



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Jenna Battson, Outdoor Water Conservation Coordinator
Kat Weismiller, Section Chief
Water Supply Planning Section

DATE: January 28, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 20a-20c Turf Replacement Grant Applications

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends Board action on three (3) Turf Replacement Grant Program applications above \$100,000 as described in the following summary tables.

Introduction

The 2024 Water Projects Bill (SB24-1435) appropriated \$2M for the Turf Replacement Grant Program, with \$1,680,000 in awards available beginning in fiscal year 2025. Turf Replacement Grant Program awards are made in two cycles during the fiscal year when funding is available. CWCB received seven (7) applications during the first application cycle, requesting a total of \$1,210,571.50. All applications are available for public viewing online at <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/turf>

The process of reviewing the applications consisted of criteria qualification checks, dialog with the applicants, and consideration by CWCB staff. All 7 applicants met CWCB's qualifications during the process, resulting in 7 staff recommendations for consideration. One applicant reduced their grant request during the review process, as noted in the data sheet and summary table below. The end result of the review is a portfolio of recommendations representing qualifying individual projects that collectively best advance the goals of the Turf Replacement Grant Program. \$1,210,571.50 in awards are recommended.

Per CWCB Policy #25, grant recommendations are considered for approval in three separate groups depending on the amount recommended. Those awards above \$100,000 will be placed on the full agenda for consideration by the Board, those between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and those not recommended for funding will be placed on the consent agenda, and those below \$50,000 are considered by the CWCB Director. This agenda item recommends approval of 3 applications above \$100,000 for a total recommended amount of \$1,060,321.50, as shown in Table 1. See attached Data Sheets for additional project details.



Table 1: Award Recommendations Above \$100,000

Category	Number of Applications	Recommended
Incentive	3	\$1,060,321.50

Project Issues/Additional Needs:

- All funding awards are contingent upon the applicant's ability to secure match funding
- Grantees should adequately address CWCB staff comments to scopes of work and engineering designs (when applicable). Staff will contact each successful applicant to discuss comments and contracting procedures prior to contracting.
- All grantees should adhere to their organizational procurement policies when hiring contractors and consultants. CWCB recommends that State procurement policies be used as a guide if an organization does not have procurement policies.
- Projects should comply with the CWCB's Rules and Regulations for Regulatory Floodplains in Colorado, when applicable.

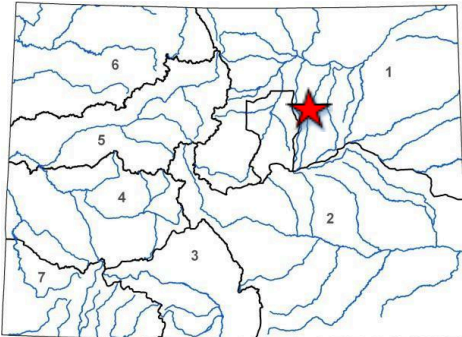
Incentive

	Applicant	Project Name	Request	Recommendation	Total Project Cost	Match	Basin
20a	Aurora Water	Aurora Water	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$200,000.00	50%	Metro
20b	Colorado Springs Utilities	Colorado Springs Utilities	\$462,234.00	\$462,234.00	\$933,210.00	50%	Arkansas
20c	Resource Central	Resource Central	\$498,087.50	\$498,087.50	\$1,031,825.00	52%	Metro; South Platte
					\$1,060,321.50		





Turf Replacement Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	Arapahoe, Adams, Douglas
Basin:	Metro

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$200,000
Turf Replacement Grant Program Request:	\$100,000
Recommended amount:	\$100,000
Applicant Match:	\$100,000
Project Type:	Implementation
Project Category:	Incentive

MEASURABLE RESULTS	
Water Savings:	131,000 gallons (0.4 acre-feet)
Converted Area:	7,500 square feet (0.17 acres)

The Turf Replacement Grant Program funding will help expand Aurora Water's current [Greatscapes program](#). Greatscapes is an income-qualified, direct-install, water-wise landscape initiative that expands water-wise landscapes into residential spaces traditionally underserved by turf replacement incentive programs. Aurora Water provides design services and manages the landscape construction contract and installation at zero cost to participants.

The new landscapes will feature native and adapted plants that require minimal watering once established. Irrigation systems will not be installed, and participants will learn hand-watering techniques for the establishment period. The goal is to rely on natural precipitation for ongoing watering needs, with hand-watering only during exceptionally dry periods. If existing sprinkler heads are present, they will be removed, but the pipes will remain underground.

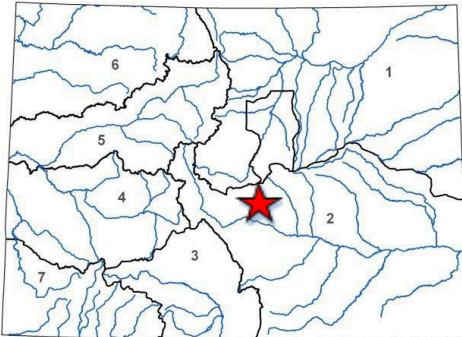
Greatscapes promotes sustainable landscaping practices that minimize water use and presents a unique solution to address equity challenges in water conservation programs. While the program may yield lower water savings than traditional turf replacement incentives, it allows residents to install water-wise landscapes rather than simply meeting any code requirements with turf. This equity-focused approach helps participants participate in water conservation programs, minimize water consumption, and reduce water bills.

The program will provide approximately eight free installations, aiming to replace around 7,500 square feet of turf grass, potentially saving 131,000 gallons (.04 acre-feet) of water annually. The estimated cost is \$10.67 per square foot.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends full funding of \$100,000 to Aurora Water.

Turf Replacement Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	El Paso
Basin:	Arkansas

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$933,210
Turf Replacement Grant Program Request:	\$462,234
Recommended amount:	\$462,234
Applicant Match:	\$470,976
Project Type:	Implementation
Project Category:	Incentive

MEASURABLE RESULTS	
Water Savings:	9,123,840 gallons (28 acre-feet)
Converted Area:	871,200 square feet (20 acres)

The Turf Replacement Grant Program funding will help Colorado Springs Utilities advance landscape conversions from turf grass to water-wise landscapes that can thrive with one day/week watering (8-12" of annual supplemental irrigation). Funding will support the ongoing testing of native grass installations in various settings to confirm best practices, build capacity, and test water-wise solutions for hard-to-landscape areas (where turfgrass will no longer be allowed due to the passage of SB24-005).

The program will target applications from local institutions, HOAs, and large commercial and/or education campuses in the Colorado Springs Utilities service territory. Organizations can receive up to a \$100,000 rebate for projects 0.5 acres or larger to remove non-essential turf and replace it with landscapes, saving a minimum of 50% of the required water for the same turf grass area. Two types of projects will be considered:

Type 1: Ongoing Installation of Climate-Based Alternatives

- Blue grama and/or buffalo grass seed or approved native grass mixes
- Water Wise plant areas with drip irrigation

Type 2: Testing Solutions for Hard-to-Landscape Areas

- Native grasses for medians and curbside landscapes
- Shade-tolerant native grasses
- Low-maintenance plant beds; low-maintenance native grass seed areas with wildflower plugs

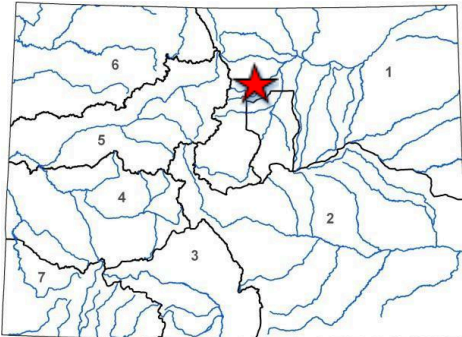
Grant funds may cover landscape design, irrigation upgrades, careful monitoring/repair of irrigation scheduling and systems, turf removal, water-wise plants, and/or native seed installation, and ongoing maintenance through year three of the project, including weed and plant health management.

The program will fund approximately 12-15 projects, converting an estimated 20 acres over three years. Water saving estimates are 60,984 gallons per square foot (1.4 acre-feet of water per acre). Assuming 20 acres are converted, the project anticipates 28 acre-feet of water savings. Based on the average cost of turf removal, native grass replacement, water-wise plant replacement, irrigation updates, and ongoing maintenance for a healthy establishment, the estimated cost is \$0.92 per square foot (\$40,000 per converted acre).

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends full funding of \$462,234 to Colorado Springs Utilities.

Turf Replacement Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	Boulder
Basin:	Metro; South Platte

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$1,031,825
Turf Replacement Grant Program Request:	\$498,087.50
Recommended amount:	\$498,087.50
Applicant Match:	\$533,733.50
Project Type:	Implementation
Project Category:	Incentive

MEASURABLE RESULTS	
Water Savings:	6,308,000 gallons (19.4 acre-feet)
Converted Area:	15,000 square feet (0.34 acres)

The Turf Replacement Grant Program funding will help Resource Central pilot a program to support larger property transition to low-water, sustainable landscapes through tailored assessments, consultations, and actionable strategies. The initiative aims to reduce water use, improve drought resilience, lower maintenance costs, support biodiversity, and create more attractive, functional spaces.

Colorado's non-single-family residential properties—such as HOAs, business parks, and public spaces—are key targets for water conservation due to large turf areas maintained primarily for aesthetics. These landscapes demand relatively significant water and incur high maintenance costs while providing minimal practical value. To target HOAs and test scalable program expansion, Resource Central will use over two decades of experience partnering with water providers and municipalities across Colorado to promote water conservation.

The pilot program will provide water use assessments, customized consultations, and expert guidance on landscape and irrigation upgrades across 25 properties by targeting property managers, HOA board members, and other key decision-makers. Of these, nine (9) properties will participate in demonstration projects, implementing irrigation retrofits and/or turf conversions with grant support to showcase best practices and encourage wider adoption of long-term conservation strategies. The remaining 16 properties will receive comprehensive assessments and actionable recommendations, equipping them to proceed with water-saving improvements independently or with future funding opportunities.

This program will remove an average of 3,000 square feet of water-intensive turf grass from up to five (5) properties. By replacing 15,000 square feet (0.34 acres) of turf grass across 5 HOA properties, an estimated 252,000 gallons of water (0.77 acre-feet) will be saved at an estimated cost of \$6.67 per square foot. Additionally, irrigation retrofits on four (4) HOA properties will reduce water use by 30%, saving an estimated 2,019,000 gallons of water (6.2 acre-feet). The 16 consultation-focused projects will combine turf replacement and irrigation retrofits, saving an estimated 4,037,000 gallons (12.4 acre-feet) of water. In total, the combined efforts across 25 properties are expected to save around 6,308,000 gallons (19.4 acre-feet) of water.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends full funding of \$498,087.50 to Resource Central.