



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Cole Bedford P.E., Chief Operating Officer

DATE: May 21-22, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 18. Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Share Program Guidelines

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve the attached Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Share Program (Program) Guidelines, which will go into effect when funding becomes available after July 1, 2025.

Staff further recommends that the Board authorize the CWCB Director to approve all grant awards for the Program. This is consistent with the previously established approval process for the Program, but is also a deviation from [CWCB Policy 25 - Approval of Grants](#).

Background

The Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Share (TAFC) Program helps water users secure and employ federal funding for Water Projects in Colorado. While historic levels of funding have been made available by the Federal Government in recent years, there is a barrier to accessing those funds for many organizations and local governments with limited technical and financial capacity. The TAFC Program provides grants to hire consultants or otherwise fund the resources necessary to develop high-quality, competitive applications for federal funding and ensure that fundings is employed on high-impact water projects.

At the November 2024 CWCB Board Meeting the Board voted to recommend the inclusion of \$500,000 in the 2025 CWCB Projects Bill to support the continuation of the TAFC Program. This recommendation is reflected in Section 8 of the Projects Bill ([SB25-283](#)), which was approved by a vote of the Senate of April 23, 2025 and a vote of the House on May 2, 2025. The Bill is currently awaiting Governor signature.

Attachments:

Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Share Program, Grant Guidelines





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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR FEDERAL COST-SHARING (TAFC) PROGRAM

GRANT GUIDELINES

JULY 2025

INTRODUCTION

Colorado water users with limited technical or staffing capacity face significant barriers to accessing federal funds. The Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Sharing Program (T AFC) Program provides direct grants to these water users to hire consultants or otherwise secure the resources necessary to develop high-quality, competitive applications for federal funding.

Tasks supported by the T AFC Program include but are not limited to: preliminary project planning and design, preliminary permitting, development of estimated project costs, navigation of available federal opportunities, grant writing, and federal grant application submittal. All T AFC grants awarded must include the preparation and submission of at least one federal grant application as a discrete task within the grant's scope and budget.

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Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

- Governmental entities including municipalities, districts, enterprises, and counties. State of Colorado agencies are generally not eligible applicants, although program staff have discretion to allow state agencies to apply in certain limited circumstances. Covered Entities as defined in Section 37-60-126, C.R.S., are eligible if the applicant has adopted an approved water conservation plan.
- Private entities including mutual ditch companies, non-profit corporations, and partnerships.

Eligible Project Examples

- Project development: site assessments, data research and collection necessary for project design, coordination with stakeholders, permitting, design assistance, cost estimating, securing matching funds for project, and other technical work required to develop an application for federal funding
- Grant writing: researching federal grant opportunities, outreach to funding programs prior to submitting an application, review of Federal guidelines and application requirements, and development of the application and required documents, including letters of support.

Matching Fund Requirements

A minimum of 25 percent match is required for all TAFC Grants. Project costs designated as match may be covered by a combination of in-kind services and cash match, but no more than half (12.5 percent) of total match may be in the form of in-kind services. During the application process, applicants should identify matching funds as pending or secure and provide evidence of secured match (such as an award letter).

Cash Match

Actual expenditures paid directly with cash funds (based on contractual arrangements) from the grantee to a vendor. Examples include 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.

Costs that CAN NOT be considered for in-kind match 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 charges to cover such items.

Application Process

Prior to submitting an application, interested parties must contact the CWCB to discuss potential projects. For more information, please email Michael Regan (michael.regan@state.co.us).

Application forms are available on the CWCB Loan and Grant Portal on the CWCB website (<https://cwcb.colorado.gov/>) under Funding. Applications to the TAFC program will be accepted on a rolling basis, with awards made to coincide with CWCB's annual schedule of Board meetings (six times per year). Applications will be accepted until all Program funds are obligated.

All grant applications must include a scope of work, budget, and project schedule. If possible, applications should identify the relevant federal grants the grantee is likely to apply for.

Application Evaluation Criteria

Program staff will develop a scoring template to be used for all applications. Specific evaluation criteria will be selected based on input from subject matter experts across the agency, but are likely to include most or all of the following:

- Does the project further Colorado Water Plan or current Basin Implementation Plan goals, objectives, or actions? Priority will be given to applications seeking to secure financial and technical assistance for basin roundtable-identified projects or projects identified through collaborative watershed planning efforts such as stream/integrated watershed management plans.
- Does the project advance interstate, regional or watershed-scale water and natural resource management efforts and solutions?
- Does the project have local community and diverse stakeholder support? Have relevant federal, state and local government agencies provided input on the project?

Grant Administration

Contract Development

All T AFC awards will be administered via grant contract. Successful applicants are expected to execute a contract with CWCB within three months of award. If a grant contract is not executed within this timeframe, CWCB staff may return the funds to support other grant applications if adequate progress is not made.

Required contracting documents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Insurance Certificate of Liability (some government entities excluded)
- Current W-9 form
- Electronic Funds Transfer authorization (preferred) or a current mailing address (in the event that a paper check is issued)
- Demonstration of an active federal Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), so that CWCB can confirm an applicant's eligibility to receive federal funding

Reimbursements

Grants will be administered on a reimbursement basis, with grantees submitting payment requests to CWCB on an agreed-upon schedule (monthly or quarterly) and based on actual expenditures invoiced by the grantee. Payments are limited by the proportionate grant percentage of the overall project. Requests for payment shall include:

- Date of request
- Dates of service
- Grantee's contact name, email address, physical address, and phone number
- Contract or purchase order number
- Description of the work accomplished by major task as presented in the approved budget
- Supporting documentation for items or services billed

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must provide the CWCB with progress reports and expenditure reports each quarter following contract execution. 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. The CWCB may withhold reimbursement until satisfactory progress reports have been submitted.

At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the CWCB a Final Report containing the following:

- Summary of work completed.
- Description of any obstacles encountered, and how these obstacles were overcome.
- Confirmation that all matching commitments have been fulfilled.
- Copies of any engineering reports or designs developed with grant funding.
- A copy of any federal grant applications completed and submitted by the grantee.

The CWCB will withhold disbursement of the last 10 percent of the budget until the Final Report is completed and submitted. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the grant will be closed without any further payment.