



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

Turf Replacement Grant Program Guidelines (2024)

Introduction

The Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 22-1151, which charged the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) with incentivizing the creation of local turf removal programs. The CWCB, as the administering agency, is responsible for managing the grant process and ensuring that the awarded funds are used in accordance with the grant guidelines. The legislation provided limited funding and staff through June 30, 2025, and HB 24-1435 extended that funding through June 30, 2028, to support the management of matching funds for eligible entities interested in incentivizing the local voluntary removal of nonfunctional turf. The CWCB ran the first round of tax-payer-provided dollars through a separate pilot grant process but is now working with the CWCB Board to create an official grant program to expend newly added funding the CWCB Board and General Assembly approved for use starting on July 1, 2024. The following Turf Replacement Grant Program guidelines (guidelines) detail the requirements for obtaining grant funding. Additional information pertaining to the Turf Replacement Grant Program is available on the CWCB website at: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/turf>

Eligible Entities

All eligible entities must submit on their own behalf and must be able to meet the contracting requirements of the State (see “Contracting” section below). Eligible entities must also submit eligible projects to be successful in their application process (see the “Eligible Projects” section). The eligible applicants who can directly apply for the State’s Turf Replacement Grant Program funds are limited to the following:

- Local Governments
- Districts (including water districts, metropolitan districts, water and sanitation districts, special districts, water utilities, and water conservancy/conservation districts)
- Nonprofit Organizations (with 501(c)(3) status and prior work in water that can support turf removal programs)
- Colorado's Federally Recognized Tribes (Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian Tribes)

Ineligible Entities

All other entities, including but not limited to the groups noted below, are considered ineligible to be funded directly by the state’s turf replacement program.

- Single Family Homeowners
- Homeowners' Associations or any Multifamily Property
- Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional entities (excluding those entities that fit into the categories that are allowed in the Eligible Entity List above)

Eligible Turf Replacement Projects

One or more of the following categories must be included to be considered an eligible turf replacement program.

- **Turf Removal Incentive Programs**

Projects may include design, materials, plantings, and labor required to complete landscaping and irrigation system modifications to remove turf and replace it with water-wise landscaping.

- Projects that remove high-water-use turf on site-specific locations and replace it with low-water plant materials as a community demonstration that motivates or encourages the removal and replacement of high-water-use turf. (50% match)
- Projects that remove high water use turf on one or more properties through established or new local programs to help subsidize local water users' removal and replacement. (50% match)

- **Turf Removal Program Design**

Projects may include irrigation planning and updates, xeriscape/planting design, administrative program development, mapping, or similar studies on how a turf project would be completed.

- In a preliminary design for a future turf removal project/program that is in the planning phase (25% match)
- A design for an active turf removal project/program that is being constructed (e.g., breaking ground) (50% match)

Eligible Project Examples

Examples of eligible components to advance the replacement of high-water-use turf with water-wise landscaping:

- Program or project design program materials
- Cost of planting and water-wise landscaping
- Labor for landscaping, irrigation improvements, and turf removal
- Education or marketing material
- Third-party contracting
- Expanding existing turf replacement programs
- New turf replacement initiatives
- Turf mapping to access program design

Additional Eligible Project Components

In keeping with the seven principles of xeriscape as defined in statute (Colo. Rev. Stat. § 37-60-135), all funded construction and design programs and projects must incorporate the following:

- Efforts to update irrigation systems to efficiently irrigate water-wise landscaping, including as a condition of participating in the eligible entity's local turf replacement program.

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- Efforts to maintain a minimum level of replacement vegetation (targeting 50% at maturity).
- Efforts to ensure a long-term maintenance plan where possible.
- Efforts to maintain or create defensible spaces to reduce wildfire risk.

The CWCB also encourages cities and local water agencies to consider ordinances or landscape codes that prohibit installing and irrigating nonfunctional turf on all commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties, as well as residential properties, where appropriate.

Ineligible Project Examples

Funding will not be offered to any applicant intending to replace turf with the following materials:

- Impermeable concrete
- Artificial turf
- Water features such as fountains
- Invasive plant species
- High-water-use turf varieties

Matching Fund Requirements

Turf Replacement Grant Program requests require that an entity have matching funds. A minimum 50% match is required for all construction projects, and a minimum 25% match is required for all plans, design, mapping, or studies. If a turf replacement program combines construction, rebates & incentives, planning, and/or studies, a minimum 50% match is required. See the Eligible Turf Replacement Projects section for more details. Greater weight will be given to projects with a higher match. Project costs may consist of a combination of in-kind and cash match, but no more than half of the match may be in the form of in-kind services. Applicants should identify match funding as pending or secure and provide evidence of matching funds (such as an award letter). Matching funds must be secured within one year of the application date.

Types of Matching Funds

Non-CWCB matching funds may include funding from state agencies such as Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and other state and federal agencies. All other funding sources within the control of the CWCB Board and its Director are considered CWCB funds, including the Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF).

- **Cash Match**

Actual expenditures paid directly with cash funds (based on contractual arrangements) from the grantee to a vendor. Examples are supplies, services, and necessary equipment purchase or rental.

- **In-Kind Match**

In-kind match includes services and labor provided by the paid staff of the grantee to perform all or part of the approved project scope of work, including necessary project administration. This can include standard direct and indirect personnel fringe benefits. Volunteer services provided at no cost to the applicant by firms or individuals consistent with the approved scope of work will be valued for in-kind match at local prevailing wage rates. Project-specific land acquisition or access agreement costs may also be claimed as in-kind contributions and credited against the minimum requirement. Costs that cannot be considered include: general organization operating costs such as utilities, operating supplies and services, amortized costs or rental costs for buildings and equipment used for the general operation of the organization, and general property and liability insurance costs, nor will overhead percent charges to cover such items be allowed. These business expenses are not reimbursable costs and may not be claimed as matching contributions.

- **Past Expenditures**

Recognizing the limited resources of some entities, past expenditures directly related to the water activity that were not used as matching funds for previous CWCB-funded turf replacement programs may be considered matching funds if the expenditures occurred within 9 months of the execution date of the contract or purchase order between the applicant and the State of Colorado.

Waived Match for Tribes

Grant awards to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe or the Southern Ute Indian Tribe do not require match funding for this program.

Application Process

Eligible entities must register for an account on the CWCB Portal to submit a grant application at <https://cwcb.force.com/s/registration-request>. It may take 1-3 days for the registration to be approved, and a notification of approval will be sent via email. Once the registration has been approved, applicants can log on to the CWCB Portal and apply at <https://cwcb.force.com/s/login/>. Applicants will be prompted to submit the following items to the portal:

- Answers to CWCB-prompted questions;
- Statement of Work (CWCB will provide MS Word template);
- Budget (CWCB will provide an Excel template);
- Schedule; and
- Letters of Commitment (proof of matching funds).

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In the case that the application submission does not clarify the funding intent, CWCB reserves the right to contact the applicant and ask additional questions to learn more.

Letters of Support

Support letters are also welcomed but not required. Any letters received should be either uploaded into the CWCB Portal along with the application materials or emailed directly to CWCB staff.

Application Dates

The application deadlines for the Turf Removal Grant Program, time for which CWCB staff will post qualifying grants on the website and the CWCB Board meeting for which the grant will be reviewed for approval or denial is shown in the table below.

Application Deadline	Qualifying Grants Posted (on the CWCB website)	Board Review
October 31	December 1	January Board Meeting
February 28	April 1	May Board Meeting

Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated based on eligibility requirements and evaluation criteria. Criteria and guidelines specific to funding are outlined in this document's "Grant Eligibility" section.

Consistent with [CWCB Policy 25](#), the review and approval process will include the following steps:

- CWCB staff will determine if the required documentation has been submitted and will follow up if necessary. The application will be accepted once all documentation has been received.
- CWCB staff will evaluate the application based on the criteria described in this document.
- Applications will be reviewed and notified within 30 days of acceptance by CWCB staff.
- The application will be reviewed and presented to the appropriate CWCB decision-makers depending on the dollar value of the request.
- After CWCB Board or Director approval, CWCB staff will notify the applicant of the funding decision.
- CWCB staff will work with the applicant to submit the required contracting documents to process the grant contract.
- Upon CWCB approval of the applicant's request, funding can only be used on project components that begin after the office of the state controller

executes a grant contract. Also, see “Past Expenditures” on page five (4) for details on matching funds expenditures that occur within 9 months of the execution date of the contract or purchase order.

- Grant contracts typically take around 45 days to execute once the CWCB has received all required documents from the grantee.

Evaluation Criteria

In general, applications will be evaluated on how well the described program or project advances the program's goals and replaces turf through materials and a process that meets the state's definition of Xeriscape and the seven principles of Xeriscape (Colo. Rev. Stat. § 37-60-135). Other considerations stated in the Grant Eligibility Section starting on page one (1) that are directly required or encouraged will also be considered.

Documents Required for Contract Execution

- Scope of Work;
- Budget and Schedule;
- Insurance Certificate of Liability (Government entities excluded);
- Secretary of State - Certificate of Good Standing (Government entities excluded);
- Colorado W-9; and
- Electronic Funds Transfer (preferred).

Contracting

After approval of funding, CWCB staff will direct the applicant to revise and supplement submitted documents if required for issuance of a purchase order or execution of a contract. Successful applicants are expected to execute a contract with CWCB within 6 months of award. If a grant contract is not executed within this timeframe, CWCB staff may return the funds to the overall program funding if adequate progress is not made.

All projects or program components utilizing the Turf Replacement Grant Program funds must be completed and invoiced by June 30, 2028. Due to the Turf Replacement Grant Program's funding limitations, there will be no exceptions, and successful applicants must demonstrate plans for completion.

Reporting Requirements

Regular reporting is a requirement for this grant, as described below.

Initial and Progress Reporting

The applicant shall provide the CWCB progress reports at pre-determined and regular intervals, beginning from the date of issuance of a purchase order or the execution of a contract. The initial baseline report and annual progress reports described in the Scope of Work 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. The CWCB may withhold reimbursement until satisfactory progress reports have been submitted.

Final Report

At the completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the CWCB a Final Report on the applicant's letterhead that:

- Summarizes the project and how the project was completed, including total square footage of removal, water savings, and verified cost components.
- Describes any obstacles encountered and how these obstacles were overcome.
- Confirms that all matching commitments have been fulfilled.
- Includes photographs, summaries, reports, or designs that demonstrate the successful use of the funding within the goals of the Turf Replacement Grant Program.

The CWCB will withhold disbursement of the last 10% of the 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 purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.

Payments

Payment will be based on actual expenditures invoiced by the grantee. Payments are limited by the proportionate grant percentage of the overall project. The request for payment must be transmitted on the supplied template and shall include:

- Date of request.
- Grantee's contact name, email address, physical address, and phone number.
- Contract or purchase order number.
- Description of the work accomplished by major task(s) presented in the approved budget.*
- Supporting documentation for items or services billed.
- Estimate of the percent completion for individual tasks and the entire water activity in relation to the percentage of budget spent.
- Identification of any major issues and proposed or implemented corrective actions.

*This may be utilized in lieu of a 6-month Progress Report if adequate detail is provided. Contact the Project Manager to determine if your project qualifies for this option.