

2021 Drought-Related Financial Assistance

A summary of state and federal grants to support drought relief, recovery, and adaptation.

Last Updated: July 30, 2021

CWCB [Agricultural Emergency Drought Response Program](#)

Uses: [Immediate aid](#) for emergency augmentation water during drought years in the form of loans or grants. Limited to reimbursement to water organizations serving as a supplier to agriculture in areas where a drought disaster emergency has been proclaimed.

Funds Available: \$1 million fund available on rolling basis

Contact: alexander.funk@state.co.us (CO Water Conservation Board)

CWCB [Flood and Drought Response Fund](#)

Uses: [Immediate aid](#) for flood and drought preparedness and response, or recovery studies, project design, education and communication following flood or drought events and disasters.

Funds Available: \$500,000 annual fund available on a rolling basis.

Contact: megan.holcomb@state.co.us (CO Water Conservation Board)

CWCB [Water Project Loan Program](#)

Uses: [Immediate aid](#) or long-range assistance for large raw water projects (e.g., dams, pipelines, ditches, wells, new projects or rehabilitation).

Funds Available: Loans typically range from \$100,000 to \$10,000,000

Contact: kirk.russell@state.co.us (CO Water Conservation Board)

NEW 2021 [CDA Stimulus Funding](#)

While these new stimulus funds are available as of July 1, 2021, the application process through CDA is still under development. Please contact les.owen@state.co.us (CO Dept of Agriculture) for more information on how to apply.

- [SB 21-203 Funding for Colorado Proud](#)
\$2.5 million to expand market opportunities for Colorado Producers through the Colorado Proud program.
- [SB 21-234 General Fund Transfer Agriculture Drought Resiliency](#)
\$1.875 million to engage in activities that promote the State's ability to anticipate, prepare for, mitigate, adapt to or respond to drought. There is also \$15,000 per Conservation District (\$1.125 million total).
- [SB 21-235 Stimulus Funding Department of Agriculture Efficiency Programs](#)
\$5 million to expand agricultural efficiency and soil health initiatives, including \$3 million to the ACRE3 program of which at least \$150,000 towards agrivoltaics and \$2 million for Soil Health activities of which at least \$1 million will go through Conservation Districts.
- [SB 21-248 Loan Program for Colorado Agriculture](#)
\$30 million to create an agricultural revolving loan and grant program, \$5-10 million is for agricultural processing loans or grants and \$10-20 million in loans to farmers and ranchers.

USDA Farm Service Agency [Disaster Assistance Programs](#) (see [2017 funding pamphlet](#))

Uses: [Immediate aid](#) for counties (or adjacent counties) under disaster designation by USDA

- [Emergency Conservation Program](#): for emergency water conservation measures during severe drought
- [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#): emergency measures to restore forest health
- [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#): help compensate for losses due to disease or wildfire (Only for water transportation assistance under drought emergency)
- [Emergency Loan Program](#): loans to support recovery from production and physical losses (max \$500k)
- [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#): grazing losses must be due to a qualifying drought condition or fire on federally managed land during the normal grazing period for the county (max \$125k)
- [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#): for noninsurable crop losses due to drought, flood, fire

- [Tree Assistance Program](#): for replanting or rehabilitating eligible trees, bushes and vines lost by disaster
- [Emergency Watershed Protection](#): mitigate hazards to life or property (75% of emergency construction costs)

Funds Available: Differs by program. See program link.

Contact: [Your County's USDA Service Center](#)

USDA Rural Development: [Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants](#)

Uses: This program helps eligible communities prepare, or recover from, an emergency that threatens the availability of safe, reliable drinking water. Eligible emergencies include drought or flood, earthquake, tornado or hurricane, disease outbreak, chemical spill, leak or seepage, and other disasters. A federal disaster declaration is not required to access this funding.

Funds Available: Up to \$150,000 for water distribution line maintenance and up to \$1,000,000 to construct a source, intake or treatment facility. Applications for this program are accepted year round, online.

Contact: [Your local Rural Development Office](#)

USDA [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP)

Uses: Long-range assistance for innovative solutions to conservation challenges and partnerships on a regional or watershed scale. Examples include natural climate solutions, on-farm and off-farm water conservation and efficiency infrastructure improvements, soil health, and forest management.

Funds Available: Up to \$360 million for projects from all 50 states

Contact: James Sperry (james.sperry@usda.gov), RCPP Program Manager, or [NRCS Office](#)

USBR [WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants](#)

Uses: Long-range assistance for projects that result in quantifiable water savings and support broader water reliability benefits. These projects conserve and use water more efficiently; increase the production of hydropower; mitigate conflict risk in areas at a high risk of future water conflict; and accomplish other benefits that contribute to water supply reliability in the western United States 50/50 cost share.

Contact: [grants.gov](#) FOA

CDPHE [Colorado Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund](#) (see [2013 funding pamphlet](#))

Uses: Long-range assistance for fire-related nonpoint source projects can be given priority status. Otherwise low-interest loans for public wastewater treatment system needs and watershed nonpoint source control projects.

Funds Available: Direct loans up to \$3,000,000 available with Board approval; \$10,000 planning grants available for disadvantaged communities (includes nonpoint source fire-related). Design and Engineering grants up to \$300,000 for disadvantaged communities may also be available. Application deadlines are Jan.15, Feb. 15, April 15, June 15, Aug. 15, Oct. 15, Nov. 15. Loans greater than \$3,000,000 available but are municipal bond loans.

Contacts: [Your regional project manager](#) and mark.henderson@state.co.us (CDPHE, DOLA, Water & Power Authority)

CDPHE [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund](#)

Uses: Long-range assistance for government agencies and private nonprofit public water systems for the construction of water projects intended to improve public and environmental health, aid compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and invest in Colorado's water infrastructure.

Funds Available: Direct loans up to \$3,000,000 available with Board approval; \$10,000 planning grants available for disadvantaged communities. Design and Engineering grants up to \$300,000 for disadvantaged communities may also be available. Application deadlines are Jan.15, Feb. 15, April 15, June 15, Aug. 15, Oct. 15, Nov. 15. Loans greater than \$3,000,000 available but are municipal bond loans (leveraged loans).

Contact: [Your regional project manager](#) and mark.henderson@state.co.us (CDPHE, DOLA, Water & Power Authority)

NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Uses: Long-range assistance for agricultural producers to deliver environmental benefits through eligible practices such as conservation planning, on-farm water efficiency and soil health improvements, off-farm irrigation delivery infrastructure improvements, and energy efficiency/renewable energy projects.

Funds Available: Maximum \$450k per participant with up to 75% match by NRCS. Applications accepted continuously. Next anticipated application batching period is forecasted for Oct-Dec 2021.

Contact: [Colorado NRCS Office](#)

NRCS Conservation Incentive Contract (EQIP-CIC)— 2021 Pilot Project

Uses: Conservation Incentive Contracts are an option that blend EQIP and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) by providing financial assistance to adopt conservation activities on working landscapes. A fact sheet for the program can be [found here](#).

Funds Available: Maximum \$200k per participant. Applications accepted continuously. Last application period ended July 21, 2021.

Contact: Kindra Brandner (kindra.brandner@usda.gov), CO EQIP Manager, or your [local USDA Field Office](#)

NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program

Uses: Long-range assistance for farmers and ranchers to actively manage and maintain existing or additional conservation system activities on land in agricultural production. Examples include soil health management, energy efficiency, on-farm irrigation efficiency, and grazing management.

Funds Available: RFA closed on Jan. 8, 2021. Applications accepted continuously. Next anticipated application batching period is forecasted for Oct-Dec 2021.

Contact: Amber Freouf (amber.freouf@usda.gov), CSP Program Manager, or your [local USDA Field Office](#)

NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants

Uses: This program aims to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection. Under CIG, [EQIP](#) funds are used to award competitive grants to non-federal governmental or nongovernmental organizations, Tribes, or individuals.

Funds Available: NEW program. Contact NRCS.

Contact: [Colorado NRCS Office](#) (elizabeth.with@co.usda.gov)

NRCS Conservation Planning Technical Assistance

Uses: Conservation Plans are free technical documents that NRCS helps a landowner/producer to create once a full inventory of their operation's natural resources. The plans are a first step in moving forward with other NRCS financial assistance such as EQIP and CSP.

Funds Available: Applications accepted continuously. Last application period ended July 21, 2021.

Contact: [Your local Rural Development Office](#) or complete the online [Conservation Plan Request](#)

CWCB Water Efficiency & Drought Planning Grants

Uses: Long-range assistance for water conservation and drought or water storage plans, the implementation of plans, or related public education.

Funds Available: Grants typically range from \$20,000 to \$60,000; Limited to funds available on rolling basis.

Contact: ben.wade@state.co.us (CO Water Conservation Board)

USDA: [Farmers to Families Food Box](#)

Uses: As part of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Secretary Perdue announced on April 17, USDA is exercising authority under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to purchase and distribute agricultural products to those in need. The second round will aim to purchase up to \$1.47 billion July 1 through August 31, 2020. AMS may elect to extend the period of performance of the contracts, via option periods, dependent upon program success and available remaining funds, up to \$3 billion.

Contact: [Colorado NRCS Office](#)

US Fish & Wildlife: [Partners for Fish and Wildlife](#)

Uses: Through voluntary Agreements, financial and technical assistance is available to private landowners to restore fish and wildlife habitat, while also supporting rural communities and viable agriculture. Projects are designed to benefit multiple wildlife species, while also creating win-win solutions for private lands management. Certain projects that help with longer-term drought mitigation, such as water tanks, are qualified.

Contact: dominic_barrett@fws.gov (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State Coordinator)

CPW Habitat Partnership Program

Uses: The program aims to reduce wildlife conflicts, particularly those associated with forage and fences, and to assist Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) in meeting game management objectives. HPP efforts are primarily aimed at agricultural operators, and focus on problems and objectives for deer, elk, pronghorn and moose. HPP has wide flexibility in what can be funded; match required.

Contact: [HPP Committee Representative](#)

CDPHE [Small communities water and wastewater grants](#)

Uses: For the planning, design and construction of public water systems or domestic wastewater treatment works that serve a population of not more than 5,000 people, and are necessary for the protection of public health and water quality.

Funds Available: RFA was open Feb. 12, 2021 - March 12, 2021. Next application period TBD.

Contact: cdphe_grantsandloans@state.co.us (CO Dept. of Public Health & Environment)

CDPHE [Nonpoint Source Pollution Grants](#)

Uses: For projects that help restore and protect water bodies from nonpoint source (NPS) pollution impacts. NPS funding opportunities include watershed planning, best management practice (BMP) implementation, and education/outreach grants. Typical awards range from \$35K-\$100K for watershed planning, \$200K-\$500K for BMP implementation, and are up to \$5K for education/outreach grants. Requires non-federal match of 40% of total cost.

Funds Available: Education/outreach grants are available on a rolling basis. The RFA for implementation projects was open Oct. 9, 2020 to Jan. 4, 2021. Next application period TBD.

Contact: cdphe_wqcd_nonpointsource+managers@state.co.us (CO Dept. of Public Health & Environment)

CDPHE [Water Quality Improvement Fund](#)

Uses: Provides money for water quality improvement projects using civil penalties from water quality violations. This includes stormwater management training and best practices training to prevent or reduce the pollution of state waters. Small and economically challenged communities are given priority for the funds. Entities that pay a Colorado Water Quality Control Act civil penalty are prohibited from receiving a grant from the WQIF for a period of 5 years from the date of the payment of the penalty.

Funds Available: RFA will be announced end of 2021 or beginning of 2022.

Contact: cdphe_grantsandloans@state.co.us (CO Dept. of Public Health & Environment)

DOLA Community Development Block Grant

Uses: For non-entitlement municipalities and counties to carry out community development activities for acquisition, design/engineering, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation or installation of public improvements or public facilities.

Funds Available: RFA was open Nov. 2020 to Feb. 2021. Next application period TBD.

Contact: [Your DOLA regional manager](#) (Dept. of Local Affairs)

DOLA Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund

Uses: For political subdivisions impacted socially and/or economically by the development, processing, or energy conversion of minerals and mineral fuels. DOLA's intent in administering this grant program is to do as outlined in statute and promote sustainable community development, increase livability and resilience of communities through strategic investments in asset-building activities. The most successful applications into this program are those that demonstrate urgency and local commitment to get the project done, show a high priority for the proposed application, are prepared to start work, and can demonstrate a relationship to energy and mineral impact in rural Colorado.

Funds Available: Available funding includes: Tier 1 grants of up to \$200K, Tier 2 grants of up to \$1M, and administrative grants of up to \$25K. Emergency Funding may be available.

Contact: [Your DOLA regional manager](#) (Dept. of Local Affairs)

CAPACITY SUPPORT & RESOURCES

[The State of Colorado Drought Plan](#) was developed to provide an effective and systematic means for the State of Colorado to reduce the impacts of water shortages over the short and long term.

The [US Bureau of Reclamation's "Drought Response Program"](#) supports a proactive approach to drought by providing assistance to water managers to: (1) develop and update comprehensive drought plans; (2) implement projects that will build long-term resiliency to drought; and (3) undertake emergency response actions to minimize losses and damages.

- (1) [Drought Contingency Planning](#) – Bureau of Reclamation will provide financial assistance on a competitive basis for applicants to develop a drought contingency plan or to update an existing plan to meet the required elements described in the Drought Response Framework.
- (2) [Drought Resiliency Projects](#) - Reclamation will fund drought resiliency projects that will help communities prepare for and respond to drought. Typically, these types of projects are referred to as "mitigation actions" in a drought contingency plan.
- (3) [Emergency Response Actions](#) - Reclamation will continue to undertake emergency response actions under the Drought Response Program to minimize losses and damages resulting from drought, relying on the authorities in Title I of the Drought Act.

The [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) has an interactive [Drought Recovery and Response Guide](#) that includes worksheets, best practices, videos and key resources for responding to drought emergencies and building long-term resilience. There is also a [case studies map with videos](#) that shows how nine utilities across the U.S. have responded to and recovered from drought.