RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Funding Opportunity Announcement No. R15AS00047

WaterSMART: Drought Contingency Planning Grants for Fiscal Year 2015



U.S. Department of the Interior
Policy and Administration
Bureau of Reclamation
Denver, Colorado

May 2015

Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects America's natural resources and heritage, honors our cultures and tribal communities, and supplies the energy to power our future.

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.

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Synopsis

Federal Agency Name:	Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Policy and Administration
Funding Opportunity Title:	WaterSMART: Drought Contingency Planning Grants for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015
Announcement Type:	Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)
Funding Opportunity Number:	R15AS00047
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:	15.514
Dates: (See FOA Sec IV.B)	Application due date: June 25, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (MST)
Eligible Applicants: (See FOA Sec. III.A)	States, Indian tribes, irrigation districts, water districts, or other organizations with water or power delivery authority located in the Reclamation States or Hawaii.
Recipient Cost Share: (See FOA Sec. III.D)	50 percent or more of total project costs. In exceptional circumstances a reduction or waiver of the non-Federal cost share may be considered.
Federal Funding Amount: (See FOA Sec. II.B)	Up to $200,000 per agreement for a project that can be completed within 2 years
Estimated Number of Agreements to be Awarded:	Approximately 6-10 agreements
Estimated Amount of Funding Available for Award: (See FOA Sec. II.A)	The President's fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget includes $5 million for the Drought Response Program. It is estimated that between $1,000,000 and $2,000,000 total will be available for all awards under this FOA. However, more funding may be made available for awards depending on the demand for other program funding opportunities. Applications submitted under this FOA also may be considered if other funding becomes available for the Drought Response Program in FY 2015 or thereafter. Please refer to <www.usbr.gov/drought/> for updated funding information.

Application Checklist

The following table contains a summary of the information that you are required to submit with a Drought Contingency Planning Grant application.

√	What to Submit	Required Content and Form or Format	When to Submit
	Application for Federal Assistance	Page 17 Form SF 424, available at: <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>	*
	Assurances	Page 17 Form SF 424B available at: <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>	*
	Title Page	Page 17	*
	Table of Contents	Page 17	*
	Technical Proposal: • Executive Summary • Background Data • Technical Project Description • Evaluation Criteria	 Page 18 Page 18 Pages 18 Pages 19	 * * * *
	Drought Contingency Plan	If applicable	*
	Required Permits and Approvals	Page 19	**
	Letters of Support	Page 19	*
	Official Resolution	Page 19	**
	Project Budget: • Funding Plan and Letters of Commitment • Budget proposal • Budget narrative • Budget form	 Pages 20-21 Page 22-23 Page 23-26 Page 26 Form SF 424A, available at: <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>	 * * * *
	Request for Cost Share Reduction or Waiver	Page 26	*

* Submit materials with your application by June 25, 2015.

** Documents should be submitted with your application; however, please refer to Section IV.B – Application Submission Date of this FOA for extended submission dates.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARC	Application Review Committee
ASAP	Automated Standard Application for Payments
CFDA	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
Climate Strategy	Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
Drought Contingency Planning	Development and Update of Drought Contingency Plans
DUNS	Data Universal Number System
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOA	Funding Opportunity Announcement
FY	fiscal year
Framework	Drought Response Program Framework
GO	Grants Officer
Interior	U.S. Department of the Interior
MST	Mountain Standard Time
NDMC	National Drought Mitigation Center
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
P.L.	Public Law
Project	Drought Contingency Planning Project(s)
Reclamation	Bureau of Reclamation
SAM	System for Awards Management
Task Force	Drought Planning Task Force
Title XVI	Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse program
U.S.	United States
USC	United States Code
WaterSMART	Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow

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Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

I.A WaterSMART – Development or Update of Drought Contingency Plans under the Drought Response Program

The United States (U.S.) Department of the Interior's (Interior) WaterSMART (*Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow*) Program establishes a framework to provide Federal leadership and assistance for using water efficiently, integrating water, and energy policies to support the sustainable use of all natural resources, and coordinating the water conservation activities of various Interior bureaus and offices. Through the program, Interior is working to achieve a sustainable water strategy to meet the Nation's water needs.

The Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Drought Response Program is an important part of WaterSMART. Many areas in the west are currently experiencing unprecedented drought conditions. While droughts are common in the western U.S., there is growing evidence that climate change is causing longer and more frequent droughts in some areas.[1] Drought directly impacts Reclamation's ability to deliver water and power to contractors, central to Reclamation's mission. As the Nation's largest wholesale water supplier, Reclamation must support our customers, stakeholders, and partners in building resiliency to drought and climate change.

Reclamation has developed a new Drought Response Program to improve our ability to assist States, tribes, and local governments to prepare for and address drought in advance of a crisis. The Drought Response Program supports a proactive approach to drought by providing assistance to water managers to (1) develop and update comprehensive drought plans (Drought Contingency Planning), (2) implement projects that will build long-term resiliency to drought (Drought Resiliency Projects), and (3) implement emergency response actions.

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) supports the Development and Update of Drought Contingency Plans that will build long-term resiliency to drought and climate change.

For further information on the Drought Response Program, please see www.usbr.gov/drought/.

[1] The Third National Climate Assessment, published by the U.S. Global Change Research Program in 2014, links climate change to increased droughts in western states. http://nca2014.globalchange.gov.

For further information on the WaterSMART Program, please see www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/.

I.B Objective of This FOA

The objective of this FOA is to invite States, Indian tribes, irrigation districts, water districts, and other organizations with water or power delivery authority to leverage their money and resources by cost-sharing Drought Contingency Planning with Reclamation to build resilience to drought in advance of a crisis. Applicants under this FOA may request funding to develop a new drought plan or to update an existing drought plan. Applicants may also request technical assistance from Reclamation for the development of elements of the Drought Contingency Plan (Project). Applicants must provide a 50 percent non-Federal cost-share for the proposed Project.

It is a well-established principle that planning for drought, in advance of a crisis, is far more cost effective than emergency response. As stated on the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) website at http://drought.unl.edu/:

> One frequently cited estimate from FEMA[2] is that "mitigation" – taking steps ahead of time to prevent known impacts from a natural disaster – saves $4 for every $1 expended. Planning ahead is generally seen as more efficient and more effective than measures taken in crisis mode. Drought researchers have found that after-the-fact assistance to farmers, for example, is expensive and doesn't necessarily reach the right people.

Through this FOA, Reclamation seeks to support collaborative planning efforts that use a proactive approach to build long-term resiliency to drought. Drought Contingency Plans developed under this program are required to include participation by multiple stakeholders to encourage more comprehensive plans that address issues important to different sectors (e.g., agricultural, municipal, and environmental). Participation by multiple stakeholders will also broaden support for mitigation and response actions identified in the plans. In addition, Drought Contingency Plans developed under this FOA must include consideration of climate change impacts to water supplies, in order to support long term resiliency to climate change.

Given current budget constraints and competing priorities for limited funding, Reclamation does not expect to submit recommendations to Congress for authorizing legislation or appropriations for construction following the completion of a Drought Contingency Plan. However, potential projects identified in a Drought Contingency Plan may be considered for funding under the Drought Resiliency Projects FOA, so long as the project meets all program and eligibility requirements.

[2] Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

I.C Requirements for Developing or Updating Drought Contingency Plans

Drought Contingency Plans developed under Reclamation's Drought Contingency Planning Grants must meet the requirements of the Drought Response Program. These requirements include the six elements of a Drought Contingency Plan and several required procedural steps, both of which are described immediately below. In developing these requirements, Reclamation relied on proven approaches and common practices used in drought planning. The required elements and steps are intended to guide the planning process, but still allow recipients flexibility to use an approach that meets their budget and planning needs. Guidance on potential approaches for meeting the program requirements is provided in more detail in the Drought Response Program Framework (Framework), available at www.usbr.gov/drought/.

I.C.1 Required Elements to be Included in New Plans or Plan Updates

Drought Contingency Plans must address each of the six elements described immediately below. Updates to the plan may focus on only those elements that have not yet been developed in the plan, or that require further development or updating. Reclamation does not prescribe any one approach to developing and addressing these elements in a plan or plan update. However, further explanation and guidance to support the development of each element is provided in the Framework, available at www.usbr.gov/drought/.

The six required elements for Drought Contingency Plans developed or updated under this FOA are as follows:

1. **Drought Monitoring.—**The plan must establish a process for monitoring near and long-term water availability, and a framework for predicting the probability of future droughts or confirming an existing drought. This includes a process for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of water availability and other drought-related data (e.g., precipitation, temperature, and streamflow levels, among other indicators). The plan must also explain how this data will be used to predict or confirm droughts, including identifying metrics and triggers (e.g., reservoir level reached at a specific reservoir and use of specific drought indices) that may be used to define stages of drought, to trigger mitigation or response actions, and to define the different stages or levels of severity of drought.

2. **Vulnerability Assessment.—**The plan must include a vulnerability assessment evaluating the risks and impacts of drought. A vulnerability assessment is an assessment of the risks to critical resources within the planning area and the factors contributing to those risks. Assessments will drive the development of potential mitigation and response actions. The

assessment must be based on a range of future conditions, including the effects of climate change. Guidance on incorporating climate change information into the plan is provided in Appendix B of the Framework.

3. **Mitigation Actions.—**The plan must identify, evaluate, and prioritize mitigation actions and activities that will build long-term resiliency to drought and that will mitigate the risks posed by drought. Mitigation measures are actions, programs, and strategies implemented before drought to address potential risks and impacts. These actions are outside of regular water management activities and are intended to decrease sector vulnerabilities and reduce the need for response actions.

4. **Response Actions.—**The plan must identify, evaluate, and prioritize response actions and activities that can be implemented during a drought to mitigate the impacts. Response actions are different than mitigation measures in that they are triggered during specific stages of drought to manage the limited supply and decrease the severity of immediate impacts. Response actions can be quickly implemented and provide expeditious benefits.

5. **Operational and Administrative Framework.—**An operational and administrative framework must be developed to identify who is responsible for undertaking the actions necessary to implement each element of the plan, including communicating with the public about those actions. At a minimum, the framework should identify roles, responsibilities, and procedures necessary to:

   - Conduct drought monitoring
   - Initiate response actions, including emergency response actions
   - Initiate mitigation actions
   - Update the plan

   The operational and administrative framework may be integrated into each element of the plan, or documented in a specific section of the plan.

6. **Plan Update Process.—**The plan must describe a process and schedule for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the plan.

These six required elements of a Drought Contingency Plan are based on the 10-Step Drought Planning Process developed by the NDMC, which has been applied by States, tribes, and countries around the world.[3] Building on this

[3] The 10-Step Drought Planning Process was published by NDMC founding director Dr. Donald A. Wilhite in 1990 and recently updated in 2005 as "Drought Preparedness Planning: Building Institutional Capacity," by Wilhite, Michael J. Hayes, and Cody Knutson, published as a chapter in *Drought and Water Crises: Science, Technology, and Management Issues*, edited by Wilhite (CRC Press, 2005).

approach, Reclamation has added a requirement that Drought Contingency Plans incorporate climate change information as part of conducting a Vulnerability Assessment (see element 2, above). Reclamation supports the use of existing climate change information to meet this requirement, where available, including information from Reclamation's WaterSMART Basin Studies or West-Wide Climate Risk Assessments, www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/wcra/, and other non-Reclamation sources.

I.C.2 Required Drought Contingency Planning Steps

Once the applicant has been informed that a proposal submitted under this FOA has been selected for funding, Reclamation will enter into a financial assistance agreement with the applicant, documenting the requirements and conditions related to the provision of financial assistance. Following finalization of the financial assistance agreement, the following Drought Contingency Planning steps are required before development of the plan can begin:

- **Establishment of a Drought Planning Task Force.—**The non-Federal entity(s) identified to receive funding through the proposal selection process will be referred to as the planning lead. At the outset of the planning process, the planning lead will develop a Drought Planning Task Force (Task Force) made up of interested stakeholders within the planning area that want to actively participate in developing the Drought Contingency Plan. The Task Force must have diverse membership representing multiple interests in the planning area.

- **Development of a detailed work plan.—**The work plan will be developed by the planning lead in consultation with Reclamation and will describe in detail how the various tasks included in developing or updating the plan will be accomplished, along with a detailed Project schedule, and the responsibilities of Reclamation (Reclamation will provide input on this element), the planning lead, the Task Force, and other interested stakeholders. The work plan must be finalized and signed by Reclamation and the planning lead before substantive work on the Drought Contingency Plan begins, and may be updated as conditions warrant.

- **Development of a communication and outreach plan.—**As part of the detailed work plan, the planning partners must develop a communication and outreach plan. Explanation of how stakeholders and the public will be involved in the planning process, including providing input on the drafting of the Drought Contingency Plan and providing feedback to the Task Force. Participation could occur through public meetings, webinars, public notices, and other forums or approaches.

Draft drought contingency plans and plan updates developed under this FOA must be submitted to Reclamation for review and approval at least 30-days before the

end of the period of performance for the financial assistance agreement. The purpose of Reclamation's review is to ensure that the plan or plan update meets program requirements.

Note, in responding to the evaluation criteria, Section V.A – Technical Proposal – Evaluation Criteria, applicants are requested to identify in their proposal an initial list of stakeholders that will be involved in support of the planning process; a plan for completing the proposed Project within the two-year time frame; and a plan for stakeholder involvement. This information will form the starting point for the establishment of a Task Force, development of a detailed work plan, and development of a communication and outreach plan if the proposal is funded.

Reporting requirements are addressed separately in Section III.F – Reporting Requirements of this FOA.

The program requirements described here are intended to increase the transparency of the planning process, encourage collaboration and participation by interested stakeholders, and ensure that the Drought Contingency Plan will meet program requirements upon completion. Collaboration with multiple stakeholders representing diverse interests in water resources is required for Planning developed under this program. For further guidance on approaches for meeting the program requirements, please see the Framework, available at http://www.usbr.gov/drought/.

I.D Program Authority

This FOA is issued under the authority of Title II of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 (Public Law [P.L.] 102-250, 43 United States Code [USC] Section 2201-2214), as amended.

I.E Other Drought Response Program Funding Opportunities

A separate FOA for Drought Resiliency Projects will be posted on Grants.gov, www.grants.gov/, concurrently with this FOA. The Drought Resiliency Projects FOA includes financial assistance provided under the Drought Response Program on a 50/50 cost-share basis, to conduct projects that will build resiliency to drought by:

- Increasing the reliability of water supplies
- Improving water management
- Facilitating the voluntary sale, transfer, or exchange of water
- Providing benefits for fish and wildlife and the environment

Section II: Award Information

II.A Total Project Funding

In FY 2015, $5 million has been allocated to the Drought Response Program and between $1 and $2 million of that amount will be available for development or update of Drought Contingency Planning Projects (Project) under this FOA. The total amount of funding for awards under this FOA will depend on the demand for funding under this and other elements of the Drought Response Program. Applications submitted under this FOA may also be considered if other funding becomes available in FY 2015 or thereafter. Please refer to www.usbr.gov/drought/ for updated funding information.

II.B Funding Limitations

The Federal share (Reclamation's share in addition to any other sources of Federal funding) for any Project shall not exceed 50 percent of the total costs. A maximum of $200,000 in Federal funding may be allocated to proposals awarded funding under this FOA. Generally, the non-Federal share of costs must be expended at the same or greater rate as the Federal share of costs.

II.C Reclamation Responsibilities

Awards of funding for Drought Contingency Planning will be made through cooperative financial assistance agreements. Substantial involvement by Reclamation will include review and input on the detailed work plan and the draft drought plan or plan update. It may also include:

- **Collaboration and participation** with the recipient in the management of the drought contingency planning process and close oversight of the recipient's activities to ensure that the program objectives are being achieved.

- **Oversight** may include review, input, and approval at key interim stages of the project.

At the request of the recipient, Reclamation can provide additional technical assistance to develop elements of a Drought Contingency Plan. If you receive additional Reclamation assistance, you must account for such costs in your budget. In most cases, the Federal cost-share will be used to cover the cost of Reclamation technical assistance in the development of the plan. At the request of an applicant, some of the non-Federal cost-share may also be used to cover the cost of Reclamation technical assistance. To discuss technical assistance

available to applicants and the associated costs, contact your local Reclamation office, www.usbr.gov/main/regions.html.

II.D Award Date

Reclamation expects to contact potential award recipients and unsuccessful applicants in July 2015. Within approximately one month of that date, cooperative financial assistance agreements will be awarded to applicants who successfully pass all pre-award reviews and clearances.

Section III: Eligibility Information

III.A Eligible Applicants

Applicants eligible to apply for funding under this FOA include: States, tribes, irrigation districts, water districts, or other organizations with water or power delivery authority located within the Reclamation States and Hawaii, as follows: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming, Utah, and Washington; and Hawaii.

III.B Eligible Projects

Proposals for the development of a new Drought Contingency Plan (Task A), or an update to an existing plan (Task B), are eligible for funding under this FOA. Drought Contingency Plans must address each of the six elements described above in Section I.C.1 – Requirements for Developing or Updating Drought Contingency Plans. Updates to an existing plan may focus on only those elements that have not yet been developed in the existing plan, or that require further development or updating. Applicants awarded funding under this must also meet the required steps for conducting a plan or plan update, also described in Section I.C.2 – Required Drought Contingency Planning Steps. Further explanation and guidance to support the development of each plan element is provided in the Framework, available at http://www.usbr.gov/drought/. Proposals for development of one or more elements of a drought contingency plan that would not result in a completed plan within the timeframe listed in this FOA are not eligible.

III.C Ineligible Projects

Proposals for the development of planning studies, other than Drought Contingency Plans, are not eligible for funding under this FOA. This includes proposals for the development of appraisal investigations, feasibility studies, special studies, Basin Studies, or studies authorized under the Title XVI Water Recycling and Reuse Program, through P.L.102-575, as amended (43 USC 390h et seq.), or under the Rural Water Program, pursuant to the Rural Water Supply Act of 2006, P.L.109-451 (http://www.usbr.gov/ruralwater/).

III.D Length of Planning Process

The development of a Drought Contingency Plan funded under this FOA must be completed within two years of award. Completed Drought Contingency Plans are defined as plans which are found to have met minimum requirements described in Section I.C – Requirements for Developing or Updating Drought Contingency Plans, above, as determined through review by Reclamation.

III.E Cost-Sharing Requirement

Applicants must be able to cost-share 50 percent or more of the total costs of the Drought Contingency Plan (also referred to as Project Costs). Applicants with sufficient resources may choose to contribute a non-Federal cost-share that is greater than 50 percent in order to develop more complex plans.

In exceptional circumstances and upon request of the applicant, Reclamation may reduce or waive the non-Federal cost-share requirement, if an overwhelming Federal interest and a significant financial need are identified. The criteria used by Reclamation to evaluate requests to reduce or waive the non-Federal cost-share requirement are set forth below. In general, the total Federal share provided through a cooperative financial assistance agreement under this FOA is not anticipated to exceed $200,000, even in those cases where a cost-share reduction or waiver is approved. Applicants requesting a reduction or waiver of the non-Federal cost-share must state their request in their proposal and include the required information demonstrating support for the existence of an overwhelming Federal interest and financial hardship, as indicated in section IV.D – Application Content of this FOA. The documentation will not count towards the page total limitations set forth in Section IV.C.3 – Application Format and Length.

- **Technical Assistance.—**At the request of an applicant, some of the non-Federal cost-share may also be used to cover the cost of Reclamation technical assistance in developing elements of a Drought Contingency Plan.

III.E.1 Cost-Share Regulations

All cost-share contributions must meet the applicable administrative and cost principles criteria established in 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200, available at www.ecfr.gov.

III.E.2 In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions constitute the value of noncash contributions that benefit the development of a federally assisted project (e.g. Drought Contingency Plan). These contributions may be in the form of real property, equipment, supplies, and other expendable property, as well as the value of goods and services directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to the study or program. Applicants should refer to 2 CFR 200.434 for regulations regarding the valuation of in-kind donations and contributions, available at www.ecfr.gov.

The cost or value of in-kind contributions that have been or will be relied on to satisfy a cost-sharing or matching requirement for another Federal financial

assistance agreement, a Federal procurement contract, or any other award of Federal funds may not be relied on to satisfy the cost-share requirement for a Drought Contingency Planning Grants under the Drought Response Program.

III.E.3 Pre-Award Costs

Project pre-award costs that have been incurred prior to the date of award but after July 1, 2014, may be submitted for consideration as an allowable portion of the recipient's cost-share for the Project. **In no case will pre-award costs incurred prior to July 1, 2014, be considered for cost-share purposes**.

For example, such costs might include employee compensation costs directly supporting the proposed Project. Reclamation will review the proposed pre-award costs to determine if they are allowable in accordance with the authorizing legislation and applicable cost principles. To be considered allowable, any pre-award costs proposed for consideration under the new awards must comply with all applicable requirements under this FOA.

III.E.4 Indirect Costs

Indirect costs that will be incurred under a Drought Contingency Planning Grant that otherwise will not be recovered, may be included as part of the applicant's Project budget. Indirect costs are those:

- Incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective
- Not readily assignable to any one cost objective

If the applicant has never received a Federal negotiated indirect cost rate, proposals may elect to include a de minimis rate of up to 10 percent of modified total direct costs. Otherwise, if the applicant proposes indirect costs in the budget, then the applicant must either supply a copy of a current federally negotiated indirect cost-rate agreement or obtain an agreement within 1 year of award. For further information on indirect costs and modified total direct costs, refer to 2 CFR Part 200 available at www.ecfr.gov.

III.F Reporting Requirements

Recipients are required to report on the status of the Project on a regular basis. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in the recipient being removed from consideration for funding under future funding opportunities. Please see Section VI.E.2 –Program Performance Reports for information on types and frequency of reports required.

III.G Other Requirements

III.G.1 Laws, Permits, and Approvals

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

III.G.2 System for Award Management (SAM) and Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) Registration

All applicants must be registered in the SAM) prior to award under this FOA. Instructions for registering for SAM are located at www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM. All applicants must maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times while they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration.

All applicants must also be registered with and willing to process all payments through the Department of Treasury ASAP system. All recipients with active financial assistance agreements with Reclamation must be enrolled in ASAP under the appropriate Agency Location Code(s) and the Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number prior to the award of funds. If a recipient has multiple DUNS numbers they must separately enroll within ASAP for each unique DUNS Number and/or Agency. All of the information on the enrollment process for recipients, including the enrollment initiation form and the enrollment mailbox, can be found at www.usbr.gov/mso/aamd/asap.html. Note that 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.

Section IV: Application and Submission Information

IV.A Address to Request Application Package

This document contains all information, forms, and electronic addresses required to obtain the information required for submission of an application.

If you are unable to access this information electronically, you can request paper copies of any of the documents referenced in this FOA by contacting:

By mail: Bureau of Reclamation
Financial Assistance Services
Attn: Ms. Irene M. Hoiby
Mail Code: 84-27852
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

By e-mail: ihoiby@usbr.gov

By telephone: 303-445-2025

IV.B Application Submission

IV.B.1 Submission Date and Time

Application submission date deadline:

- June 25, 2015, 4:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time

Proposals received after the application deadline will not be considered unless it can be determined that the delay was caused by Federal Government mishandling or by the Grants.gov application system.

*Please note that any application submitted to Reclamation for Drought Contingency Planning Grants funding may be subjected to a Freedom of Information Act request (*5 USC Section 552, as amended by P.L. No. 110-175*), and as a result, may be made publicly available. In addition, Reclamation will post all successful applications on the Reclamation website, www.usbr.gov/drought/ after redactions as determined by Reclamation to be necessary.*

IV.B.2 Application Delivery Instructions

Applications may be submitted electronically through http://www.grants.gov or hard copies may be submitted as follows. Under no circumstances will applications received through any other method (such as email or fax) be considered eligible for award.

By mail:	Bureau of Reclamation Acquisition Operations Branch Attn: Ms. Irene M. Hoiby Mail Code: 84-27852 P.O. Box 25007 Denver, CO 80225
By express delivery/ mail services:	Bureau of Reclamation Attn: Ms. Irene M. Hoiby Mail Code: 84-27852 Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 67, Rm. 152 6th Avenue and Kipling Street Denver, CO 80225
By telephone:	303-445-2025

IV.C Instructions for Submission of an Application

Each applicant shall submit an application in accordance with the instructions contained in this section.

IV.C.1 Applications Submitted by Mail or Express Delivery

Please follow these instructions to submit your application by mail or express delivery.

- Applicants shall submit an original and one copy of all application documents for hardcopy submissions. Each document should be clearly identified as the "ORIGINAL" or as a "COPY."
- Only binder clip documents submitted.
- Hard copy applications may be submitted by mail or express methods to the addresses listed in Section IV.C – Instructions for Submission of an Application, above.

- Materials arriving separately will not be included in the application package and may result in the application being rejected or not funded. This does not apply to letters of support, funding commitment letters, or official resolutions.

- Faxed and emailed copies of application documents will not be accepted.

- Do not include a cover letter or company literature/brochure with the application. All pertinent information must be included in the application package.

IV.C.2 Applications Submitted Electronically

If the applicant chooses to submit an electronic application, it must be submitted through Grants.gov at www.grants.gov. Reclamation encourages applicants to submit their applications for funding electronically through www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp. Applicant resource documents and a full set of instructions for registering with Grants.gov and completing and submitting applications online are available at www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html.

- Please note that submission of an application electronically requires prior registration through Grants.gov, which may take 7 to 21 days. Please see registration instructions at www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.

- Applicants sometimes have experienced significant delays when attempting to submit applications through Grants.gov. If you plan to submit your application through Grants.gov, you are encouraged to submit your application several days prior to the application deadline. If you are a properly registered Grants.gov applicant and encounter problems with the Grants.gov application submission process, you must contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to obtain a case number. This case number will provide evidence of your attempt to submit an application prior to the submission deadline.

Regardless of the delivery method used, you must ensure that your proposal arrives by the date and time deadline stated in Section IV.B., above. Late applications will not be accepted unless it is determined that the delay was caused by Federal Government mishandling or by a problem with the Grants.gov application system.

IV.C.3 Application Format and Length

The total application package shall be no more than 50 pages and shall be single spaced. If an application exceeds 50 pages, only the first 50 pages will be

evaluated. 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. Oversized pages will not be accepted. The technical proposal section shall be limited to a maximum of 20 pages. The SF-424 forms and drought contingency plans (if the proposal is to update an existing drought contingency plan) included as attachments will not be considered in the total page count.

Applications will be prescreened for compliance to the page number limitations.

IV.D Application Content

The application must include the following elements in order to be considered complete:

- Mandatory Federal Forms
  - Application for Federal Assistance, form SF-424
  - Assurances–Non-Construction Programs, form SF-424B
- Title page
- Table of contents
- Technical proposal and evaluation criteria (limited to 20 pages)
  - Executive summary
  - Background data
  - Technical project description
  - Evaluation criteria
- Existing drought contingency plan (if applicable) – attach as an appendix (this will not count against the 50 page total limit)
- Required permits or approvals
- Letters of project support
- Official resolution
- Project budget
  - Funding plan and letters of commitment
  - Budget proposal
  - Budget narrative

- Budget information – Non-Construction Programs, form SF-424A
- Request for cost-share reduction or waiver and supporting documentation (if applicable)(this also will not count against the page limit)

SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B forms may be obtained at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15.

IV.D.1 Mandatory Federal Forms

SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance

This fully completed application for Federal assistance form must be signed by a person legally authorized to commit the applicant to performance of the Project. **Failure to submit a properly signed SF-424 form may result in the elimination of the application from further consideration.**

SF-424 Assurances

A SF-424B – Assurances–Nonconstruction Programs, signed by a person legally authorized to commit the applicant to performance of the Project shall be included. **Failure to submit a properly signed SF-424B form may result in the elimination of the application from further consideration**.

IV.D.2 Title Page

Provide a brief, informative, and descriptive title for the proposed Project that indicates the nature of the proposed drought contingency plan or plan update. Include the name and address of the applicant, and the name and address, e-mail address, telephone, and fax numbers of the Project manager.

IV.D.3 Table of Contents

List all major sections of the technical proposal in the table of contents.

IV.D.4 Technical Proposal and Evaluation Criteria

The technical proposal (20 pages maximum) includes: (1) the Executive Summary; (2) Background Data; (3) Technical Description of the Drought Contingency Plan; and (4) Evaluation Criteria.

Executive Summary

The executive summary should include:

- The date, applicant name, city, county, and state.
- A one paragraph summary of the proposal.
- State the length of time and estimated completion date for the proposed Drought Contingency Plan.
- Indicate whether or not a Reclamation project, facility, or activity is located within the geographic area to be addressed in the proposed Drought Contingency Plan.

Background Data

Provide a map of the planning area showing the geographic location (include the State, county, and direction from nearest town).

Provide a general description of the area to be addressed in the Drought Contingency Plan, including a description of the source(s) of water supply, the water rights involved, the current water uses (i.e., agricultural, municipal, domestic, or industrial), the number of water users served, and the current and projected water demand, if available. If water is primarily used for irrigation, describe major crops and total acres served.

Identify any past working relationships with Reclamation. This should include the date(s), description of prior relationships with Reclamation, and a description of the project(s), facility(s), or activity(s).

Technical Project Description

The technical description should describe the work in detail including the specific activities to be accomplished as part of this Project. This description shall have sufficient detail to permit a comprehensive evaluation of the proposal. The technical description should clearly indicate if the proposal is for Task A (Develop Drought Contingency Plan) or Task B (Update Drought Contingency Plan). Proposals should address the requirements for conducting a drought contingency plan or plan update under the Drought Response Program, identified in Section I.C – Requirements for Developing or Updating Drought Contingency Plans of this FOA. When the applicant is writing the technical proposal, they need to address each of the criteria in the order presented to assist in the complete and accurate evaluation of the proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

(See Section V – Application Review Information for additional details, including a detailed description of each criterion and subcriterion and points associated with each.)

The evaluation criteria portion of your application should thoroughly address each criterion and subcriterion in the order presented to assist in the complete and accurate evaluation of your proposal. ***It is suggested that applicants copy and paste the evaluation criteria and sub-criteria immediately below into their applications to ensure that all necessary information is adequately addressed.***

IV.D.5 Existing Drought Contingency Plan (if applicable)

If there is an existing drought contingency plan addressing the relevant geographic area, please attach a copy (or relevant sections) of the existing plan. (*Note, this will not count against the application page limit).*

IV.D.6 Required Permits or Approvals

Applicants must state in the application whether any permits or approvals are required for developing the Drought Contingency Plan and describe the approach for obtaining such permits or approvals.

IV.D.7 Letters of Support

To demonstrate that the planning process will include a diverse range of stakeholders, please include letters from interested stakeholders supporting the development of a new drought contingency plan or plan update.

Letters of support will not be counted towards the 20 page limit within the Technical Proposal; however, they will be counted towards the 50 page proposal limit. To ensure your proposal is accurately reviewed, please attach all letters of support/ partnership letters as an appendix.

IV.D.8 Official Resolution

Include an official resolution adopted by the applicant's board of directors or governing body, or for State government entities, an official authorized to commit the applicant to the financial and legal obligations associated with receipt of Federal financial assistance, verifying:

- The identity of the official with legal authority to enter into an agreement

- The board of directors, governing body, or appropriate official who has reviewed and supports the application submitted

- The capability of the applicant to provide the amount of funding and/or in-kind contributions specified in the funding plan

- The applicant will work with Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a cooperative financial assistance agreement

An official resolution that meets the requirements set forth above is mandatory. If you are unable to submit the official resolution by the application deadline because of the timing of board meetings or other justifiable reasons, the official resolution may be submitted up to 30 days after the application deadline.

IV.D.9 Project Budget

The project budget includes:

- **Funding plan and letters of commitment**
- **Budget proposal**
- **Budget narrative**
- **Budget form**

Funding Plan and Letters of Commitment

Describe how the non-Reclamation share of Project costs will be obtained. Reclamation will use this information in making a determination of financial capability.

Project funding provided by a source other than the applicant shall be supported with letters of commitment from these additional sources. This is a **mandatory requirement**. Letters of commitment shall identify the following elements:

- The amount of funding commitment
- The date the funds will be available to the applicant
- Any time constraints on the availability of funds
- Any other contingencies associated with the funding commitment

Cost-share funding from sources outside the applicant's organization (e.g., loans or State grants) should be secured and available to the applicant prior to award. Commitment letters should be included with the Project application. If a final funding commitment has not been received by the date of application, the commitment letters should be submitted by no later than 30 days after application deadline.

Reclamation may approve an award prior to an applicant securing non-Federal cost-share funds if Reclamation determines that there is sufficient evidence and likelihood that the non-Federal funds will be available to the applicant by the start of the Project.

The funding plan must include all Project costs, as follows:

How the applicant will make its contribution to the cost-share requirement, such as monetary and/or in-kind contributions and source funds contributed by the applicant (e.g., reserve account, tax revenue, and/or assessments).

- Describe any in-kind costs incurred before the anticipated Project start date that the applicant seeks to include as Project costs. Include:
  - What Project expenses have been incurred
  - The date of cost incurrence
  - The amount of the expenditure
  - How the expenditure benefitted the Project
- Provide the identity and amount of funding to be provided by funding partners, as well as the required letters of commitment.
- Describe any funding requested or received from other Federal partners. Note: Other sources of Federal funding may not be counted towards the applicant's 50 percent cost-share unless otherwise allowed by statute.
- Describe any pending funding requests that have not yet been approved, and explain how the Project will be affected if such funding is denied.

Please include the following chart (table 1) to summarize the non-Federal and other Federal funding sources. Denote in-kind contributions with an asterisk (*). Please ensure that the total Federal funding (Reclamation and all other Federal sources) does not exceed 50 percent of the total estimated Project costs.

Table 1.—Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources

Funding Sources	Funding Amount
Non-Federal Entities	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Non-Federal Subtotal	

Funding Sources	Funding Amount
Other Federal Entities	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Other Federal Subtotal	
Requested Reclamation Funding	
Total Study Funding	

Budget Proposal

General Requirements

Include a Project budget that estimates all Project costs (not just costs to be borne by Reclamation). Include the value of in-kind contributions of goods and services and sources of funds provided to complete the Project. The proposal must clearly delineate between Reclamation and applicant contributions.

Budget Proposal Format

The Project budget shall include detailed information on the categories listed below and must clearly identify all Project costs. Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors. Additionally, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the study budget. It is strongly advised that applicants use the budget proposal format shown on tables 2 and 3 at the end of this section or a similar format that provides this information.

Table 2.—Sample Funding Sources

Funding Sources	% of Total Study Cost	Total Cost by Source
Recipient Funding		$ -
Reclamation Funding		$ -
Other Federal Funding		$ -
Totals	**0%**	**$ -**

Table 3.—Sample Budget Proposal Format

Budget Item Description	Computation		Quantity Type (hours/days)	Total Cost
	$/Unit	Quantity		
Salaries and Wages				
Employee 1				$ -
Employee 2				$ -
Employee 3				$ -
Fringe Benefits				
Full-Time Employees				$ -
Part-Time Employees				$ -
Travel				
Trip 1				$ -
Trip 2				$ -
Trip 3				$ -
Equipment				
Item A				$ -
Item B				$ -
Item C				$ -
Materials/Supplies				
Item A				$ -
Item B				$ -
Contractual/Construction				
Contractor A				$ -
Contractor B				$ -
Other				
				$ -
Total Direct Costs				$ -
Indirect Costs - __%				$ -
Total Project Costs				$ -

This is only a sample budget proposal format. You may use this format or submit the information in a different format which provides a detailed break-down of costs and need justification for budgets presented in the SF-424A.

Contracts should be broken out into specific line items. You may attach a separate, detailed budget for each contract to adequately address all contractor budget items.

Budget Narrative Format

Submission of a budget narrative is mandatory. An award will not be made to any applicant who fails to fully disclose this information. The budget narrative provides a discussion of, or explanation for, items included in the budget proposal. The types of information to describe in the narrative include, but are not limited to, those listed in the following subsections.

Salaries and Wages

Indicate program manager and other key personnel by name and title. Other personnel may be indicated by title alone. For all positions, indicate salaries and wages, estimated hours or percent of time, and rate of compensation. The labor rates should identify the direct labor rate separate from the fringe rate or fringe cost for each category. All labor estimates, including any proposed subcontractors, shall be allocated to specific tasks as outlined in the recipient's technical study description. Labor rates and proposed hours shall be displayed for each task.

Clearly identify any proposed salary increases and the effective date. Generally, salaries of administrative and/or clerical personnel will be included as a portion of the stated indirect costs. If these salaries can be adequately documented as direct costs, they should be included in this section; however, a justification should be included in the budget narrative.

Fringe Benefits

Indicate rates/amounts, what costs are included in this category, and the basis of the rate computations. Indicate whether these rates are used for application purposes only or whether they are fixed or provisional rates for billing purposes. Federally approved rate agreements are acceptable for compliance with this item.

Travel

Include the purpose of the trip, destination, number of persons traveling, length of stay, and all travel costs, including: airfare (basis for rate used), per diem, lodging, and miscellaneous travel expenses. For local travel, include mileage and rate of compensation.

Equipment

Itemize costs of all equipment having a value over $5,000 and describe the need for this equipment, as well as how the equipment was priced if it is being purchased for the agreement. If equipment is being rented, specify the number of hours and the hourly rate. Local rental rates are only accepted for equipment actually being rented or leased for the study. If equipment currently owned by the applicant is proposed for use under the proposed study and the cost to use that equipment is being included in the budget as in-kind cost-share, provide the rates and hours for each piece of equipment owned and budgeted. These should be ownership rates developed by the recipient for each piece of equipment. If these rates are not available, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' recommended equipment rates for the region are acceptable. Blue book, FEMA, and other data bases should not be used.

Materials and Supplies

Itemize supplies by major category, unit price, quantity, and purpose, such as whether the items are needed for office use, research, or construction. Identify how these costs were estimated (i.e., quotes, past experience, engineering estimates, or other methodology).

Contractual

Identify all work that will be accomplished by subrecipients, consultants, or contractors, including a breakdown of all tasks to be completed and a detailed budget estimate of time, rates, supplies, and materials that will be required for each task. If a subrecipient, consultant, or contractor is proposed and approved at time of award, no other approvals will be required. Any changes or additions will require a request for approval. Identify how the budgeted costs for subrecipients, consultants, or contractors were determined to be fair and reasonable.

Other

Any other expenses not included in the above categories shall be listed in this category, along with a description of the item and the purpose of its use. No profit or fee will be allowed.

Indirect Costs

Show the proposed rate, cost base, and proposed amount for allowable indirect costs based on the applicable Office of Management and Budget circular cost principles (see Section III.E – Cost-Sharing Requirement) for the recipient's organization. It is not acceptable to simply incorporate indirect rates within other direct cost line items.

If the recipient has separate rates for recovery of labor overhead and general and administrative costs, each rate shall be shown. The applicant should propose rates for evaluation purposes, which will be used as fixed or ceiling rates in any resulting award. Include a copy of any federally approved indirect cost rate agreement. If a federally approved indirect rate agreement is not available, provide supporting documentation for the rate. This can include a recent recommendation by a qualified certified public accountant along with support for the rate calculation.

If you do not have a federally approved indirect cost rate agreement, or if unapproved rates are used, explain why and include the computational basis for the indirect expense pool and corresponding allocation base for each rate. Information on preparing and submitting indirect cost proposals is available from the Interior Business Center, and Indirect Cost Services Section, at www.doi.gov/ibc/services/Indirect_Cost_Services/index.cfm.

Total Cost

Indicate the total amount of Project costs, including the Federal and non-Federal cost-share amounts.

Budget Form

In addition to the above-described budget information, the applicant must complete an SF-424A, Budget Information—Non-construction Programs. This form is available at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15.

IV.D.10 Request for a Cost-Share Reduction or Waiver

As set forth in Section III.E – Cost-Sharing Requirement of this FOA, in exceptional circumstances, Reclamation may reduce or waive the non-Federal cost-share requirement upon request by the applicant, if an overwhelming Federal interest and a significant financial need are identified. If the funding plan identifies less than 50 percent non-Federal cost-share match, please include the request for a cost-share reduction or waiver in the proposal. The request must include information and documentation addressing the factors set forth immediately below.

Reclamation will use the following factors when considering whether to reduce or waive the non-Federal cost-share requirement. Please address each of the following criteria, providing an explanation for the applicability of each criterion and supporting documentation:

- **Overwhelming Federal Interest.** Reclamation will make a determination of whether an overwhelming Federal interest exists based on factors such as the programs and policies of the President and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

- **Financial Hardship.** In determining whether a significant financial need exists the following factors will be considered:
  - The population-weighted median household income within the study area and the state based on the latest available data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey;
  - Family poverty level for the state as estimated by guidelines published annually by the Department of Health and Human Services;
  - The population-weighted average unemployment rate within the study area based on the latest available data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey; and

- A current financial statement of the applicant and a statement that the applicant does not possess sufficient funds or assets to pay for all or part of the required cost-share.

IV.E. Funding Restrictions

See Section III.E.3 – Pre-Award Costs for restrictions on incurrence and allowability of pre-award costs.

Section V: Application Review Information

V.A Technical Proposal – Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria portion of the application should thoroughly address each criterion and sub-criterion in the order presented below in this FOA to assist in the complete and accurate evaluation of the proposal. **Applications will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria (listed below), which comprise a total of 100 points.** Please note that proposals may be prioritized to ensure balance among the program Task Areas and to ensure that the proposals funded address the goals of the Drought Response Program.

The following criteria will be used by the Application Review Committee to rank proposals to develop a drought contingency plan or plan update, submitted under this Drought Contingency Planning FOA. ***It is suggested that applicants copy and paste the evaluation criteria and sub-criteria immediately below into their applications to ensure that all necessary information is adequately addressed.***

V.A.1 Evaluation Criterion A – Need for a Drought Contingency Plan or Plan Update (40 points)

*Up to **40 points** may be awarded based on the extent to which the proposal demonstrates a compelling need to develop or update a drought contingency plan.* Proposals that address more urgent needs and more severe drought risks will receive higher priority consideration on this criterion than proposals to address less significant needs and risks.

Describe existing or potential drought conditions to be addressed in the Drought Contingency Plan.

- Will the proposed plan or plan update address a geographic 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, http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/]).

- Describe any projected increases to the frequency, severity, or duration of drought in the geographic area resulting from climate change. Please provide support for this response (e.g., reference a recent climate change analysis, if available).

Describe the severity of the risks to water supplies that will be addressed in the Drought Contingency Plan.

- What are the risks to water supplies within the applicable geographic area that will be addressed in the plan or plan update, and how severe are those risks? Describe the existing or potential drought risks to specific sectors in the project area (e.g., impacts to agriculture, environment, hydropower, recreation and tourism, forestry). For example, risks could include but are not limited to:
    - Whether there are public health concerns or social concerns associated with existing or potential drought conditions. For example, are there water quality concerns including past or potential violations of drinking water standards, increased risks of wildfire, or past or potential shortages of drinking water supplies? Does the community have another water source available to them in the case that their water service is interrupted?
    - Whether there are environmental concerns, such as existing or potential impacts to endangered, threatened or candidate species.
    - Whether there are ongoing or potential, local, economic losses associated with drought conditions (e.g., business, agriculture, reduced real estate values)
    - Whether there are other drought-related risks not identified above, including tensions over water that could result in a water-related crisis or conflict, or risks to tribes, for example.

Describe the status of any existing Drought Contingency Plan.

- Please explain generally why the applicant is seeking to conduct a drought contingency plan or plan update.

- If a drought contingency plan already exists for the relevant geographic area, please explain why a new plan or plan update is needed. For example, is the existing plan outdated or is there a need to make the plan more comprehensive or inclusive of various sectors or interests (i.e., municipal, agricultural, industrial, or environmental)? Is there a need to incorporate consideration of climate change in the existing plan? If a drought contingency plan exists, please attach a copy of the applicable plan, or sections of the plan as an appendix to the application (this will not count against the page limit).

- If no applicable drought plan exists, please explain why no drought contingency plan has been developed to date.

V.A.2 Evaluation Criterion B – Diversity of Stakeholders (35 points)

Up to **35 points** may be awarded based on the extent to which the proposal demonstrates that the planning process will incorporate input and participation by a diverse range of stakeholders. Note, "stakeholders" may include a mix of both internal and external stakeholders (e.g. stakeholders internal and external to a tribe, city or district).

Describe the diversity of stakeholders to be involved in the planning process. Please address the following:

- Identify stakeholders in the planning area who have committed to be involved in the planning process and describe their commitment. Do these stakeholders represent diverse interests (e.g., agricultural, municipal, environmental, tribal)? Support could include letters from stakeholders committing to be involved in the planning process.

- Describe stakeholders in the planning area who have expressed their support for the planning process, whether or not they have committed to participate. Support can include letters of support from stakeholders expressing support for the planning process.

- If specific stakeholders have not yet been identified, or if some sectors are not yet represented, describe what efforts that you will undertake to ensure participation by a diverse array of stakeholders in the development of a plan or plan update. Support could include a description of key stakeholder interests in the planning area and what efforts that you will undertake engage them in the planning process, including outreach to stakeholders or collaborating with other groups or partners

V.A.3 Evaluation Criterion C – Project Implementation (20 points)

Up to **20 points** may be awarded based on the extent to which the proposal supports the applicant's ability to meet the program requirements within the two-year timeframe, based on the following:

Describe the approach for addressing the six required elements of a Drought Contingency Plan within the two year timeframe. Note, new plans must address all six required elements (described in Section I.C – Requirements for Developing or Updating Drought Contingency Plans of this FOA), whereas plan updates may address only those elements not (sufficiently) addressed in an existing plan. Please address the following:

- Describe how each of the six required elements of a Drought Contingency Plan, as applicable, will be addressed within the two year timeframe. If the proposal is for a plan update, please explain whether all or only some elements of the existing plan will be updated, and why. Please include an estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates. Describe the availability and quality of existing data and models[4] applicable to the proposed plan or plan update.

- Identify staff with appropriate technical expertise and describe their qualifications. Describe any plans to request additional technical assistance from Reclamation, or by contract.

V.A.4 Evaluation Criterion D – Nexus to the Bureau of Reclamation (5 points)

Up to **5 points** may be awarded based on the extent that the proposal demonstrates a nexus between the development of Drought Contingency Plan and a Reclamation project or activity. Please provide the following information regarding the connection to a Reclamation project, facility, or activity:

- Is there a Reclamation project, facility, or activity within the planning area?

- Is the planning area in the same basin as a Reclamation project, facility, or activity?

- Will the proposed plan or plan update benefit a basin where a Reclamation project, facility, or activity is located?

V.B Review and Selection Process

The Government reserves the right to reject any and all applications which do not meet the requirements of this FOA or which are outside the scope of Drought Response Program. Awards will be made for Projects most advantageous to the Government. Award selection may be made to maintain balance among the program tasks listed in Section III.B – Eligible Projects. The evaluation process will be comprised of the steps described in the following subsections.
For additional information on the review and selection process, please see www.usbr.gov/drought/

[4] Data and models include but are not limited to: hydrologic models, operational models, climate data, water demand data or projections, water quality data, recreational water needs, environmental water needs, demographics, and economic data and models.

V.B.1 Initial Screening

All applications will be screened to ensure that:

- The application meets the requirements of the FOA package, including submission of technical and budget proposals, a funding plan, letter(s) of commitment, and related forms.
- The application contains a properly executed SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance, a form SF-424A, Budget Information—Non-construction Programs, and a form SF-424B, Assurances—Non-construction Programs.
- The applicant meets the eligibility requirements stated in this document.
- The application includes an official resolution, adopted by the applicant's board of directors, governing body, or appropriate authorized official.
- At least 50 percent of the cost of the Project will be paid for with non-Federal funding. Cost-share funding from sources outside the applicant's organization, e.g., loans or state grants, should be secured and available to the applicant prior to award. Reclamation will execute a financial assistance agreement and make funds available for a Drought Contingency Planning Grant once the recipient secures non-Federal funding or Reclamation determines that there is sufficient evidence and likelihood that non-Federal funds will be available to the applicant subsequent to executing the agreement.
- As set forth in section IV.C – Instructions for Submission of an Application of this FOA, in exceptional circumstances, Reclamation may reduce or waive the non-Federal cost-share requirement upon request by the applicant, if an overwhelming Federal interest and a significant financial need are identified. If the funding plan identifies less than 50percent non-Federal cost-share match, please include the State your request for a cost-share reduction or waiver in the proposal. The request must include information and documentation addressing the factors set forth immediately below
- The application meets the description of eligible projects in Section III.B – Eligible Projects, (Tasks A and B) and is within the scope of Drought Contingency Planning Grants FOA.
- The proposed Project can be completed by September 30, 2017.

Reclamation reserves the right to remove an application from funding consideration if it does not pass all Initial Screening criteria listed above. An applicant that has submitted an application that is determined to be ineligible for funding will be notified along with other applicants, or sooner if possible

V.B.2. Application Review Committee (ARC) Review

Evaluation criteria will comprise **100 points** of the total evaluation weight as stated in Section V.A – Applications will be scored against the evaluation criteria by an ARC, made up of experts in relevant disciplines selected from across Reclamation.

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

V.B.3 Red Flag Review

Following the results of the ARC review, Reclamation will review the top-ranking applications and will identify any reasons why a proposed Project would not be feasible or otherwise advisable, including environmental or cultural resources compliance issues, permitting issues, legal issues, or financial position. Positive or negative past performance by the applicant and any partners in previous working relationships with Reclamation may be considered, including whether the applicant is making significant progress toward the completion of outstanding financial assistance agreements and whether the applicant is in compliance with all reporting requirements associated with previously funded Projects.

In addition, during this review Reclamation will address any specific concerns or questions raised by members of the ARC, conduct a preliminary budget review, and evaluate the applicant's ability to meet cost-share as required.

V.B.3. Managerial Review

Reclamation management will prioritize Projects to ensure the total amount of all awards does not exceed available funding levels. Management will also ensure that all Projects meet the scope, priorities, and requirements of the Drought Response Program. Management may also prioritize projects to ensure that multiple project types (task areas) are represented.

V.C. Pre-Award Clearances and Approvals

After completion of the Managerial Review, Reclamation will notify applicants whose proposals have been selected for award consideration and will forward their applications to the appropriate Reclamation region or area office for completion of environmental compliance.

Reclamation will also complete a business evaluation and determination of responsibility. During these evaluations, the Grants Officer (GO) also will consider several factors that are important, but not quantified, such as:

- Pre-award clearances, determinations, reviews, and approvals
- Allowability and allocability of proposed costs
- Financial strength and stability of the organization
- Past performance, including satisfactory compliance with all terms and conditions of previous awards, such as environmental compliance issues, reporting requirements, proper procurement of supplies and services, and audit compliance
- Adequacy of personnel practices, procurement procedures, and accounting policies and procedures—as established by 2 CFR Part 200

If the results of all pre-award reviews and clearances are satisfactory, an award of funding will be made once the financial assistance cooperative agreement is finalized (approximately one to two months from date of initial selection). If the results of pre-award reviews and clearances are unsatisfactory, consideration of funding for the proposed Project may be withdrawn.

Section VI: Award Administration Information

VI.A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive, by electronic or regular mail, a notice of award.

VI.B. Award Document

If the applicant is awarded a financial assistance agreement as a result of this FOA, the proposed Drought Contingency Plan and other relevant information from the application will be referenced in the agreement. The agreement document must be signed by a Reclamation GO before it becomes effective.

VI.C. Releasing Applications

Following awards of funding, Reclamation will post all successful applications on the Reclamation website after conducting any redactions determined necessary by Reclamation, in consultation with the Recipient.

VI.D. Reporting Requirements and Distribution

If the applicant is awarded an agreement as a result of this FOA, the applicant will be required to submit the following types of reports during the term of the agreement.

VI.D.1. Financial Reports

Form SF-425 – Federal Financial Report must be submitted on at least a semiannual basis and with the final performance report.

VI.D.2. Program Performance Reports

The specific terms and conditions pertaining to the reporting requirements will be included in the financial assistance agreement.

- Interim reports submitted on at least a semi-annual basis, must include:
  - A comparison of actual accomplishments to the milestones established by the financial assistance agreement for the period

  - The reasons why established milestones were not met, if applicable
  - The status of milestones from the previous reporting period that were not met, 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

- Final report, including, but not limited to, the following information (please note that final reports are public documents and will be made available on Reclamation's website, www.usbr.gov/drought/):
  - Whether the project objectives and goals were met
  - Discussion of the benefits achieved by the Drought Contingency Plan, including how the plan improves long-term resiliency to drought
  - How the plan demonstrates collaboration

Section VII: Agency Contacts

There will be no pre-application conference. Organizations or individuals interested in submitting applications in response to this FOA may **direct questions to Reclamation in writing**. Questions may be submitted to the attention of Ms. Irene M. Hoiby, GO, as follows:

By mail: Bureau of Reclamation
Financial Assistance Management Branch
Attn: Ms. Irene M. Hoiby
Mail Code: 84-27852
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

By email: ihoiby@usbr.gov

By telephone: 303-445-2025