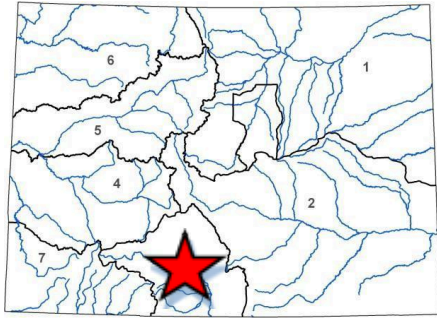




Water Plan Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	Alamosa; Conejos; Costilla; Rio Grande; Saguache; Mineral; Hinsdale
Basin:	Rio Grande

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$287,021.00
Water Plan Grant Request:	\$207,720.00
Recommended Amount:	\$207,720.00
Match Commitment:	\$79,301.00
Grant to Match Ratio:	72/28
Project Type:	Education
Primary Project Category:	Engagement & Innovation
Measurable Result:	5,000 Coloradans impacted by engagement activity

The Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center (Salazar Center) at Adams State University (ASU), based in Alamosa, is seeking a Colorado Water Plan grant to support a three-year Water Education and Community Engagement effort in the San Luis Valley.

The Salazar Center was founded in 2016 to advance knowledge of and invite participation in solutions for the San Luis Valley's most pressing natural resource challenges. With a 2019 Water Plan Grant, the Salazar Center launched ASU's first water studies minor and the inaugural Rio Grande State of the Basin Symposium (now in its seventh year). Despite this initial momentum, factors such as the COVID pandemic, the former director's retirement, and a two-year vacancy in the director position temporarily limited the Salazar Center's impact on campus and within the community.

With a new director hired in 2024, the Salazar Center has an opportunity to reinvigorate the university's role as a leader in regional water education and within the local water community. This leadership is highly valued by the community, as indicated by project support from the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable, the locally-based Outcalt Foundation, and the Division of Water Resources Division 3 Engineer.

This funding request aims to capitalize on this momentum by jumpstarting water educational offerings and fostering stronger connections between the local water community and students. These programs will target students, community members, and water professionals. Specifically, the Salazar Center will enhance its water-related curriculum, offer student internships with local water organizations, host a community speaker series, and create the "Rio Grande Collection"—a historical repository of local water heritage material.

Grant funds will be used to support these activities, including covering student internships, project assistant salaries, and speaker fees. Matching funds will also provide student and community scholarships. To create the Rio Grande Collection, funds will cover locking bookshelves, a high-resolution scanner, videography, and travel costs to conduct taped interviews with local water leaders.

This project advances the Colorado Water Plan's Partner Actions by promoting diversity in water-related careers and increasing community engagement in water discussions. ASU is the only four-year higher education institution in the rural, 8,000 square-mile San Luis Valley. Sixty-two percent of undergraduates are Colorado residents, 30% are from the San Luis Valley, and 45% are first generation college students. ASU is also a federally-designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, meaning at least 25% of its student population identifies as Hispanic or Latino.

This effort also advances the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan—which specifically identified the Salazar Center as a key leader in local water education—by increasing ASU's contributions to water curriculum, local workforce development, and community water solutions.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends a Water Plan Grant award not to exceed \$207,720.00 to Adams State University for Water Education and Community Engagement.