



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

P (303) 866-3441

F (303) 866-4474

Jared Polis, Governor

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

Rebecca Mitchell, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Brent Newman, Interstate, Federal, & Water Information Section

DATE: March 21, 2019

AGENDA ITEM: 23. Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Share (TAFC) Program

Background

At the May 2017 CWCB meeting, the Board approved criteria for technical assistance funding, to assist applicants seeking competitive federal grant funds, as described in the 2017 Projects Bill (HB17-1248):

Technical assistance for federal irrigation improvement cost-sharing program - appropriation. (1) For the 2017-18 state fiscal year, \$500,000 is appropriated to the department of natural resources for use by the Colorado water conservation board. This appropriation is from the Colorado water conservation board construction fund created in section 37-60-121, C.R.S. To implement this section, the Colorado water conservation board may use this appropriation to provide technical assistance for applicants seeking competitive federal grant funds.

These funds have been expended consistent with Board direction over the past few years to assist ditch companies, conservation districts, and other agricultural entities to prepare feasibility studies and competitive applications for federal funding opportunities. This first year of the Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Share (TAFC) Program (2017) was very successful. CWCB loans, WRSF grants, and TAFC funds totaling \$2.5 million were utilized as matching funds and cost-share for the 2017 Funding Opportunity Announcement for the Bureau of Reclamation's Salinity Control Program. This investment leveraged \$26 million of agricultural infrastructure upgrades in the Gunnison and Southwest Basins, benefitting water quality, agricultural efficiencies, and modernizing water delivery systems.

In November of 2018, the Board approved the Non-Reimbursable Investments proposed by staff to be included in the 2018 Projects Bill, including a continuation of the TAFC program. These additional funds were made available in July of 2018.

The Bureau of Reclamation has indicated that an upcoming Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) will be released in June 2019. Several workshops will be held to engage



potential applicants and provide information about the requirements and application process. CWCB staff will work with the Bureau and local partners to provide information about the opportunities available for feasibility studies and technical assistance through the TAFC program.

These funds may also be used to cost-share on efforts that leverage federal funds for programmatic support. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) recently announced a program to cost-share with local conservation districts on the District Conservation Technician (DCT) Program. CWCB funds have been used to partner with NACD and the Colorado State Conservation Board to support the local DCT programs, which provide natural resource conservation technical assistance to private landowners.

CWCB staff have been partnering with local conservation districts and the Department of Agriculture to identify and cooperate with interested applicants for these federal grant funds. Salinity control projects leverage a significant amount of federal funds for the benefit of water users and water quality in western Colorado. The on-the-ground assistance provided by these local conservation districts has been invaluable in identifying and preparing applicants for the FOA process. Staff will recommend that purchase orders with these local partner districts be executed, so that applications for technical assistance funds may be reviewed by district staff, in consultation with CWCB staff, and successful applicants may be reimbursed for costs incurred by this pre-application work.

Draft scopes of work are attached to this memorandum, for Board review.

Staff recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve purchase orders to be executed in the amounts as follows:

- 1) \$99,000 to Delta Conservation District for Salinity Control Program feasibility studies and program capacity building;

These funds shall be utilized to provide technical assistance for applicants seeking competitive federal grant funds, consistent with the 2017 and 2018 Projects Bill (HB17-1248, SB18-218).



Scope of Work
Delta Conservation District
Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Share (TAFC) Program
Technical Assistance and Feasibility Planning for Colorado River Basin Salinity
Control USBR Funding Opportunity Announcement Applicants

Purchase Order Amount: \$99,000

CWCB Funding Source: Construction Fund, HB17-1248, sec. 8

Contractor: Delta Conservation District,
690 Industrial Blvd., Delta, CO 81416
Taxpayer ID# 846010950
Suzie Bilberry, District Manager,
Phone: 970-874-5725 ext 121; Email: deltaconservationd@gmail.com

Project Purpose: Provide technical assistance (TA) and feasibility planning to entities demonstrating a commitment to submitting high quality, cost competitive applications to US Bureau of Reclamation's Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) in support of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (CRBSCP).

Task Descriptions:

1. Consultant Technical Assistance Grants:

A. District shall develop criteria and conduct a selection process to determine ditch companies eligible for grant funding. Criteria shall include previous participation, willingness to provide non-salinity program funding for project, number of irrigated acres served, and likelihood of successful participation in the 2019 FOA. Criteria may also include a reimbursement cap and a requirement for matching funds as part of the grant award. District shall review proposed ditch company selections with the approval of CWCB and the Gunnison Basin Salinity Coordinator prior to final award of TA grants. At the request of, and/or with the permission of the CWCB the District may award grants to entities outside its historic service area.

B. Provide technical service grants to ditch companies to defray the actual cost of engineering services retained to applications for USBR's 2019 FOA. Technical services must be provided by registered engineers licensed to do work in the State of Colorado.

C. Provide technical service grants to ditch companies to defray the actual cost of engineering services related to interim studies, engineering, or feasibility for cooperative projects before the next announced FOA date (est. June 2019). Technical services must be provided by registered engineers licensed to do work in the State of Colorado. District shall review proposed ditch company selections with the approval of CWCB and the Gunnison Basin Salinity Coordinator prior to final award of TA grants.

D. District shall manage all aspects of the grant program including: assisting water users with consultant selection, documentation of claims for reimbursement, disbursement of funds, and preparation of deliverables. District shall reimburse grantees for final engineering costs only after the entity submits a written copy of its FOA application.

2. Project Administration:

District may charge the CWCB up to 10% of the costs of task 1C to defray a portion of the project management and administration expense it incurs in providing those services and preparation of all deliverables.

Deliverables:

1. Provide status reports documenting all task activities with each invoice.
2. Provide copy of FOA application for each ditch company.
3. Provide copy of completed feasibility studies for each company.

Task Schedule: Complete project by December 31, 2021.

Payment Schedule: CWCB will reimburse the District on a monthly basis after receipt of invoices for costs related to the task described above at the rates set forth below.

Invoice Items by Task	Quantity	Max. Unit Charge	Maximum Reimburse
1A and 1D no charge, costs covered by Task 2 below.		N/C	0
1B and 1C. Consultant Technical Service and Feasibility Grants (actual consultant invoiced cost not to exceed)	TBD	\$10,000.00	\$90,000.00
2. Project Administration @ 10% of cost for tasks 1 - 2 above			\$9,000.00
Total			\$99,000.00

**Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Share Programs
(TAFC) Criteria and Procedures**

Approved by the CWCB on May 17, 2017

A. Funds available for award in Fiscal Year 2018/2019 = \$500,000

B. Eligibility

- Units of Colorado local government: Conservation Districts, Water Conservancy Districts, Water Conservation Districts, Municipalities
- Environmental and conservation organizations: non-profits and 501(c) groups
- Incorporated ditch and irrigation companies selected by unit of local government
- Must demonstrate eligibility for underlying federal program (WaterSMART, NRCS EQIP, Salinity Control Program)

C. Federal Project types (activities must be located in Colorado)

- Water conservation, irrigation efficiency enhancement (infrastructure)
- Encouraged to include elements of: Stream restoration, invasive phreatophyte control, water quality enhancement, aquatic/riparian endangered species habitat and mitigation, and soil health

D. Technical assistance funds may be used as follows:

- No mandatory cost-share percent, as significant funding will be leveraged if federal application is successful
- Payment of reasonable administrative charges/fees
- Pre-feasibility level design and cost estimates
- Grant writing assistance
- Capacity building and coordination with potential participants
- Feasibility level design and cost estimates
- Detailed design and cost estimates
- Environmental compliance
- No reimbursement for in-kind services allowed

E. Procedure

- Availability announced on CWCB website
- Rolling process timed to meet federal submittal deadlines
- Director's discretion for grants less than \$25,000 to any single entity
- Board approval for larger grants
- If requests exceed available funds, applications evaluated on the following:
 - The irrigation system is currently deemed a significant source of salinity loading;
 - There exists potential to improve current system delivery efficiency;
 - The number of irrigated acres in service area, and current average annual diversions;
 - Additional on-farm irrigation system improvements can be made;
 - The availability of storage to better utilize water saved through elimination of losses;
 - There are opportunities to save water and support environmental benefits;
 - The proposed project or program will increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in water management;
 - Risk can be mitigated in areas at high risk of future water conflict.



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