

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



General Drought Funding Questions

Q: What programs are available to fund my drought project?

A: DWR has established two funding programs for drought: Small Community Drought Relief Program and Urban Community Drought Relief Program. These FAQs are for the Urban Community Drought Relief Program

Q: How do I apply for funding?

A: The Guidelines and instructions for applying to the Small Communities funding can be found [here](#). The [Urban Community Drought Relief Program](#) grant solicitation opened in Fall of 2022. There are also a variety of funding sources available through the California State Water Resources Control Board. It's recommended that you contact your County Office if you are in need of emergency funding.

Q: Who is eligible to apply for drought funding?

A: Entities that are eligible to apply are listed below:

- Public agencies
- Public utilities
- Special districts
- Colleges and universities
- Mutual water companies
- 501(c) 3 Non-profit organizations
- Regional water management groups, as defined in Section 10539 of the Water Code
- Federally recognized California Native American Tribes
- Non-federally recognized Native American Tribes on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission for the purposes of Chapter 905 of the Statutes of 2004

Q: What type of projects can the drought funding support?

A: The drought funding guidelines and proposal solicitation package (GL/PSP) lists multiple types of eligible projects (see below). It is important to note that the first the list includes a general category of: projects that support immediate drought response.

- Projects that support immediate drought response
- Projects that enhance local supply and climate resilience through source watershed improvements, consistent with Water Code section 108.5, that defines source watersheds
- Drought resilience planning
- Water conservation activities, including but not limited to; education, outreach, direct installation programs, fixture replacement incentives and rebate programs,

and other activities that provide reductions in water consumption or improvements to water supply reliability

- Turf replacement with drought tolerant landscaping: i.e., replacing turf (traditional grass lawns) with native and drought tolerant plants and/or climate appropriate turf species for functional turf²
- Hauled water
- Installation of temporary or permanent community water tanks • Bottled water • Water vending machines
- Emergency water interties
- New wells or rehabilitation of existing wells
- Construction or installation of permanent connection to adjacent water systems, recycled water projects that provide immediate relief to potable water supplies, and other projects that support immediate drought response
- Fish and wildlife rescue, protection, and relocation

Q: I have a question about the funding. Who do I contact?

A: The Small Community Drought Relief program is overseen by DWR's South Central Region office in Fresno. You can contact them at SmallCommunityDrought@water.ca.gov. The Urban Community Drought Relief Program can be contacted at urbandrought@water.ca.gov.

Q: I have a project on private property. How do I know if it's eligible?

A: State funds are intended for public benefit and most projects on private property will not be eligible. **Please** contact DWR before making an application if your project is on private property. At a minimum, DWR will need the following information:

- Will the project have any financial benefit to the landowner?
- How will you as the Grantee ensure that the project meets the terms of the agreement? Will there be an agreement in place with the landowner? Will the land deed be altered in some way? How will the Grantee ensure the project produces benefits for the full useful life (defined as at least 15 years)?
- Please be sure to describe the water management related public benefit of the project.

Q: What does drought resilience planning mean?

A: Planning efforts intended to foster long term resilience to drought to address one or more of the following: (1) building a community's coping capacity and ability to prepare for and adapt to drought; (2) improving drought early warning, forecasting, and monitoring; (3) improving drought emergency response; and (4) improving recovery and relief from adverse effects. This includes but is not limited to developing or updating Water Shortage Contingency Plans, climate change vulnerability assessments, and updates to Groundwater Sustainability Plans or alternatives to plans. Please note updates to larger or regional plans must explicitly address drought resilience within the plan to be eligible for funds.

Q: What happens if I submit an application and don't get awarded in the first phase of awards?

A: If the application is not found to be a high priority, it will still be retained for future evaluations for awards. The next technical review will continue to evaluate your application against all other applications received and if it is found to be a higher priority than other applications it will receive an award. DWR estimates that funding will be exhausted in early 2023.

Q: My organization applied last year, no one followed up to ask for more information when the reviewers found our answers to not be adequate. Will you follow up this year?

A: After the initial completeness check, we will notify you of any immediately apparent missing information (e.g. attachments, required answers that are blank, etc.) The initial completeness review does not evaluate the quality and completeness of individual answers. This is a competitive solicitation and in the interest of fairness to other applicants, you will not be contacted for additional information or clarification of answers.

Eligible Project Questions

Q: Can an application bundle multiple projects into one application?

A: Yes, and DWR encourages applicants to do this with smaller projects in order to meet the minimum grant award requirement.

Q: What types of projects will be eligible under Turf Replacement? Is replacing traditional grass landscape with artificial turf eligible?

A: Artificial turf is not eligible under Turf Replacement. Examples of eligible project types include replacing traditional turf with climate appropriate landscaping; this includes native plants, native grass, drought tolerant grass species, etc.

Budget Questions

Q: What does non-state required cost share mean?

A: This program requires a 25% non-state cost share unless the project requests and receives a waiver due to Underrepresented Community. This is not a match requirement to the grant dollars. It is a required percentage of the total application costs that must be met with funding from non-state sources. DWR considers a non-state funding source to be anything that doesn't originate from State Funding. For example, "State Revolving Funds" from the State Water Resources Control Board is federal funding and therefore can be used for the cost share requirement. If you have multiple projects, DWR will determine a cost share requirement for the total proposal. This means that the cost share can be met by any project(s) included in the application.

Q: Will advanced pay still be available? If so, what percentage of the grant can be given as advanced pay?

A: Advanced pay will still be available for any projects that can demonstrate a cash flow issue. Up to 25% of the grant award can be requested (by the grant recipient) as advanced pay. A project must benefit a County under an emergency drought proclamation or declared to be a drought scenario by the State Water Board in order to be eligible for Advanced Pay.

Q: When would reimbursement start?

A: Costs incurred after June 30, 2022 are eligible for reimbursement in arrears. DWR will reimburse for costs after a signed agreement is in place. Eligible costs include technical assistance, site acquisitions, and costs directly related to the implementation of each project.

Q: Can I charge administrative expenses if indirect expenses are ineligible?

A: Yes, administrative expenses directly related to the project are an eligible expense. General indirect charges are not an eligible expense due to legal restrictions.. Costs such as rent, office supplies, fringe benefits, etc. can be "Direct Costs" and are eligible for reimbursement as long as:

- There is a consistent, articulated method for how the costs are allocated that is submitted and approved by the grant manager. The allocation method must be fully documented for auditors. Alternatively, a "Fully burdened labor rate" Can be used to capture these costs.
- The administrative costs can never include things like conference fees, building depreciation, etc.
- A general overhead percentage cannot be used.

Schedule Questions

Q: When can I start and by what date must I complete my project?

A: Projects can start immediately. DWR will reimburse eligible costs incurred after June 30, 2022, but will not be able to process the payment until a signed agreement is in place. Projects must be completed by December 2026.