

South Platte Basin Roundtable Water Supply Reserve Fund Program Guidelines

Revised February 2023

Introduction

- The South Platte Basin Roundtable's (SPBRT) primary objective is to help solve the water supply gap throughout the basin. To achieve this, eligible project proponents may apply for grant funding through the Colorado Water Conservation Board's (CWCB) Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) program. Ideally, all projects approved for Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) grants would reduce the water supply gap, either through new storage, improved delivery efficiency or greater water conservation. The protection of the environment and agriculture and provision of water-based recreation are crucial to any project that helps solve the water supply gap. In addition, education and outreach efforts approved for WSRF funding shall promote the SPBRT to achieve the objective of helping solve the water supply gap.

The Basin WSRF Account grants fund activities within a specific roundtable and are managed by each of the nine roundtables; To provide stability, the Statewide Account (previously used for match) is now operated by CWCB as a savings account which is used to fill up each basin's annual distribution and help reduce the impacts of severance tax variability. The Statewide WSRF Account may also be used for projects related to Drought Resiliency and Aging Infrastructure. The administration of this program has been updated as of September 2022. Details can be found at the CWCB website under "[Recent Updates to WSRF Program \(January 2023\)](#)". All SPBRT Water Supply Reserve Fund grant applications must first be reviewed and approved by the SPBRT before the CWCB makes a final decision.

Eligibility requirements and application instructions for the **CWCB's** WSRF grants are located here:

<https://cwcb.colorado.gov/loans-grants/water-supply-reserve-fund-grants>

The SPBRT membership has approved the categories of its WSRF Basin Account funds in six specific topic areas that are based on the [South Platte Basin Implementation Plan \(SPBIP\)](#). Grant applicants are encouraged to review the SPBIP. WSRF grant requests are facilitated by the SPBRT WSRF Needs Committee (Needs Committee), which is comprised of the SPBRT membership. The Needs Committee members and priority topic area information are located on the [South Platte Basin Website WSRF Guidance Page](#). The SPBRT project activity categories are:

- Planning, Studies, & Permitting
- Water Supply Infrastructure
- Conservation, Efficiency, & Reuse
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Watershed Health, Environmental, & Recreational Attributes
- Education & Outreach

As mentioned further below in this document, the SPBRT encourages multi-purpose projects that encompass more than one of the above categories. Grant applications that incorporate multiple purposes may receive higher consideration for funding.

Background

Colorado's growth and development as a state are intertwined with water. Development and management of water is complex, controversial and, at times, contentious. Decisions regarding water have become increasingly complex as Colorado has experienced both unprecedented population growth and a greater emphasis on multiple uses of this precious resource.

To facilitate discussions on water management issues and encourage locally driven collaborative solutions, nine basin roundtables were established by the [Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act](#). These roundtables represent each of the state's eight major river basins and the Denver metropolitan area.

The South Platte Basin covers approximately 22,000 square miles in northeast Colorado. The largest cities in the SPBRT roundtable area are Boulder, Fort Collins, Longmont, and Greeley. The projected population in 2050 is estimated to almost double in size to between 1.9 and 2.6 million people. The SPBRT area also is home to rural mountain communities and includes more than 1.3 million acres of irrigated farm and ranch land that contributes about \$5B to the Colorado economy. Irrigation water supply is vital to this industry.

Nearly two-thirds of the increase in the state gross municipal and industrial (M&I) demand for water by 2030 – will be in the overall South Platte Basin (a combination of the South Platte Basin Roundtable and the Metro Roundtable areas).

The SPBRT WSRF Program is designed to meet this demand by funding projects and processes that are consistent with the [South Platte Basin Implementation Plan](#), including but not limited to:

- Develop or advance multi-purpose water supply projects.
- Improve municipal and industrial water efficiency.
- Sustain irrigated agriculture.
- Protect and enhance the environment and water-based recreation.
- Promote education and outreach that emphasizes the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan priorities.

Purpose of Guidelines

The SPBRT has actively developed several projects by leveraging funds from the WSRF ([Explore Water Supply Reserve Fund Projects](#)). It is the goal of these WSRF Account Grant Guidelines to:

- Provide documented guidelines and procedures for WSRF grant applications, suitable for the needs of the SPBRT and consistent with the [Water Supply Reserve Fund Grants | DNR CWCB \(colorado.gov\)](#) and help maximize applicant success of obtaining funding approval from the SPBRT in pursuit of WSRF grants from both the statewide and/or basin accounts.
- Provide a mechanism to aid grant applicants in understanding the requirements of the WSRF grant application process and allow the SPBRT Needs Committee to provide input to applicants to align projects with South Platte Basin needs and strengthen the applications.
- Provide a methodology to evaluate applications and select projects that support the principles and goals of [the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan](#) and the [Colorado Water Plan](#). Provide the opportunity for the SPBRT to evaluate grant applications with more thorough consideration

of the suitability of the project for the South Platte Basin, and vet the project through the WSRF Needs Committee prior to presentation at the full Roundtable level.

SPBRT Vision

As a majority of Colorado’s M&I gap is expected to occur in the South Platte Basin, the SPBRT believes that efforts to meet M&I demands should continue to be a high priority for the basin. The SPBRT also believes that efforts to close the projected M&I gap should be done in a way that ensures to the greatest extent possible the long-term sustainability of the Basin’s agriculture and natural environment, both for their own sake and for the beneficial economies, open space, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation activities that agriculture and a healthy environment support.

Diverse interests along the Front Range and Northeastern Colorado, including the largest urban centers in Colorado, have the potential to divide water into several separate and opposing uses whereby agriculture and the environment may lose. The SPBRT wishes to encourage WSRF grant-funded projects of statewide and local basin significance that address existing and future M&I demands while also meeting goals related to the long-term sustainability of agricultural economies and the natural environment. Ideally, projects funded through the SPBRT WSRF program would have multiple benefits. Multi-beneficial projects are more likely to get funded and will be eligible for larger funding awards.

It is important for WSRF Grant applicants to understand that SPBRT members are focused on delivering on-the-ground solutions to the M&I gap but doing so in a manner that also contributes to lessening the agricultural gap and meeting environmental and recreational demands. Several multiple benefit projects have been approved and developed by the roundtable, and applicants should strive to address these needs in every project. Single benefit projects will be considered and ranked according to their contribution to the basin and statewide goals for meeting future water demand. The SPBRT also envisions that joint Metro Roundtable and South Platte Roundtable subcommittees may develop projects directly related to the Goals and Measurable Outcomes contained in the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan to be funded through the WSRF program. These Criteria and Guidelines also apply to these projects.

Call for Projects

The SPBRT Needs Committee considers projects twice a year. At times, the Needs Committee may consider or actively seek applications or projects that address elevated SPBRT priorities.

Program Summary

How/Where to Apply?	Submit Proposal Summary during open application periods via the online form at Grants — The South Platte Basin
Spring Cycle Full Application Deadline	April 15
Fall Cycle Full Application Deadline	October 15
Summer Cycle Award Date	May Roundtable Meeting
Fall Cycle Award Date	November Roundtable Meeting
Eligible Entities	Governmental Entities Governmental entities include municipalities, districts, enterprises, counties, and State of Colorado agencies. Federal agencies are encouraged to work with local entities.

	Private Entities Private entities include mutual ditch companies, non-profit corporations, and partnerships, etc.
Match Requirements	25% of project cost

The SBPRT recognizes the value of leveraging WSRF funds for projects that are considered “deferred maintenance” (ex. ditch cleaning, replacement of dilapidated diversion structures, pump refurbishing, etc.). Due to the magnitude of infrastructure in need of repair/replacement and the relatively small amount of funding available for WSRF grants, the SBPRT does not intend for WSRF funds to be the primary funding source for deferred maintenance projects. The SBPRT strongly encourages applicants to use WSRF funds to meet the matching fund requirements of the statewide WSRF grants through the CWCB. The SBPRT requests that any WSRF applications for deferred maintenance projects demonstrate the funds are being utilized to leverage other grant funds (state and federal programs, private foundations, etc.) and that the project furthers the objectives and goals of the Colorado Water Plan and South Platte Basin Implementation Plan.

Match Requirements

Basin Applications – The SBPRT and CWCB WSRF Grant requests require matching funds. A minimum match of 25% of total project costs is required for all WSRF projects. Greater weight may be given to projects with a higher match. Matching funds may consist of a combination of in-kind (50% maximum) and cash. Applicants should identify matching funds as either pending or secure and provide evidence of those matching funds (such as an award letter). A [WSRF Budget Calculator](#) has been created to support applicants. Matching funds must be secured within one year of the application date and prior to contracting.

Application Process and Deadlines

The South Platte Basin Roundtable has developed an annual spring and fall grant cycle. The deadline dates allow the SBPRT’s Needs Committee sufficient time to review all proposals, applications, and request a presentation from the applicant if needed and provide recommendations for approval to the SBPRT.

Application Steps	Cycle 1 Deadlines	Cycle 2 Deadlines
Online summary proposal via www.southplattebasin.com/grants	March 1	September 1
Draft Full Application Submittal on CWCB Portal	3rd Friday in April	3rd Friday in October
RT Award Decision	May RT meeting	November RT meeting
Final Application submittal on CWCB Portal	June 1	December 1
CWCB Approval Meeting	September	March

How to Apply

The SBPRT is the organization that reviews the Basin applications and the CWCB is the contracting party for both the Basin WSRF funds.

1. Review [CWCB’s Water Supply Reserve Fund Criteria and Guidelines](#).

2. Review the SPBRT's WSRF Program Guidelines ([this document](#)) and the [South Platte Basin Implementation Plan](#).
3. Review the [Topic Areas Funding Distribution and Grant Priorities](#) to determine if the project meets one or more of the RT priority areas. Contact the topic area lead, or the Needs Committee Chair, to discuss project eligibility and determine whether funding is available.
4. If the project is eligible and funding is available, the applicant submits via an online form on the [southplattebasin.org grants page portal](#), a Proposal Summary of the project. The form questions include:
 - a. Project description, timeline, and budget
 - The description should reference specific sections of the South Platte Basin Roundtable's Basin Implementation Plan and the Colorado Water Plan.
 - b. Grant request
 - c. Match amount (minimum 25% required)
5. The Needs Committee will review the project summary and will determine whether to request the applicant to apply for funding.
6. Attend the appropriate Cycle 1 or Cycle 2 RT meeting to make a short presentation about the project and answer questions from the RT membership. The RT will vote on approval to advance the applicant to the CWCB review, which requires a majority vote at a meeting with a quorum.
7. Upon request, applicants must upload application documents into the [CWCB WSRF Grants Portal](#). Basin WSRF coordinators will evaluate the application from the portal using the roundtable's process. Applicants are encouraged to work with the topic area lead to ensure the completeness of the application prior to submission.
8. If the project is approved, the applicant should provide a draft letter of recommendation to the CWCB to be signed by the RT Chair. The roundtable will submit the written recommendation to the CWCB signed by the RT Chair through the portal. The letter of recommendation must specify the amount of grant funding requested from the Basin Account and describe how the water activity meets Basin Implementation Plan goals. The letter should describe the level of agreement among roundtable members, who opposed the application and why, and any minority opinion. If the applicant is requesting a waiver of the Basin Account match requirement, the letter of recommendation shall reflect the waiver request and shall provide a justification for the request as determined by the Roundtable.
9. The Applicant will work with CWCB staff to address any issues or additional information needed prior to CWCB Board review.

Reports to CWCB Following Grant Award and Contracting

Progress Reports: The applicant shall provide the CWCB a progress report every 6 months, beginning from the date of issuance of a purchase order, or the execution of a contract. The progress report shall describe the status of the tasks identified in the statement of work, including a description of any major issues that have occurred and any corrective action taken to address these issues. Applicants are required to submit Progress Reports to their respective Roundtable(s) and the CWCB. The CWCB may withhold reimbursement until satisfactory progress reports have been submitted.

Final Report: At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide their respective Roundtable(s) and the CWCB a final report on the applicant's letterhead that:

- Summarizes the project and how the project was completed.
- Describes any obstacles encountered, and how these obstacles were overcome.
- Confirms that all matching commitments have been fulfilled.
- Includes photographs, summaries of meetings and engineering reports/designs, if appropriate.

The CWCB will withhold the last 10% of the entire water activity budget until the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the water activity and purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.