to:
    - Constructing or modifying surface water intakes to access supplies when water levels are low (e.g., at dead pool), or to allow access at different locations.
    - Constructing new conveyance system components (pipelines, canals, pumping plants, etc.) to increase flexibility to deliver water from different sources, to facilitate voluntary water marketing or to deliver water from alternative sources.
    - Constructing interties between water conveyance systems to increase options for water deliveries.
    - Installing barriers or other facilities to prevent saltwater intrusion into surface supplies.

- **Storing water and/or recharging groundwater supplies:** Projects that enable the capture or storage of additional water supplies that can be made available during drought. Projects include, but are not limited to:
    - Developing or expanding small-scale surface water storage facilities such as off-stream storage ponds.
    - Installing water towers and storage tanks to store water for municipal and domestic use.
    - Installing recharge ponds or injection wells to increase recharge of surplus, inactive, or reclaimed water. Recharged water can serve multiple purposes such as sustainable conjunctive use in times of drought, deterring saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers, and limiting additional land subsidence.
- **Developing alternative sources of water supply including water treatment:** Projects that develop alternative water supplies to build resiliency to the impacts of drought. Projects include, but are not limited to:
    - Constructing wells to provide back-up water supplies during times of drought.
    - Constructing extraction wells at groundwater banks to improve extraction and return capabilities during dry years.
    - Constructing or expanding small-scale water treatment facilities to treat impaired groundwater, municipal wastewater, stormwater runoff, for environmental, agricultural, or potable purposes.
    - Constructing stormwater capture and reuse systems, including green stormwater infrastructure solutions such as rain gardens, cisterns and bioswales.
    - Installing residential grey water and rain catchment systems.

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

Task B Projects are intended to help provide entities with water use information and tools to monitor the onset of drought, detect different levels of drought that may trigger certain drought mitigation and response actions, and identify potential strategies to address drought. Task B Projects also includes developing tools that facilitate water marketing between willing buyers and sellers to redistribute water supplies to meet other existing needs or uses (e.g., agricultural, municipal, or dedication to in-stream flows).

Task B Projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Developing water management, water marketing, and modeling tools to help communities evaluate options and implement strategies to address drought.**
    - Developing online decision support tools to help communities identify alternative water supplies or water management options in times of drought.
        - For example, Reclamation has partnered with the State of Oklahoma to develop a drought tool familiarizing users with alternative sources of supply, treatment processes, distribution options, short term equipment solutions for treatment, and permitting requirements, see www.owrb.ok.gov/drought/Drought tool.pps.
        - Also, in 2015, Reclamation awarded the Texas Water Development Board with a Drought Resiliency Grant to modify their existing drought prediction tool to provide more accurate probabilistic forecast of average May - July rainfall, reservoir levels, and reservoir storage across the state by county. The project was completed in 2017, and the forecasts are updated bi-weekly and made accessible for water managers through the Water Data for Texas website.
    - Developing new models or improving existing models for analyzing and predicting drought conditions. Such models should be based on proven methods to analyze drought frequency, duration, and intensity, as opposed to research type efforts.
    - Developing water budgets and tiered pricing programs that incentivize decreased consumptive use. Tiered pricing can be paired with water budgets to reward customers who use less water by charging lower rates for water in a lower tier. For example, Tier I pricing can include a relatively low price for indoor water use within a budgeted amount (e.g., 55 gallons per person per day). Reasonable water use above that amount—assumed to be for outdoor use—would be included within Tier 2 pricing at a higher cost than Tier 1. Tier 3 would establish an even higher price for all water use that exceeds the total water budget.
    - Real-time operational modeling to track supply conditions and demands. Modeling can be used to analyze different operational scenarios to optimize pumping capacities, evaluate user restrictions, water delivery needs, etc., and determine how to best meet other compliance standards such as temperature control points, water quality, or Endangered Species Act (ESA)-related requirements.
    - Assessing water quality with respect to the level of drought to determine appropriate measures to protect water quality for fish and wildlife, agriculture, and human consumption (e.g., water quality testing or constructing groundwater monitoring wells).

  - Developing tools to facilitate water marketing, connecting willing sellers and willing buyers that want to participate in the buying, selling, leasing, or exchanging of water.

- **Installing water measurement equipment and monitoring instrumentation devices to accurately track water supply conditions** (e.g., water service meters, stream flow measurement structures, flow meters, well level instruments, reservoir level monitors). ***Note:*** *Projects to install meters or other water measurement devices are considered routine water management activities and are, therefore, not eligible for funding under this program as a standalone project.* However, meters or other measuring devices are eligible as a necessary sub-component of another eligible Drought Resiliency Project as described in Tasks A-C (e.g., meters could be coupled with development of an online consumptive use website for consumers to see and adjust their habits). Projects may include, but are not limited to:
  - Improving measurement accuracy (e.g., installing weirs, flumes, ramps, etc. in open channels or installing meters in pressurized pipes).
  - Installing dual municipal meters to track indoor versus outdoor water use, allowing water purveyors to control or discourage landscape irrigation and other outdoor uses in times of drought.
  - Installing and/or modifying monitoring equipment associated with stream flow measurement devices, water level sensors, etc.

B.2. Cost-Sharing Requirements

For projects submitted under this funding opportunity, applicants must be capable of cost sharing 50 percent or more of the total project costs.

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.

Drought resiliency projects that primarily provide ecological benefits and values should be submitted under the Environmental Water Resources funding opportunity where the Federal cost-share may be up to 75 percent of the project's cost if certain conditions are met. See Attachment A2. Cost-Sharing Requirements *for more details.*

B.3. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria portion should be addressed in the technical proposal section of the application. Applications should thoroughly address each criterion and any subcriterion in the order presented below. **Applications will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria listed below.** If the work described in your application is a phase of a larger project, only discuss the benefits that will result directly from the work discussed in the technical project description and that is reflected in the budget, not the larger project.

Evaluation Criteria Scoring Summary	Points:
A. Project Benefits	40
B. Drought Planning and Preparedness	15
C. Severity of Actual or Potential Drought Impacts to be Addressed by the Project	15
D. Project Implementation	10
E. Nexus to Reclamation	10
F. Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities	10
Total	***100***

Note: Projects may be prioritized to ensure balance among the program task areas and to ensure that the projects address the goals and objectives of the funding opportunity.

Evaluation Criterion A—Project Benefits (40 points)

Up to **40 points** may be awarded based on the expected drought resiliency benefits of the proposed project. Proposals containing a well-supported and detailed description of both quantifiable and qualitative benefits will receive the most points under this criterion.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that funding is prioritized for drought resiliency projects that will provide significant benefits to drought resiliency, in support of the Department's priorities to create a conservation stewardship legacy and modernize our infrastructure.

Corresponding to the task areas, there are projects that will make additional water supplies available or improve water management. Please describe how the proposed project will improve drought resiliency and answer all applicable questions:

- How will the project build long-term resilience to drought? How many years will the project continue to provide benefits?
- Will the project make additional water supplies available?
    - If so, what is the estimated quantity of additional supply the project will provide and how was this estimate calculated? Provide this quantity in acre-feet per year as the average annual benefit over ten years (e.g., if the project captures flood flows in wet years, provide the average benefit over ten years including dry years).
    - What percentage of the total water supply does the additional water supply represent? How was this estimate calculated?
    - Provide a brief qualitative description of the degree/significance of the benefits associated with the additional water supplies.

- Will the project improve the management of water supplies? For example, will the project increase efficiency, increase operational flexibility, or facilitate water marketing (e.g., improve the ability to deliver water during drought or access other sources of supply)?
    - If so, how will the project increase efficiency or operational flexibility?
    - What is the estimated quantity of water that will be better managed as a result of this project? How was this estimate calculated? Provide this quantity in acre-feet per year as the average annual benefit over ten years (e.g., if the project captures flood flows in wet years, provide the average benefit over ten years including dry years).
    - How will the project increase efficiency or operational flexibility?
    - What percentage of the total water supply does the water better managed represent? How was this estimate calculated?
    - Provide a brief qualitative description of the degree/significance of anticipated water management benefits.
    - Will the project make new information available to water managers? If so, what is that information and how will it improve water management?

If the proposed project includes any of the following components, please provide the applicable additional information:

- **Saltwater Barriers —**What supply of water is the barrier protecting and to what degree is it comprehensive protection? What is the protected water supply mainly used for?
- **Wells —**What is the estimated capacity of the new well(s), and how was the estimate calculated? How much water do you plan to extract through the well(s)? Will the well be used as a primary supply or supplemental supply when there is a lack of surface supplies? Please provide information documenting that proposed well(s) will not adversely impact the aquifer it/they are pumping from (overdraft or land subsidence). At a minimum, this should include aquifer description, information on existing or planned aquifer recharge facilities, a map of the well location and other nearby surface water supplies, and physical descriptions of the proposed well(s) (depth, diameter, casing description, etc.). If available, information should be provided on nearby wells (sizes, capacities, yields, etc.), aquifer test results, and if the area is currently experiencing aquifer overdraft or land subsidence. Please describe the groundwater monitoring plan that will be undertaken and the associated monitoring triggers for mitigation actions. Describe how the mitigation actions will respond to or help avoid any significant adverse impacts to third parties that occur due to groundwater pumping.
- **New Water Marketing Tool or Program —**How does the new tool or program increase the flexibility of acquiring water on the open market? What is the scope of water users and uses that will benefit? Are there any legal issues pertaining to water marketing that could hinder project implementation (e.g., restrictions under Reclamation or state law or contracts, or individual project authorities).

- **Metering/Water Measurement Projects —**To what extent are the methods tested/proven? To what degree will the project improve the ability to predict the onset of drought earlier and/or with more certainty? To what degree will the project improve the ability to anticipate the severity and magnitude of drought? To what degree will the project improve the likelihood/timing of detecting mitigation action triggers? Explain why this is a necessary sub-component of an eligible Drought Resiliency Project as described in Tasks A and B.

Evaluation Criterion B—Drought Planning and Preparedness (15 points)

Up to **15 points** may be awarded for a proposal based on the extent that the proposed drought resiliency project(s) is supported by an existing drought plan. Such drought plans do not require Reclamation approval and may include plans prepared by someone other than the applicant (e.g., an existing state, county, municipal, or other plan is acceptable). The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that funding is prioritized for drought resiliency projects that have a foundation in collaborative planning efforts.

Proposals that demonstrate that the proposed project is clearly supported by an existing drought plan will be awarded the most points under this criterion. *Please note that this criterion does not address the benefits of the project and the description should be limited to the extent to which a plan supports the project. Project benefits are addressed under* Evaluation Criterion A—Project Benefits*, above.*

For purposes of evaluating this criterion, please:

- Attach a copy of the applicable drought plan, or sections of the plan, as an appendix to your application. These pages will not be included in the total page count for the application.
- Explain how the applicable plan addresses drought. Proposals that reference plans clearly intended to prepare for and address drought will receive more points under this criterion.
    - Explain whether the drought plan was developed with input from multiple stakeholders. Was the drought plan developed through a collaborative process?
    - Does the drought plan include consideration of climate change impacts to water resources or drought?
- Describe how your proposed drought resiliency project is supported by and existing drought plan.
    - Does the drought plan identify the proposed project as a potential mitigation or response action?
    - Does the proposed project implement a goal or need identified in the drought plan?
    - Describe how the proposed project is prioritized in the referenced drought plan.

Evaluation Criterion C—Severity of Actual or Potential Drought Impacts to be addressed by the Project (15 points)

Up to **15 points** may be awarded based upon the severity of actual or potential drought impacts to be addressed by the project. Proposals that address more urgent needs and more severe drought impacts will receive higher priority consideration on this criterion than proposals that address less significant needs and impacts.

Describe the severity of the impacts that will be addressed by the project:

- What are the ongoing or potential drought impacts to specific sectors in the project area if no action is taken (e.g., impacts to agriculture, environment, hydropower, recreation and tourism, forestry), and how severe are those impacts? Impacts should be quantified and documented to the extent possible. For example, impacts could include, but are not limited to:
    - Whether there are public health concerns or social concerns associated with current or potential drought conditions (e.g., Are there water quality concerns including past or potential violations of drinking water standards, increased risk of wildfire, or past or potential shortages of drinking water supplies? Does the community have another water source available to them if their water service is interrupted?).
    - Whether there are ongoing or potential environmental impacts (e.g., impacts to endangered, threatened, or candidate species or habitat).
    - Whether there are ongoing, past, or potential, local, or economic losses associated with current drought conditions (e.g., business, agriculture, or reduced real estate values).
    - Whether there are other drought-related impacts not identified above (e.g., tensions over water that could result in a water-related crisis or conflict).
- Describe existing or potential drought conditions in the project area.
    - Is the project in an area that is currently suffering from drought or which has recently suffered from drought? Please describe existing or recent drought conditions, including when and the period of time that the area has experienced drought conditions (please provide supporting documentation, [e.g., Drought Monitor, droughtmonitor.unl.edu]).
    - Describe any projected increases to the severity or duration of drought in the project area resulting from climate change and other changes to water supply availability. Provide support for your response (e.g., reference a recent climate informed analysis, if available).

Evaluation Criterion D—Project Implementation (10 points)

Up to **10 points** may be awarded based upon the extent to which the proposed project is capable of proceeding upon entering into a financial assistance agreement. Please note, if your project is selected, responses provided in this section will be used to develop the scope of work that will be included in the financial assistance agreement.

Applications that include a detailed project implementation plan (e.g., estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates) will receive the most points under this criterion.

- Describe the implementation plan of the proposed project. Please include an estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates. Milestones may include, but are not limited to, the following: design, environmental and cultural resources compliance, permitting, construction/installation.

- Describe any permits that will be required, along with the process for obtaining such permits.
- Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of the proposed project.
- Describe any new policies or administrative actions required to implement the project.

Evaluation Criterion E—Nexus to Reclamation (10 points)

Up to **10 points** may be awarded if the proposed project is connected to a Reclamation project or Reclamation activity. No points will be awarded for proposals without connection to a Reclamation project or Reclamation activity.

- Describe the nexus between the proposed project and a Reclamation project or Reclamation activity. Please consider the following:
    - Does the applicant have a water service, repayment, or O&M contract with Reclamation?
    - If the applicant is not a Reclamation contractor, does the applicant receive Reclamation water through a Reclamation contractor or by any other contractual means?
    - Will the proposed work benefit a Reclamation project area or activity?
    - Is the applicant a Tribe?

Evaluation Criterion F—Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (10 points)

Up to **10 points** may be awarded based on the extent that the project demonstrates support for the Biden-Harris Administration's priorities, including Presidential Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (E.O. 14008) and Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (E.O. 13985). Consideration under this criterion is also given for tribal benefits and adding ecological value by increasing ecological resiliency to climate change and drought.

Please only address those priorities that are applicable to your project. It is not necessary to address priorities that are not applicable to your project. A project will not necessarily receive more points simply because multiple priorities are addressed. Points will be allocated based on the degree to which the project supports one or more of the priorities listed, and whether the connection to the priority(ies) is well supported in the proposal. **Without repeating benefits already described in Criterions A and B, describe in detail how the proposed project supports a priority(ies) below.**

1. **Climate Change:** E.O. 14008 emphasizes the need to prioritize and take robust actions to reduce climate pollution, increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, protect public health, and conserve our lands, waters, oceans, and biodiversity.
    - In addition to drought resiliency measures, does the proposed project include other natural hazard risk reductions for hazards such as wildfires or floods?

- Does the proposed project include green or sustainable infrastructure to improve community climate resilience such as reducing the urban heat island effect, lowering building energy demands, or reducing the energy needed to manage water? Does this infrastructure complement other green solutions being implemented throughout the region or watershed?
- Will the proposed project establish and use a renewable energy source?
- Does the proposed project seek to reduce or mitigate climate pollutions such as air or water pollution?
- Will the proposed project reduce greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering carbon in soils, grasses, trees, and other vegetation?
- Does the proposed project have a conservation or management component that will promote healthy lands and soils or serve to protect water supplies and its associated uses?
- Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?

2. **Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities:** E.O. 14008 and E.O. 13985 affirm the advancement of environmental justice and equity for all through the development and funding of programs to invest in disadvantaged or underserved communities.
   - Will the proposed project serve or benefit a disadvantaged or historically underserved community? Benefits can include, but are not limited to, public health and safety through water quality improvements, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities.
   - If the proposed project is providing benefits to a disadvantaged community, provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the community meets the applicable state criteria or meets the definition in Section 1015 of the Cooperative Watershed Act (defined as a community with an annual median household income that is less than 100 percent of the statewide annual median household income for the state).
   - If the proposed project is providing benefits to an underserved community, provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the community meets the underserved definition in E.O. 13985, which includes populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

3. **Tribal Benefits:** The Department of the Interior is committed to strengthening tribal sovereignty and the fulfillment of Federal tribal trust responsibilities. The President's memorandum, "Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships," asserts the importance of honoring the Federal government's commitments to Tribal Nations.
   - Does the proposed project support tribal resilience to climate change and drought impacts or provide other tribal benefits such as improved public health and safety through water quality improvements, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities?

- Does the proposed project support Reclamation's tribal trust responsibilities or a Reclamation activity with a Tribe?

4. **Ecological Value:** Drought resiliency projects often provide environmental benefits in addition to water supply reliability benefits for other users. Ecological resiliency is crucial to sustain ecosystems that can respond to and recover from external stressors resulting from climate change and drought.

    - Does the project seek to improve ecological climate change resiliency of a wetland, river, or stream to benefit to wildlife, fisheries, or habitats? Do these benefits support an endangered or threatened species?
    - What are the types and quantities of environmental benefits provided, such as the types of species and the numbers benefited, acreage of habitat improved, restored, or protected, or the amount of additional stream flow added? How were these benefits calculated?
    - Will the proposed project reduce the likelihood of a species listing or otherwise improve the species status?

Attachment C: Water and Energy Efficiency Grants

Attachment C: Water and Energy Efficiency Grants

C.1. Eligibility Information and Cost Sharing Requirements

Eligible Applicants

Under P.L. 111-11, Section 9502, applicants eligible to receive an award under this funding opportunity include:

Category A applicants:

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

Category B applicants:

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

Applicant Location

Applicants must also be located in one of the following states or territories: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Ineligible Applicants

Those not eligible include, but are not limited to, the following entities:

- Federal governmental entities
- Institutions of higher education
- Individuals
- 501(c)4 organizations
- 501(c)6 organizations

Eligible Projects

Water conservation and renewable energy projects eligible for funding under this funding opportunity are described below. Applications may include any one, or a combination, of the types of projects described. In general, if you are seeking funding for multiple projects (e.g., a piping project and a hydropower project) and the projects are interrelated or closely related, they should be combined in one application.

Water Conservation Projects

Water conservation projects result in quantifiable and sustained water savings or improved water management. Please note that an agreement will not be awarded for an improvement to conserve irrigation water unless the applicant agrees to the terms of Section 9504(a)(3)(B) of Public Law 111-11.

Eligible water conservation projects include:

- **Canal Lining/Piping:** Projects that line or pipe canals, resulting in conserved water. Projects include, but are not limited to:
  - Installing new proven lining materials or technology
  - Converting open canals to pipeline
  - Improving existing conveyance and delivery infrastructure
- **Municipal Metering:** Projects that install meters, resulting in measurable water savings. Projects include, but are not limited to:
  - Installing end-user water service meters, e.g., for a residential or commercial building unit.
  - Installing distribution system meters associated with production and/or leakage quantification. Note that distribution system meters will not receive points for quantifiable water savings under Evaluation Criterion A – Quantifiable Water Savings. Accordingly, to receive points under Evaluation Criterion A, these projects must be paired with a complementary project component that will result in water savings, e.g., pipe installation using upgraded materials, or individual water service meters
- **Irrigation Flow Measurement:** Projects that improve measurement accuracy and result in reduced spills and over-deliveries to irrigators. Projects include, but are not limited to:
  - Installing weirs, flumes, ramps, etc. in open channels
  - Installing meters in pressurized pipes
- **Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition and Automation (SCADA)**: Projects that install SCADA and/or automation components that provide water savings when irrigation delivery system operational efficiency is improved to reduce spills, over-deliveries, and seepage. Projects include, but are not limited to:
  - Installing SCADA components that allow for remote monitoring of irrigation delivery system conditions (flow rates, water elevations, controls devices openings, etc.)
  - Installing automation components that allow for remote operation of delivery system control features (gates, valves, turnouts, etc.)

- **Irrigation Measures:** Projects that provide water savings by reducing outdoor water usage. These measures include turf removal, Smart irrigation controllers (weather or soil-moisture based), and high-efficiency nozzles (sprinkler heads). These measures are typically promoted by water entities through rebates or direct-install programs. Projects include, but are not limited to:
    - Removing turf
    - Installing Smart irrigation controllers
    - Installing high-efficiency nozzles (e.g., sprinkler heads)
- **High-Efficiency Indoor Appliances and Fixtures:** Projects that promote installation of high-efficiency indoor appliances and fixtures to provide water savings for municipal water entities where there is significant potential for replacing existing non-efficient indoor appliances and fixtures. This is typically promoted by water entities through rebates or direct-install programs.

Renewable Energy Projects

Projects that increase the use of renewable energy sources in managing and delivering water and/or projects that upgrade existing water management facilities resulting in quantifiable and sustained energy savings. Projects include, but are not limited to, those discussed in the following subsections.

Implementing renewable energy projects related to water management and delivery include, but are not limited to:

- Installing a small-scale hydroelectric facility that enables use of renewable energy sources (e.g., installing low-head hydrokinetic power generation units in a water system)
- Installing solar-electric, wind energy, or geothermal power systems that enables use of renewable energy sources (e.g., replacing fossil fuel powered pumps with renewable energy based pumps)

C.2. Cost-Sharing Requirements

For projects submitted under this funding opportunity, applicants must be capable of cost sharing *50* percent or more of the total project costs.

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.

Water and Energy Efficiency Grants projects that primarily provide ecological benefits and values should be submitted under the Environmental Water Resources Projects funding opportunity where the Federal cost-share may be up to 75 percent of the project's cost if certain conditions are met. See Attachment A2. Cost-Sharing Requirements *for more information.*

C.3. Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria prioritize projects that are intended to meet the objectives stated in Section 9504(a) of the Secure Water Act and that align with priorities of the Biden-Harris Administration, including Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (E.O. 14008) and Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (E.O. 13985). Applications should thoroughly address each criterion and any sub-criterion in the order presented below. It is suggested that applicants copy and paste the below criteria and subcriteria into their applications to ensure that all necessary information is adequately addressed. **Applications will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria listed below.** If the work described in your application is a phase of a larger project, only discuss the benefits that will result directly from the work discussed in the technical project description and that is reflected in the budget, not the larger project.

The evaluation criteria portion should be addressed in the technical proposal section of the application.

Evaluation Criteria: Scoring Summary	Points:
A. Quantifiable Water Savings	26
B. Renewable Energy	20
C. Sustainability Benefits	20
D. Complementing On-Farm Irrigation Improvements	10
E. Planning and Implementation	8
F. Collaboration	6
G: Additional Non-Federal Funding	6
H: Nexus to Reclamation	4
Total	***100***

Note: Since the funding opportunity is open to a variety of project types, Evaluation Criteria A-D may not apply to every project. For example, a water savings project (Criterion A) may not include implementation of a renewable energy component (Criterion B). Please provide as much detail and support as you can for those criteria in A-D that are applicable to your project. All applicants should respond to Evaluation Criteria E-H.

Evaluation Criterion A—Quantifiable Water Savings (26 points)

Up to 26 points may be awarded for this criterion. This criterion prioritizes projects that will conserve water and improve water use efficiency, supporting the goals of E.O. 14008. Points will be allocated based on the quantifiable water savings expected as a result of the project. Points will be allocated to give greater consideration to projects that are expected to result in more significant water savings.

All applicants should be sure to address the following:

1) **Describe the amount of estimated water savings.** For projects that conserve water, please state the estimated amount of water expected to be conserved (in acre-feet per year) as a direct result of this project.

   Please include a specific quantifiable water savings estimate; do not include a range of potential water savings.

2) **Describe current losses:** Please explain where the water that will be conserved is currently going and how it is being used. Consider the following:

   a. Explain where current losses are going (e.g., back to the stream, spilled at the end of the ditch, or seeping into the ground)?

   b. If known, please explain how current losses are being used. For example, are current losses returning to the system for use by others? Are current losses entering an impaired groundwater table becoming unsuitable for future use?

   c. Are there any known benefits associated with where the current losses are going? For example, is seepage water providing additional habitat for fish or animal species?

3) **Describe the support/documentation of estimated water savings:** Please provide sufficient detail supporting how the estimate was determined, including all supporting calculations. Note: projects that do not provide sufficient supporting detail/calculations may not receive credit under this section. Please be sure to consider the questions associated with your project type (listed below) when determining the estimated water savings, along with the necessary support needed for a full review of your proposal.

   In addition, please note that using visual observations alone to calculate water savings, without additional documentation/data, is <u>not</u> sufficient to receive credit under this section. Further, the water savings must be the result of reducing or eliminating a current, ongoing loss—not the result of an expected future loss.

4) **Please address the following questions according to the type of infrastructure improvement you are proposing for funding.**

   (1) **Canal Lining/Piping:** Canal lining/piping projects can provide water savings when irrigation delivery systems experience significant losses due to canal seepage. Applicants proposing lining/piping projects should address the following:

      a. How has the estimated average annual water savings that will result from the project been determined? Please provide all relevant calculations, assumptions, and supporting data.

      b. How have average annual canal seepage losses been determined? Have ponding and/or inflow/outflow tests been conducted to determine seepage rates under varying conditions? If so, please provide detailed descriptions of testing methods and

all results. If not, please provide an explanation of the method(s) used to calculate seepage losses. All estimates should be supported with multiple sets of data/measurements from representative sections of canals.

c. What are the expected post-project seepage/leakage losses and how were these estimates determined (e.g., can data specific to the type of material being used in the project be provided)?

d. What are the anticipated annual transit loss reductions in terms of acre-feet per mile for the overall project and for each section of canal included in the project?

e. How will actual canal loss seepage reductions be verified?

f. Include a detailed description of the materials being used.

(2) **Municipal Metering:** Municipal metering projects can provide water savings when individual user meters are installed where none exist to allow for unit or tiered pricing, when existing individual user meters are replaced with advanced metering infrastructure, and when new meters are installed within a distribution system to assist with leakage reduction. To receive credit for water savings for a municipal metering project, an applicant must provide a detailed description of the method used to estimate savings, including references to documented savings from similar previously implemented projects. Applicants proposing municipal metering projects should address the following:

a. How has the estimated average annual water savings that will result from the project been determined? Please provide all relevant calculations, assumptions, and supporting data.

b. How have current distribution system losses and/or the potential for reductions in water use by individual users been determined?

c. For installing end-user water service meters, e.g., for a residential or commercial building unit., refer to studies in the region or in the applicant's service area that are relevant to water use patterns and the potential for reducing such use. In the absence of such studies, please explain in detail how expected water use reductions have been estimated and the basis for the estimations.

d. Installation of distribution system meters will not receive points under this criterion. Accordingly, these projects must be paired with a complementary project component that will result in water savings in order for the proposal to receive credit for water savings, e.g., pipe installation using upgraded materials, or individual water service meters.

e. What types (manufacturer and model) of devices will be installed and what quantity of each?

f. How will actual water savings be verified upon completion of the project?

(3) **Irrigation Flow Measurement:** Irrigation flow measurement improvements can provide water savings when improved measurement accuracy results in reduced spills and over-deliveries to irrigators. Applicants proposing municipal metering projects should address the following:

a. How have average annual water savings estimates been determined? Please provide all relevant calculations, assumptions, and supporting data.

b. Have current operational losses been determined? If water savings are based on a reduction of spills, please provide support for the amount of water currently being lost to spills.

c. Are flows currently measured at proposed sites and if so, what is the accuracy of existing devices? How has the existing measurement accuracy been established?

d. Provide detailed descriptions of all proposed flow measurement devices, including accuracy and the basis for the accuracy.

e. Will annual farm delivery volumes be reduced by more efficient and timely deliveries? If so, how has this reduction been estimated?

f. How will actual water savings be verified upon completion of the project?

(4) **Turf Removal:** Applicants proposing turf removal projects should address the following:

a. How have average annual water savings estimates been determined? Please provide all relevant calculations, assumptions, and supporting data.

b. What is the total surface area of turf to be removed and what is the estimated average annual turf consumptive use rate per unit area?

c. Was historical water consumption data evaluated to estimate average annual turf consumptive use per unit area? If so, did the evaluation include a weather adjustment component?

d. Will site audits be performed before applicants are accepted into the program?

e. How will actual water savings be verified upon completion of the project?

(5) **Smart Irrigation Controllers and High-Efficiency Nozzles:** Applicants proposing smart irrigation controller or high-efficiency nozzle projects should address the following:

a. How have average annual water savings estimates been determined? Please provide all relevant calculations, assumptions, and supporting data.

b. Was historical water consumption data evaluated to estimate the percent reduction in water demand per unit area of irrigated landscape? If so, did the evaluation include a weather adjustment component?

c. What types (manufacturer and model) of devices will be installed and what quantity of each?

d. Will the devices be installed through a rebate or direct-install program?

e. Will site audits be performed before and after installation?

f. How will actual water savings be verified upon completion of the project?

(6) **High-Efficiency Indoor Appliances and Fixtures:** Installing high- efficiency indoor appliances and fixtures can provide water savings for municipal water entities where there is significant potential for replacing existing non-efficient indoor appliances and fixtures. Applicants proposing high-efficiency indoor appliance and fixtures projects should address the following:

a. How have average annual water savings estimates been determined? Please provide all relevant calculations, assumptions, and supporting data.

b. What types of appliances and fixtures (clothes washers, shower heads, etc.) will be installed and what quantity of each?

c. Have studies been conducted to verify the existence of non-efficient appliances and fixtures? Provide published water savings rates for each of these devices and reference the source for each of the device savings rates.

d. Will the devices be installed through rebate or direct-install programs?

e. How will actual water savings be verified upon completion of the project?

Note that an agreement will not be awarded for an improvement to conserve irrigation water unless the applicant agrees to the terms of Section 9504(a)(3)(B) of Public Law 111-11.

Evaluation Criterion B—Renewable Energy (20 points)

Up to ***20 points*** *may be awarded based on the extent to which the project increases the use of renewable energy or otherwise results in increased energy efficiency and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.*

For projects that include construction or installation of renewable energy components, please respond to Subcriterion No. B.1: Implementing Renewable Energy Projects Related to Water Management and Delivery. If the project does not implement a renewable energy project but will increase energy efficiency, please respond to Subcriterion No. B.2. Increasing Energy Efficiency in Water Management. If the project has separate components that will result in both implementing a renewable energy project and increasing energy efficiency, an applicant may respond to both.

Note: an applicant may receive points under both subcriterion No.B.1 and B.2 if the project consists of an energy efficiency component separate from the renewable energy component of the project. However, an applicant may receive no more than 20 points total under both subcriteria No. B.1 and B.2.

Subcriterion No. B.1: Implementing Renewable Energy Projects Related to Water Management and Delivery

Up to ***20 points*** *may be awarded for projects that include construction or installation of renewable energy components (e.g., hydroelectric units, solar- electric facilities, wind energy systems, or facilities that otherwise enable the use of renewable energy). Projects such as small-scale solar resulting in minimal energy savings or production will be considered under Subcriterion No. B.2 below.*

Describe the amount of energy capacity. For projects that implement renewable energy systems, state the estimated amount of capacity (in kilowatts) of the system. Please provide sufficient detail supporting the stated estimate, including all calculations in support of the estimate.

Describe the amount of energy generated. For projects that implement renewable energy systems, state the estimated amount of energy that the system will generate (in kilowatt hours per year). Please provide sufficient detail supporting the stated estimate, including all calculations in support of the estimate. Please explain how the power generated as a result of this project will be used, including any existing or planned agreements and infrastructure.

Describe any other benefits of the renewable energy project. Please describe and provide sufficient detail on any additional benefits expected to result from the renewable energy project, including:

- How the system will combat/offset the impacts of climate change, including an expected reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- Expected environmental benefits of the renewable energy system
- Any expected reduction in the use of energy currently supplied through a Reclamation project
- Anticipated benefits to other sectors/entities
- Expected water needs, if any, of the system

AND/OR

Subcriterion No. B.2: Increasing Energy Efficiency in Water Management

Up to ***10 points*** *may be awarded for projects that address energy demands and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by retrofitting equipment to increase energy efficiency and/or through water conservation improvements that result in reduced pumping or diversions.*

Describe any energy efficiencies that are expected to result from implementation of the water conservation or water efficiency project (e.g., reduced pumping).

- If quantifiable energy savings is expected to result from the project, please provide sufficient details and supporting calculations. If quantifying energy savings, please state the estimated amount in kilowatt hours per year.
- How will the energy efficiency improvement combat/offset the impacts of climate change, including an expected reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- If the project will result in reduced pumping, please describe the current pumping requirements and the types of pumps (e.g., size) currently being used. How would the proposed project impact the current pumping requirements and energy usage?
- Please indicate whether your energy savings estimate originates from the point of diversion or whether the estimate is based upon an alternate site of origin.
- Does the calculation include any energy required to treat the water, if applicable?
- Will the project result in reduced vehicle miles driven, in turn reducing greenhouse gas emissions? Please provide supporting details and calculations.
- Describe any renewable energy components that will result in minimal energy savings/production (e.g., installing small-scale solar as part of a SCADA system).

Evaluation Criterion C—Sustainability Benefits (20 points)

*Up to **20 points** may be awarded under this criterion. This criterion prioritizes projects that address a specific water and/or energy sustainability concern(s), including enhancing drought resilience, addressing the current and future impacts of climate change, and resolving water related conflicts in the region. In addition, this criterion is focused on the benefits associated with the project, including benefits to Tribes, ecosystem benefits, and other benefits to water and/or energy supply sustainability.*

Addressing a specific water and/or energy sustainability concern(s). Will the project address a specific sustainability concern? Please address the following:

- Explain and provide detail of the specific issue(s) in the area that is impacting water sustainability, such as shortages due to drought and/or climate change, increased demand, or reduced deliveries.
- Explain and provide detail of the specific issue(s) in the area that is impacting energy sustainability, such as reliance on fossil fuels, pollution, or interruptions in service.
- Please describe how the project will directly address the concern(s) stated above. For example, if experiencing shortages due to drought or climate change, how will the project directly address and confront the shortages?
- Please address where any conserved water as a result of the project will go and how it will be used, including whether the conserved water will be used to offset groundwater pumping, used to reduce diversions, used to address shortages that impact diversions or reduce deliveries, made available for transfer, left in the river system, or used to meet another intended use.
- Provide a description of the mechanism that will be used, if necessary, to put the conserved water to the intended use.
- Indicate the quantity of conserved water that will be used for the intended purpose(s).

Project benefits. Please provide a detailed explanation of the project benefits and their significance. These benefits may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Combating the Climate Crisis: Presidential Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, focuses on increasing resilience to climate change and supporting climate-resilient development. For additional information on the impacts of climate change throughout the western United States, see: https://www.usbr.gov/climate/secure/docs/2021secure/2021SECUREReport.pdf. Please describe how the project will address climate change, including the following:

a. Please provide specific details and examples on how the project will address the impacts of climate change and help combat the climate crisis.

b. Does this proposed project strengthen water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change?

c. Will the proposed project establish and use a renewable energy source?

d. Will the project result in lower greenhouse gas emissions?

(2) Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities: E.O. 14008 and E.O. 13985 support environmental and economic justice by investing in underserved and disadvantaged communities and addressing the climate-related impacts to these communities, including impacts to public health, safety, and economic opportunities. Please describe how the project supports these Executive Orders, including the following:

a. Does the proposed project directly serve and/or benefit a disadvantaged or historically underserved community? Benefits can include, but are not limited to, public health and safety through water quality improvements, new water supplies, new renewable energy sources, or economic growth opportunities.

b. If the proposed project is providing benefits to a disadvantaged community, provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the community meets the disadvantaged community definition in Section 1015 of the Cooperative Watershed Act (defined as a community with an annual median household income that is less than 100 percent of the statewide annual median household income for the State), or the applicable state criteria for determining disadvantaged status.

c. If the proposed project is providing benefits to an underserved community, provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the community meets the underserved definition in E.O. 13985, which includes populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

(3) Tribal Benefits: The Department of the Interior is committed to strengthening tribal sovereignty and the fulfillment of Federal tribal trust responsibilities. The President's memorandum "Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to Nation Relationships" asserts the importance of honoring the Federal government's commitments to Tribal Nations. Please address the following, if applicable:

a. Does the proposed project directly serve and/or benefit a Tribe? Will the project increase water supply sustainability for an Indian Tribe? Will the project provide renewable energy for an Indian Tribe?

b. Does the proposed project directly support tribal resilience to climate change and drought impacts or provide other tribal benefits such as improved public health and safety through water quality improvements, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities?

(4) Enhancing Drought Resiliency: Please provide information regarding how the project will enhance drought resilience by benefitting the water supply and ecosystem, including the following:

a. Does the project seek to improve ecological resiliency to climate change?

b. Will water remain in the system for longer periods of time? If so, provide details on current/future durations and any expected resulting benefits (e.g., maintaining water temperatures or water levels).

c. Will the project benefit species (e.g., federally threatened or endangered, a federally recognized candidate species, a state listed species, or a species of particular recreational, or economic importance)? Please describe the relationship of the species to the water supply, and whether the species is adversely affected by a

Reclamation project or is subject to a recovery plan or conservation plan under the Endangered Species Act.

d. Please describe any other ecosystem benefits as a direct result of the project.

e. Will the project directly result in more efficient management of the water supply? For example, will the project provide greater flexibility to water managers, resulting in a more efficient use of water supplies?

Projects intended to improve streamflows and that are requesting $500,000 or more in Federal funding must include information about plans to monitor the benefits of the project. Please describe the plan to monitor improved streamflows over a five-year period once the project has been completed. Provide detail on the steps to be taken to carry out the plan.

(5) Other Benefits: Will the project address water and/or energy sustainability in other ways not described above? For example:

a. Will the project assist States and water users in complying with interstate compacts?

b. Will the project benefit multiple sectors and/or users (e.g., agriculture, municipal and industrial, environmental, recreation, or others)?

c. Will the project benefit a larger initiative to address sustainability?

d. Will the project help to prevent a water-related crisis or conflict? Is there frequently tension or litigation over water in the basin?

Evaluation Criterion D—Complementing On-Farm Irrigation Improvements (10 points)

*Up to **10 points** may be awarded for projects that describe in detail how they will **complement on-farm irrigation improvements** eligible for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) financial or technical assistance.*

Note: Scoring under this criterion is based on an overall assessment of the extent to which the WaterSMART Grant project will complement ongoing or future on-farm improvements. Applicants should describe any proposal made to NRCS, or any plans to seek assistance from NRCS in the future, and how an NRCS-assisted activity would complement the WaterSMART Grant project. Financial assistance through EQIP is the most commonly used program by which NRCS helps producers implement improvements to irrigation systems, but NRCS does have additional technical or financial assistance programs that may be available. Applicants may receive maximum points under this criterion by providing the information described in the bullet points below. **Applicants are *not* required to have assurances of NRCS assistance by the application deadline to be awarded the maximum number of points under this sub-criterion.** Reclamation may contact applicants during the review process to gather additional information about pending applications for NRCS assistance if necessary.

Please note: On-farm improvements themselves are *not* eligible activities for funding under this FOA. This criterion is intended to focus on how the WaterSMART Grant project will complement ongoing or future on-farm improvements. NRCS will have a separate application process for the on-farm components of selected projects that may be undertaken in the future, separate of the WaterSMART Grant project.

If the proposed project will complement an on-farm improvement eligible for NRCS assistance, please address the following:

- Describe any planned or ongoing projects by farmers/ranchers that receive water from the applicant to improve on-farm efficiencies.
    - Provide a detailed description of the on-farm efficiency improvements.
    - Have the farmers requested technical or financial assistance from NRCS for the on-farm efficiency projects, or do they plan to in the future?
    - If available, provide documentation that the on-farm projects are eligible for NRCS assistance, that such assistance has or will be requested, and the number or percentage of farms that plan to participate in available NRCS programs.
    - Applicants should provide letters of intent from farmers/ranchers in the affected project areas.
- Describe how the proposed WaterSMART project would complement any ongoing or planned on-farm improvement.
    - Will the proposed WaterSMART project directly facilitate the on-farm improvement? If so, how? For example, installing a pressurized pipe through WaterSMART can help support efficient on-farm irrigation practices, such as drip-irrigation.

      OR

    - Will the proposed WaterSMART project complement the on-farm project by maximizing efficiency in the area? If so, how?
- Describe the on-farm water conservation or water use efficiency benefits that are expected to result from any on-farm work.
    - Estimate the potential on-farm water savings that could result in acre-feet per year. Include support or backup documentation for any calculations or assumptions.
- Please provide a map of your water service area boundaries. If your project is selected for funding under this funding opportunity, this information will help NRCS identify the irrigated lands that may be approved for NRCS funding and technical assistance to complement funded WaterSMART projects.

Note: On-farm water conservation improvements that complement the water delivery improvement projects selected through this funding opportunity may be considered for NRCS funding and technical assistance to the extent that such assistance is available. For more information, including application deadlines and a description of available funding, please contact your local NRCS office. See the NRCS website for office contact information, www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/states/.

Evaluation Criterion E—Planning and Implementation (8 points)

*Up to **8 points** may be awarded for these subcriteria.*

Subcriterion E.1— Project Planning

Points may be awarded for proposals with planning efforts that provide support for the proposed project.

Does the applicant have a Water Conservation Plan and/or System Optimization Review (SOR) in place? Does the project address an adaptation strategy identified in a completed WaterSMART Basin Study? Please self-certify or provide copies of these plans where appropriate to verify that such a plan is in place. Including a specific excerpt or a link to the planning document may also be considered where appropriate. Provide the following information regarding project planning:

(1) Identify any district-wide, or system-wide, planning that provides support for the proposed project. This could include a Water Conservation Plan, SOR, Drought Contingency Plan or other planning efforts done to determine the priority of this project in relation to other potential projects.

(2) Describe how the project conforms to and meets the goals of any applicable planning efforts and identify any aspect of the project that implements a feature of an existing water plan(s).

(3) If applicable, provide a detailed description of how a project is addressing an adaptation strategy specifically identified in a completed WaterSMART Basin Study or Water Management Options Pilot (e.g., a strategy to mitigate the impacts of water shortages resulting from climate change, drought, increased demands, or other causes).

For more information on Basin Studies, including a list of completed basin studies and reports, please visit: www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/bsp.

Subcriterion E.2— Readiness to Proceed

Points may be awarded based upon the extent to which the proposed project is capable of proceeding upon entering into a financial assistance agreement. Please note, if your project is selected, responses provided in this section will be used to develop the scope of work that will be included in the financial assistance agreement.

Applications that include a detailed project implementation plan (e.g., estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates) will receive the most points under this criterion.

- Identify and provide a summary description of the major tasks necessary to complete the project. Note: please do not repeat the more detailed technical project description provided in Section D.2.2.4.; this section should be focused on a summary of the major tasks to be accomplished as part of the project.
- Describe any permits that will be required, along with the process for obtaining such permits.
- Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of the proposed project.

- Describe any new policies or administrative actions required to implement the project.
- Please also include an estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates. Milestones may include, but are not limited to, the following: complete environmental and cultural compliance; mobilization; begin construction/installation; construction/installation (50% complete); and construction/installation (100% complete)

Evaluation Criterion F—Collaboration (6 points)

*Up to **6 points** may be awarded for projects that promote and encourage collaboration among parties in a way that helps increase the sustainability of the water supply.*

Please describe how the project promotes and encourages collaboration. Consider the following:

- Is there widespread support for the project? Please provide specific details regarding any support and/or partners involved in the project. What is the extent of their involvement in the process?
- What is the significance of the collaboration/support?
- Will this project increase the possibility/likelihood of future water conservation improvements by other water users?
- Please attach any relevant supporting documents (e.g., letters of support or memorandum of understanding).

Evaluation Criterion G— Additional Non-Federal Funding (6 points)

*Up to **6 points** may be awarded to proposals that provide non-Federal funding in excess of 50 percent of the project costs. State the percentage of non-Federal funding provided using the following calculation:*

$$\frac{\text{Non-Federal Funding}}{\text{Total Project Cost}}$$

Evaluation Criterion H— Nexus to Reclamation (4 Points)

*Up to **4 points** may be awarded if the proposed project is connected to a Reclamation project or Reclamation activity. No points will be awarded for proposals without connection to a Reclamation project or Reclamation activity.*

Describe the nexus between the proposed project and a Reclamation project or Reclamation activity. Please consider the following:

- Does the applicant have a water service, repayment, or O&M contract with Reclamation?
- If the applicant is not a Reclamation contractor, does the applicant receive Reclamation water through a Reclamation contractor or by any other contractual means?
- Will the proposed work benefit a Reclamation project area or activity?
- Is the applicant a Tribe?