

Bureau of Reclamation

**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

Native American Affairs: Fiscal Year 2025 Colorado River Basin Tribal Drought Resiliency Program

Funding Opportunity Number

R26AS00021

## Table of Contents

BASIC INFORMATION.....	1
ELIGIBILITY .....	3
Cost Sharing Requirement .....	4
GET READY TO APPLY .....	4
Required System Registrations .....	4
PROGRAM OVERVIEW .....	5
Program Goals.....	5
Program Description .....	5
Legislative Authority .....	6
Type of Award .....	6
PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION .....	6
Application Content and Format.....	6
Application Documents.....	7
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES .....	12
Address to Request Application Package .....	12
Submission Dates and Times .....	12
Submission Instructions .....	12
APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.....	13
Eligibility Review .....	13
Merit Review.....	14
Review and Selection Process.....	17
Risk Review .....	18
AWARD NOTICES .....	19
POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION .....	19
Administration and National Policy Requirements .....	19
Reporting.....	21

### BASIC INFORMATION

**Announcement Type:** Initial

**Funding Opportunity Number:** R26AS00021

**Assistance Listing Number(s):** 15.519

**Estimated Total Program Funding:** \$6,000,000

**Expected Number of Awards:** 10

**Award Ceiling:** \$1,000,000

**Award Floor:** \$50,000

**Cost Sharing Required?**

No

**Closing Date Explanation**

Applications must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m., MT, on the listed application due date.

U.S. states and local governments may be required under [Executive Order 12372](#), [Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#) to submit their application to their State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for review. For more information, see the [Intergovernmental Review SPOC List](#).

**Have Questions?**

Questions regarding applicant and project eligibility and application review may be submitted to the attention of Dr. Kristine Reed, Native American Affairs Advisor:

By e-mail: [kareed@usbr.gov](mailto:kareed@usbr.gov)

By phone: (301) 575-7469

Lower Colorado Basin – Jessica Pope,  
[jpope@usbr.gov](mailto:jpope@usbr.gov)  
Phoenix Area Office  
6150 W Thunderbird Road Glendale, Arizona 85306  
(623) 428-7563

Upper Colorado Basin – Ernie Rheaume,  
[erheaume@usbr.gov](mailto:erheaume@usbr.gov)  
Regional Office  
125 State Street  
Salt Lake City, UT 84138  
(970) 317-1487

For questions regarding application and submission, contact the NOFO team at [bor-sha-fafoa@usbr.gov](mailto:bor-sha-fafoa@usbr.gov). Staff availability on the day of the NOFO closing will be limited. Please include the NOFO number R26AS00021 in the subject line of any email correspondence.

**Executive Summary**

The objectives of this NAA/TAP funding opportunity are to provide funding for drought relief actions/projects that mitigate drought impacts for designated federally recognized tribes within the Colorado River Basin (see Eligibility section for list of tribes), and which advance Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities within the Basin.

Proposals should meet one or more of the following objectives:

- Mitigate drought impacts,
- Increase drought resiliency,
- Reduce reliance on declining water sources,
- Increase the efficiency of water deliveries,
- Mitigate the loss of tribal water or water related resources,
- Address drinking water shortages or,
- Advance Presidential or Department of the Interior Priorities in these areas

Reclamation Plans to make Fiscal Year 2025 funds available for proposals selected for this NOFO:

- Maximum award per tribe: \$1,000,000
- No cost share is statutorily required; however, partnering and collaboration, including through cost sharing, is encouraged.

The NAA/TAP demonstrably advances Trump administration priorities, such as those identified in Presidential Executive Order 14154 (January 20, 2025): Unleashing American Energy (E.O. 14154) and Secretarial Order 3418, and aligns with other priorities and requirements, such as those identified in Presidential Executive Order 14332 (August 7, 2025): Improving Oversight in Federal Grantmaking (E.O. 14332).

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligible Applicants**

Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)

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

### **Additional Information on Eligibility**

To be considered for this program, applicants will meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- The tribe must be one of the following federally recognized tribes, as defined in 25 U.S.C. Section 5304, designated Colorado River Basin tribes: Ak-Chin Indian Community; Chemehuevi Indian Tribe; Cocopah Indian Tribe; Colorado River Indian Tribes; Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation; Fort Mojave Indian Tribe; Fort Yuma - Quechan Tribe; Gila River Indian Community; Havasupai Tribe; Hopi Tribe; Hualapai Tribe; Jicarilla Apache Nation; Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians; Las Vegas Paiute Tribe; Moapa Band of Paiute Indians; Navajo Nation; Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah; Pascua Yaqui Tribe; Pueblo of Zuni; Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; San Carlos Apache Tribe; San Juan Southern Paiute; Southern Ute Indian Tribe; Tohono O'odham Nation; Tonto Apache Tribe; Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation; Ute Mountain Ute Tribe; White Mountain Apache Tribe; Yavapai-Apache Nation; and Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe, and
- The proposed project must provide drought relief actions to mitigate adverse drought impacts in the Colorado River Basin.

Any applicant with an enacted Indian Water Rights Settlement, should identify the settlement in their application and might not be eligible for an award under this NOFO due to the uniqueness of each settlement.

***Project activities not eligible for funding under this NOFO include, but are not limited to:***

- Stand-alone Cultural or Feasibility studies (as defined under Reclamation law, which require express congressional authorization).
- Activities that lack definable products or deliverables.
- Specific employment positions within a tribe.
- Activities with a duration of more than 5 years from date of execution of a grant/cooperative agreement.
- Activities that generate data or analyses that have the potential to compromise any study or activities of a U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) Indian water rights negotiation or the Department of Justice in its pursuit of related Indian water rights claims.
- Activities related to non-Federal or non-tribal dams and associated structures.
- Activities providing funding for the administration of contracts or agreements under P.L. 93-638.
- Purchase of equipment as the sole purpose of the activity.
- Water purchases including the purchase or leasing of water rights or water shares.
- Activities in direct support of litigation of any kind.
- Activities that will obligate Reclamation to provide, or are not sustainable unless Reclamation does provide, on-going funding, such as an obligation to provide future funding for operation, maintenance, or replacement.
- Biological activities such as:
  - fisheries work (including collection, analysis and evaluation of background data);
  - habitat restoration unless directly related to water quality and quantity; and
  - ecosystem based activities such as biological surveys, air quality monitoring, and watershed-scale management.

## **Cost Sharing Requirement**

### **Cost Sharing Required?**

No

## **GET READY TO APPLY**

### **Required System Registrations**

#### **Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration**

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

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

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

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

## GRANTS.GOV

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

**Refer to Attachment – Submission Instructions & Tips.**

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Program Goals

- To increase opportunities for designated federally recognized tribes to develop, manage and protect their water and related resources with projects and activities that mitigate the adverse impacts of drought in the Colorado River Basin (see Eligibility section for list of tribes).
- Advancing projects and activities in the Colorado River Basin that meet one or more of the following: mitigate drought impacts, increase drought resiliency, reduce reliance on declining water sources, increase the efficiency of water deliveries, mitigate the loss of tribal water or water related resources, or address drinking water shortages.

### Program Description

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) through the Native American Affairs Technical Assistance Program (NAA/TAP), provides financial and technical assistance to federally recognized tribes in the 17 western states for projects and activities that develop, manage, and protect their water and water related resources.

The NAA/TAP is managed by the Native American Affairs Program (NAAP) within Reclamation’s Office of the Commissioner. NAAP coordinates with Regional Native American Affairs Program Managers to carry out the NAA/TAP.

Funding for the Fiscal Year 2025 Colorado River Basin Tribal Drought Resiliency Program will be provided by NAAP Fiscal Year 2025 annual appropriations.

For more information on this program please visit <https://www.usbr.gov/native/programs/TAPprogram.html>.

Certified Local Governments are encouraged to prioritize projects in support of the celebration of America’s 250th birthday (American250). This may include, but is not limited to, preservation 2 planning, interpretation, public engagement, and rehabilitation projects that recognize and honor the nation’s founding, history, and cultural heritage.

*Prioritization for projects in support of American250, though welcome, is not required for Tribal nations.*

### **Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects**

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

For further information on the Buy America preference, please visit [www.doi.gov/grants/BuyAmerica](http://www.doi.gov/grants/BuyAmerica)

### **Legislative Authority**

Reclamation’s Fiscal Year 2025 Colorado River Basin Tribal Drought Resiliency Program is administered in accordance with the:

- Reclamation Act of 1902, as amended and supplemented and
- Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003, Division D - Energy and Water Development Appropriations, Title II, Sec. 201, Public Law (P. L.) 108-7 (43 USC 373d), which authorizes Reclamation to enter into grants and cooperative agreements with federally recognized Tribes to increase opportunities to develop, manage, and protect their water and water related resources.

### **Type of Award**

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

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

If a cooperative agreement is awarded, the Tribe should expect Reclamation to have substantial involvement in the project, as follows:

Collaboration and participation with the successful applicant in the management of the project and close oversight of the successful applicant’s activities to ensure that the program objectives are being achieved; and oversight may include review, input, and approval at key interim stages of the project.

## **PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION**

### **Application Content and Format**

#### **Pre-Application Requirements**

Prior to applying, applicants should review presidential actions found at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/> and DOI Secretary’s Orders found at: <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order>. By applying in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity, the applicant certifies awareness and compliance with all currently effective and applicable executive orders and secretary’s orders, including but not limited to the

Executive Order titled Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the Executive Order and Secretary’s order titled Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring their proposed activities are consistent with the intent and requirements of these directives.

**Application Documents**

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

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance  Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative’s signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in <a href="#">Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying</a>	Required from all applicants
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required from all applicants
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds <u>and</u> the applicant has used or plans to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award purpose,</li> <li>• Activities to be performed,</li> <li>• Expected deliverables or outcomes,</li> <li>• Intended beneficiaries,</li> </ul> Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)	Required from all applicants

Failure to include a Project Abstract Summary will not result in removal of the proposal from consideration by Reclamation.

**Project Narrative**

The Project Narrative (proposal) will be limited to a maximum of 35 consecutively numbered pages. **The full application, including all attachments, should not exceed 100 pages.** The font

shall be at least 12 points in size and easily readable. Page size shall be 8½ by 11 inches, including charts, maps, and drawings. Margins should be standard 1-inch margins.

Oversized pages will not be accepted.

Submission of a proposal is required. The proposal and evaluation criteria (limited to 35 pages) should include the following sections:

### **Executive Summary**

The executive summary should include:

- The date, applicant name, city, county, and State.
- The project location, provide specific information on the project location within the Colorado River Basin and where work will be conducted, please include a map showing the geographic location. For example, {Tribe's Reservation} is located in {state and county} approximately {distance} miles {direction, e.g., northeast} of {nearest town}. If you are selected for funding, Reclamation may request additional detail regarding your project location.
- A one-paragraph project summary that briefly describes how the proposed project will provide drought relief actions that mitigate drought impacts for designated federally recognized tribe within the Colorado River Basin.
- Describe if the applicant is impacted by the operation of Reclamation water project or if they have a nexus to a Reclamation water project.
- The amount of federal funding requested by the applicant.
- The length of time and estimated completion date for the proposed project (month/year).
- Whether or not the proposed project efforts are focused on a federal facility or will involve Federal land.
- Whether the applicant has an enacted Indian Water Rights Settlement.

### **Title Page**

Provide a brief, informative, and descriptive title for the proposed work that indicates the nature of the project. Include the name and address of the Tribe, and the name and address, e-mail address, and telephone of the Project Manager.

### **Table of Contents**

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

### **Project Description**

Describe the work for which the funding will be used, including any specific activities the work will accomplish. Please include:

- *Background/ Problem Statement:* Description of the problem to be solved by the proposed project as it relates to drought relief in the development, management, or protection of tribal water and water related resources. Include a brief description of the drought deficiencies/hazards/threats to tribal water and water related resources that will be addressed by the proposed activity and why it is a high priority for the tribe.

- *Need for Activity:* Describe the specific need to be addressed by the proposed drought relief activity including the current or historic drought conditions in the tribal or project area, including but not limited to tribal water supplies and water related resources. Clearly indicate how the proposal will strengthen or improve the tribe’s ability to relieve drought impacts and protect, manage, and/or develop its water and water related resources.
- *Anticipated Results/Benefits:* Briefly describe the expected benefits of the proposed activity related to the protection, management, and/or development of tribal water and water related resources and how the proposals will meet one or more of the following objectives:
  - Mitigate drought impacts,
  - Increase drought resiliency,
  - Reduce reliance on declining water sources,
  - Increase the efficiency of water deliveries,
  - Mitigate the loss of tribal water or water related resources, or
  - Address drinking water shortages.

## **Technical Description**

The technical description should describe the work, including specific activities that will be accomplished.

Please address the following in the Technical Description:

### *1. Proposed Scope and Schedule of Activity*

Describe the project tasks and activities proposed by the tribe to address the needs outlined in the previous section. The level of detail should support the commitment of resources to be applied to the activity to accomplish the desired results and permit a comprehensive evaluation of the proposal. For each task, describe:

- planned activities and expected outcomes and milestones
- staff levels and expertise, the number of staff hours, and
- the schedule for completing each task.

Clearly and concisely convey proposed schedule using a visual format such as a table, Gantt chart, or project network diagram. List significant challenges to be addressed and/or opportunities to be realized in the course of the proposed activity.

### *2. Technical Proposal*

The technical proposal provides an opportunity for you to provide a clear description of the technical nature of the project and to address any aspect of the project that reviewers may need additional information to understand. Include whether any permits or approvals are required and explain the plan for obtaining such permits or approvals.

Copying and pasting the Evaluation Criteria (outlined in the Merit Review section) into this section of your application is suggested to ensure that all necessary information is adequately presented to assist in the complete and accurate evaluation of your proposal.

### *3. Environmental and Cultural Resource Considerations (if applicable)*

- Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment? If so, describe all earth-disturbing work and any work that will affect the air, water, or animal habitat, the impacts of such work on the surrounding environment and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts.
- Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a federal threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitat in the project area? If so, would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project?
- Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as “Waters of the United States”? If so, please describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have.
- Are there any adverse impacts to groundwater quality that potentially fall within the jurisdiction of the Ground Water Rule? If so, please describe and estimate the adverse impacts the project may have.
- Are there any adverse impacts that may fall within the jurisdiction of the Safe Drinking Water Act? If so, please describe and estimate the adverse impacts the project may have.
- When was the water delivery system constructed?
- Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously.
- Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?
- Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area?
- Will the proposed project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area?

#### 4. *Project Partners/Participants (if applicable)*

List significant participants and the contribution(s) they will make or tasks for which they will be responsible.

#### **Budget Narrative**

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

Budget items must be:

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

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

- De Minimis Rate: If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal

negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).

- **Negotiated Rate:** State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

Tribes are strongly encouraged to review the procurement standards for federal awards found at [2 CFR Section 200.317](#) through Section [200.326](#) before developing their budget proposal.

The budget narrative provides a written description of the costs included in each budget category on the SF-424A and how they were estimated. While the SF-424A gives the total cost for each category of the budget, the budget narrative gives the item by item breakdown for each category and shows the calculations used to derive the costs. The budget description serves two purposes:

1) it explains how the costs were estimated, and 2) it justifies the need for the cost. See Attachment A for Budget Narrative Guidance. Attachment B is a suggested format for capturing budget details to support the Narrative.

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

### **Environmental and Regulatory Compliance Costs**

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

### **Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures:**

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

### **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:**

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

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

## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

### Address to Request Application Package

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

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

### Submission Dates and Times

**Closing Date for Applications:** 09/23/2026

#### Closing Date Explanation

Applications must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m., MT, on the listed application due date.

### Submission Instructions

#### Apply Through Grants.gov

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

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

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

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

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

By mail or United States Postal Service overnight services:

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

By all other express delivery and courier services:

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

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

Applications can be submitted electronically to the email address below by the submission date and time.

To apply by email, please submit applications by the submission date and time to [dronofo@usbr.gov](mailto:dronofo@usbr.gov). All emailed applications should include the following information:

In the Subject line of the email:

1. the NOFO Number and Fiscal Year (FY2026) In the body of the email:
  1. the NOFO title and number,
  2. the application due date of the specified NOFO,
  3. the Assistance Listing number,
  4. the name of the applicant organization and UEI number(s),
  5. the authorized organizational representative name and contact information (phone and email address),
  6. the name and email of the point of contact regarding matters involving the application.

## APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### Eligibility Review

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Merit Review

An Application Review Committee (ARC), made up of experts in relevant disciplines, will review the technical merit of the application and its relationship with Presidential and Departmental of the Interior priorities, based on the following evaluation criteria:

### **Evaluation Criterion A—Project Need (25 points)**

Up to **25 points** may be awarded based upon the extent to which the proposal demonstrates a compelling need to implement the project. Compelling need should be demonstrated through responses, as applicable, to a subset or all of the following:

- Describe how drought and limited availability of water has affected the tribe's ability to develop, manage, or protect its water and related resources.
- Describe how federal funding will assist in developing the project and, though not required, any cost sharing, collaboration, or partnerships that will leverage federal funding impact.
- What is the magnitude of the near-term and long-term impacts if the proposed project is not funded (e.g., access to water, regulatory, and social risk etc.)?
- Does the project address the health and safety of tribe and its members, and if so, how?
- How urgent is the proposed project? Describe any factors that place tribal drinking water supplies or water related resources in imminent jeopardy or threaten the beneficial use of a tribal water resource. Describe the basis for any adverse impacts that are likely to result from such jeopardy or threats.
- Does the project assist in complying with regulatory requirements related to water and related resources, and if so, how?
- Does the project accelerate drought response actions for an earlier realization of project benefits?

### **Evaluation Criterion B—Project Benefits (25 points)**

Up to **25 points** may be awarded based upon evaluation of the benefits that are expected to result from implementing the proposed project/activity. This criterion considers a variety of project benefits to water and related resources, including increases to water availability, reliability and quality, improvements to water management, and/or reduction to conflicts between water users.

Describe the expected benefits and outcomes of the project. It is not necessary to answer all questions in the affirmative to score well on this criterion and points will be allocated based on the degree to which the project mitigates drought impacts as a whole.

- Will the project build long-term resilience to drought for the Colorado River Basin, and if so, how?
- Does the project proposal bring positive impacts to communities by bringing projects to completion or meaningfully advances progress?
- Does the proposed project provide or improve the availability of a reliable drinking water supply? If so, how?
- Does the proposed project protect, improve, or restore tribal water related resources? If so, how?
- Does the project improve development, management, and/or protection of tribal water and water related resources impacted by drought, and if so, how?
- Does the project build or enhance the tribe's internal capacity to manage, develop and protect its water and related resources impacted by drought, and if so, how?
- If the project includes data collection related to water quality impacted by drought:
  - How will data be analyzed and used to benefit the tribe?
  - How will data analyses inform management decisions/ approaches?
- If the project improves water reliability or builds long-term drought resilience for a given tribal community:
  - How and to what extent?
- Does the project assist with addressing current or future water shortages, and if so, how?
- Will the project make additional water supplies available, and if so, how?
  - What is the estimated quantity of additional supply the project will provide and how was this calculated?
  - What percentage of the total water supply does the additional water supply represent?
- Does the project improve tribal water system efficiencies and promote water conservation, and if so, how?
  - What is the estimated average annual quantity of conserved water and how was this calculated?
  - How will the conserved water be used?
- Does the project reduce conflicts related to drought between water users, including instream water necessary to protect aquatic ecosystems, and if so, how?
  - Does the project address heightened competition for finite water supplies or issues related to over-allocation of water rights, and if so, how?

- Does the project promote and encourage collaboration among parties in a way that helps increase the reliability of the water supply, and if so, how?
- Will the project help prevent a water-related crisis or conflict, and if so, how?
- Is there frequently tension or litigation over water in the basin?
- Are there non-tribal partners in the project and what is their roles?
- Is the project supported by existing drought and water resource management plans, and if so, how?
- Does the project protect and enhance the environment, and if so, how?
- Projects that involve riparian and aquatic habitat improvements, must also improve water quality and quantity. Describe the environmental benefits as they relate to improved water quality and quantity.

**Evaluation Criterion C—Project Implementation (20 points)**

Up to **20 points** may be awarded based upon the extent to which the proposed project is capable of proceeding upon entering into a financial assistance agreement. Proposals that describe a detailed 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. In responding to this criterion, provide the following information to demonstrate the capability to implement the project:

- Describe the implementation plan for the project including a budget and schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work and associated costs.
- The plan should also include major tasks and milestones, identify staff with appropriate technical and project management expertise and describe their qualifications and roles in the proposed project or activity.
- Describe the tribe’s capacity to implement the proposed project.
- Describe any plans to contract activities. Describe the procurement standards that will be used to select successful contractors.
- 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.
- Identify staff with appropriate technical and project management expertise and describe their qualifications and roles in the proposed project or activity.
- Describe how the environmental compliance estimate was developed. Has the compliance cost been discussed with the local Reclamation office?

**Evaluation Criterion D—Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (20 points)**

Up to **20 points** may be awarded based on the extent that the project demonstrably:

- advances the Trump Administration’s priorities, including E.O. 14154: Unleashing American Energy, justifies alignment with priorities and requirements in E.O. 14332: Improving Oversight in Federal Grantmaking;

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

Please address only those priorities that are applicable to your project. **All priorities will be given equal consideration.** 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, advances, or otherwise demonstrates an enhancement of one or more of the priorities identified, and whether the connection to the stated priority (or priorities) is (are) well supported.

**Evaluation Criterion E—Construction Priority (10 points)**

Up to **10 points** may be awarded based on the extent that the proposed project is a construction project that can be completed within five years of the project start date. Projects that focus on construction of hard infrastructure to deliver durable, long-term improvements in water reliability and resilience will be prioritized. Hard infrastructure is tangible or built infrastructure. Points will be allocated based on the degree to which the project improves a tribe’s ability to manage, develop or protect their tribal water and water related resources during drought conditions.

- Identify the hard infrastructure construction components of the project, if applicable
- Describe how the construction project will support the tribe’s ability to manage, develop and protect their tribal water and water related resources.
- Identify which tribal water and water related resources will be positively impacted by the construction project; describe how they will be improved or impacted and any drought impacts that will be mitigated.

Applications will be evaluated against the above Evaluation Criteria, which comprise a total of **100 points**.

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

**Review and Selection Process**

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

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

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

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

An ARC, made up of experts in relevant disciplines selected from across Reclamation, will review the technical merit of the application. Evaluation criteria will comprise the total evaluation weight as stated in the “Technical Proposal: Evaluation Criteria,” of this NOFO. Applications will be scored against the evaluation criteria by an ARC. The ARC will also review the application to ensure that the proposed project meets the description of eligible projects and meets the objective of this NOFO.

During ARC review, Reclamation may contact applicants to request clarifications to the information provided, if necessary.

After the merit review, Reclamation conducts a “red-flag” review of top-ranking applications. During this review, Reclamation identifies any reasons a project would not be feasible or advisable, including environmental or cultural compliance, permitting, legal, financial, performance or other concerns. After the red-flag review, Reclamation conducts a “managerial review” of top-ranking applications. The managerial review prioritizes applications for selection based on the objectives of the NOFO. The review of applications will follow the requirements of E.O. 14332, such as ensuring review by senior appointees, and that selections demonstrably advance the President’s policy priorities consistent with applicable law. Geographic dispersion, project types, applicant types, previous award history, and applicant success in implementing Gold Standard Science (E.O. 14303) may be considered during the review. Selections are finalized once these reviews are complete, and all applicants are notified.

## **Risk Review**

Prior to making an award, the applicant will be assessed for their level of risk per [2 CFR 200.206](#). This assessment includes the applicant's financial management capabilities, project

delivery experience, staffing resources, past award performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential for challenges. If an award will be made, special conditions may be applied to the award corresponding to the assessed risk. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$350,000), a review of the applicant's eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records will also be performed per [2 CFR 200.206](#).

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

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

## AWARD NOTICES

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

**Anticipated Project Start Date:** 01/01/2027

**Anticipated Project End Date:** 01/01/2029

Reclamation anticipates contacting potential award recipients and unsuccessful applicants in Spring of 2026 (or later if necessary), subject to the timing and availability of funding.

Reclamation will contact award recipients individually to discuss the time frame for the completion of their agreement.

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

## POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

### Administration and National Policy Requirements

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

**Automated Standard Application for Payments Registration**

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

### **Approvals and Permits**

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

### **Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance**

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

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

### **Geospatial Data**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Intangible Property**

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

### **Real Property**

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

### **Wage Rate Requirements (Davis-Bacon Act)**

Section 41101 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, otherwise known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) requires that all laborers and mechanics employed by contractors or subcontractor in the performance of construction, alteration, or repair work on a project assisted in whole or in part by funding made available under the BIL shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on similar projects in the locality, as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with Subchapter IV of Chapter 31 of Title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Davis-Bacon Act).

### **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**

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

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

## **Reporting**

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

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting,
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),

- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) and 2 CFR 170 requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation, and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts and consortiums equal to or over \$30,000 to SAM.gov.

Report any required mitigation to lessen environmental impacts of the project.

Recipients of Reclamation awards must include the following information in performance reports:

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

### **Other Information**