



THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Developing and Conserving the Waters of the
SAN JUAN AND DOLORES RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES
IN SOUTHWESTERN COLORADO

2024 GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. Southwestern Water Conservation District Background

The Southwestern Water Conservation District (“SWCD”) is a political subdivision of the State that was established by the Colorado General Assembly in 1941 to protect, conserve, use, and develop the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins as well as to safeguard all waters to which the state of Colorado is equitably entitled.¹ SWCD periodically offers financial assistance in the form of grants to “qualified entities”², that are carrying out projects consistent with SWCD’s statutory purposes. Funding for this program is subject to SWCD’s discretion, annual budget, and appropriation process. The Board retains the right, in its sole discretion, to approve, reduce, or deny any grant request.

Before applying, please ensure you can answer “yes” to each of the following questions:

- Are you a qualified entity²?
- Are you located within the SWCD’s boundaries?
- Is the project anticipated to start and finish in 2024?
- Are you providing cash or in-kind match of at least 25% of the total project cost?
- Is the SWCD grant request for no more than 50% of the total project cost?
- Have you spoken with SWCD staff (Mo Rock, 970-247-1302) about the project and grant application before submission?

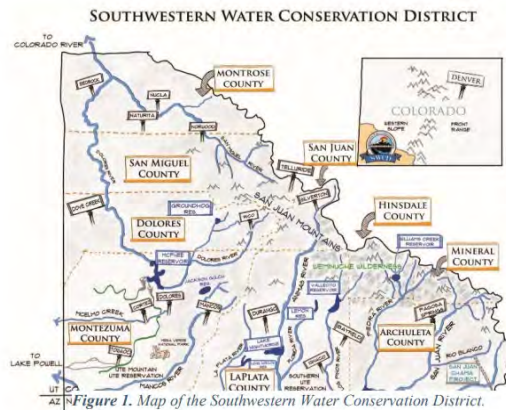


Figure 1. Map of the Southwestern Water Conservation District.

¹ See C.R.S. § 37-47-101 through -151

² See “Additional Requirements” for the definition of a “qualified entity”.



2. General Program Information

For the 2024 grant program, applications may be submitted from **August 1st through November 17th, 2023**. Applicants are encouraged to submit their application as early as possible so that there is adequate time to work with SWCD staff to ensure that the application meets all requirements in advance of the November 17th deadline. Applications received after November 17th, 2023 will not be considered, unless the application qualifies as an emergency grant request. In most cases, final decisions will be made by the Board shortly after the first regular Board meeting of 2024.

Emergency Grant Requests: The deadlines provided above apply to routine grant requests and can be modified to address emergencies. Examples of Emergency Requests include but are not limited to: flood events causing damage to diversion or measurement structures, catastrophic canal or pipeline failure that prevents the delivery of water, spillway or dam failure, regulatory restrictions, wildfire impacts including post-fire runoff, and other impacts, and toxic spills. Contact SWCD staff directly if this occurs to discuss submitting an emergency grant application.

SWCD annually anticipates receiving grant requests well over the available funds. The maximum amount of money potentially available from SWCD in the 2024 calendar year for all grant recipients is listed in the table below. The amounts available for each category are based on the assumption that the SWCD Board will continue to allocate a total of \$250,000 to SWCD’s grant program in 2024, and may change if the Board subsequently elects to increase or decrease the total funding available to the program.

Grant Funding Category	<u>Anticipated 2024 Funds Available</u>	<u>Annual Max Grant Request per Applicant per Category</u>	<u>Five-Year Max Grant Funds received per Applicant per Category</u>
Water Supply/Watershed Restoration: Water supply or watershed restoration or enhancement projects, including design, engineering, and construction	\$125,000	\$60,000	\$120,000
Public Forums/Studies: Public forums, workgroups, studies, planning efforts	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
Education: Teaching seminars, workshops, and related programs	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Emergency requests	\$50,000	N/A	N/A

Any member of SWCD’s Board of Directors or Staff with a financial or property interest in a grant request will disclose any such interest or any other conflict of interest and recuse themselves from participating in any recommendation, vote, or decision-making process related to that grant request.



3. Additional Requirements

A. Eligibility:

SWCD will only consider grant requests from “qualified entities” for (1) development or improvement of water supply and watershed restoration or enhancement projects, including related design, engineering, and construction, (2) studies and facilitating stakeholder involvement in water-related matters, including water quality, (3) educational purposes, including teaching seminars, workshop, and related programs, and (4) emergency situations.

“Qualified entities” are defined by statute to include any public entity, non-profit corporation, not-for-profit corporation, carrier ditch company, mutual ditch or reservoir company, unincorporated ditch or reservoir company, or cooperative association within the boundaries of SWCD.³ Individuals are not eligible. All projects, studies, and program grants will be limited to “raw” or untreated water supplies. Only projects or portions of projects located within the SWCD’s boundaries are eligible for grant funding.

SWCD will **not** consider grant requests or funding for:

- a. Completed Projects; however, the Board may make an exception for projects completed within the past six months arising from emergencies;
- b. Municipal or domestic drinking water projects that do not qualify as a “public water system,” which is defined for the purposes of these guidelines to mean any system that does not have a public water system ID number with the state of Colorado;
- c. Any part of a municipal or domestic “public water system” which is unrelated to raw water storage or delivery. Applications for eligible portions of the public water system should include the state ID number for the system;
- d. Wastewater treatment projects;
- e. Legal fees or payroll costs. SWCD will not pay an employee’s salary or hourly wages but may consider paying for crew or seasonal work as it pertains to the specific project described in the grant proposal. If your project includes salary or hourly wages for employees, please identify them as a separate line item in the proposed budget and explain how you will pay for those costs without using SWCD grant funds. If you would like to apply grant funding to crew or seasonal project work, please identify this in your application and be aware that additional documentation may be required by the Board to approve such requests. Paying for project-specific crew or seasonal workers’ time will be at the discretion of the Board;
- f. Grant administration costs;
- g. Weed management projects, although consideration will be given to programs that specifically remove phreatophytes if the Applicant demonstrates it has a plan, including funding, for appropriate revegetation and ongoing maintenance.

³ C.R.S. § 37-47-107(1)(j.5).



B. Matching Contributions

SWCD will not award a grant for more than 50% of the total project costs,⁴ and Applicants must demonstrate that they are actively contributing to the project for which they are requesting a grant. Any grant approval will be contingent on the recipient demonstrating, prior to disbursement of the grant, that the Applicant has secured funding for the remaining total project costs.

In addition, Applicants or beneficiaries of the proposed project must also demonstrate that they will provide, through a cash contribution and/or in-kind goods or services, at least 25% of the total project costs (in other words, half of the matching funds).⁵ Applications proposing the use of in-kind goods and services as all, or a portion of the required matching contribution, must provide detailed information identifying the time and valuation (at an hourly or total project rate) of in-kind contributions. The Board may, at their discretion, consider previous expenditures directly related to the proposed project as matching contributions if those expenditures occurred within six months of the grant application deadline.

Non-profit, or non-governmental organizations, serving on behalf of a broad group of local constituents that do not receive tax revenues and do not have opportunities for third-party contributions for the project, may request a reduction of the match requirement to 10% of the total project cost (subject to approval by the Board) by garnering and documenting strong community or watershed support for the project.

C. Limits on Grant Funding

The amount of funding each “qualified entity” may receive from SWCD is further limited to the following:

- a. Recipients of grants for the development or improvement of water-related projects may not receive more than \$60,000 in a single year or a total of \$120,000 in any given five-year period.
- b. Recipients of grants for participation in public forums and the performance of studies may not receive, more than \$20,000 in any single year or a total of \$40,000 in any given five-year period.
- c. Recipients of grants for educational purposes may not receive more than \$10,000 in a single year or a total of \$20,000 in any given five-year period.

Additional funds, outside of SWCD’s grant program, may be available through SWCD’s loan program. Please review the Loan section below or contact SWCD staff to find out more about SWCD’s loan program.

⁴ For multi-phase projects, “total project costs” shall mean all costs related to the particular phase of the project for which the Applicant is requesting funding.

⁵ The Applicant’s 25% match cannot be met through a loan from SWCD.



4. Application Instructions and Process

Completion of SWCD's application is required for SWCD to consider grant requests. The Board will not consider applications that do not meet the minimum requirements. To ensure consideration for funding by SWCD, please apply for a grant before the water project, study or educational program has been initiated. Please use the following application:

[General Application for Financial Assistance 2024](#)

Each application should be typed and include, at a minimum, the required information indicated by an asterisk, *, and all applications and supporting documentation must be submitted in a single .pdf file.

Please attach additional sheets as necessary to fully answer any question to assure that all information that might be helpful in evaluating your application is considered. Please return the **signed copy** of the application to Southwestern Water Conservation District and retain a copy for your records. Please submit to the following address or email: Southwestern Water Conservation District, 841 E. 2nd Avenue, Durango, CO 81301, *or* morock@swgcd.org. Once your grant application is received, it will be reviewed by SWCD staff to ensure that it meets the minimum requirements before consideration by the Board. Staff will endeavor to share its funding recommendation with the Applicant prior to the meeting.

The Board will review and consider grant applications at the first Regular Board meeting in 2024. Applicants are encouraged to attend the meeting at which the funding requests will be considered, either in person or virtually, so that they can provide a **brief summary** of their grant request and answer questions that may arise.

For questions about the application or board meeting, please contact SWCD staff by phone (970-247-1302) or e-mail (morock@swgcd.org). For your reference, agendas are generally posted to the swgcd.org website one week prior to regular board meetings.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Grant proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposed project, study, or educational request carries out the purposes, mission, and strategic priorities of SWCD. The Board will give special consideration to grant proposals that further the use or protection of pre-compact water rights and the development of Colorado River Compact entitlements as well as educational-related requests that complement or otherwise further SWCD's existing programs.

Furthermore, Applicants must demonstrate adequate shareholder assessments and reserves for ongoing operation, maintenance, and repair of their infrastructure. The Board will give favorable consideration to grant proposals from Applicants that are proactively and financially planning for their own future needs.



6. Disbursement of Grant Funds

Once a grant application has been reviewed and approved by the Board, a request for the release of grant funds may be made during 2024. If the Applicant will not be able to use the funds in that year, please contact the SWCD office as soon as possible.

For grant funds to be released, the Applicant must complete the following tasks:

1. Sign the “Document of Understanding” that accompanies the grant approval letter sent by SWCD;
2. Complete a “Request for Release of Funds” form found on the SWCD [website](#);
3. Provide written documentation that all committed matching funds have been secured; and
4. Provide written documentation that the Applicant continues to be a “qualified entity”, documentation can include but is not limited to; articles of incorporation, corporate bylaws, or [a certificate of good standing](#) from the Colorado Secretary of State.

The signature of the Applicant’s authorized representative on the “Request for Release of Funds” form indicates that the funds are needed at that time and that the Applicant ensures and verifies that the funds are only being used for the specific purpose(s) described in the application and amount(s) indicated in SWCD’s grant approval letter. The Applicant agrees to allow SWCD to display a public notice identifying the project or activity as being partially funded by the SWCD. Additional documentation may be requested at SWCD’s discretion before the release of funds.

In the event the project, study, or program for which the grant was awarded ultimately comes in under budget, the grant recipient must return a pro-rata portion of the remaining funds to SWCD within 45 days of completion. For example, if the completed project, study, or program is \$20,000 under budget and SWCD contributed 20% of the total anticipated project costs, then the grant recipient must return \$4,000 (20% of \$20,000) to SWCD.

7. Changing the Use of Funds

If the Board approves funding for the application, and at a future date the intended use of funds changes, please notify staff as soon as possible. Board review and approval of the change is necessary. Otherwise, SWCD requires reimbursement of funds.



8. Grant Extension Requests

If the Board approves funding for the application, and completion of the project, study, program, or other grant-funded task will not occurred in 2024, the Applicant must submit a written grant extension request to SWCD Staff describing the progress to date and the projected timeline for completion. Staff may elect to approve or deny a one-year extension of the grant, or elevate the request to the Board.

Grant extensions are usually limited to one year. However, the Board may at its option: approve grant extensions of more than one year; require the Applicant to submit a new application; or require any previously disbursed spent or unspent grant funds to be returned.

9. Annual Reporting Requirement

If the Board approves funding for the application, the Applicant must provide a written report and/or supporting documentation of the work accomplished no later than December 31, 2024. This written report must include a detailed accounting of the use of SWCD funds including supporting documentation for any expenses incurred, as well as a detailed outline of the total project budget spent. Additional documentation may be requested at the discretion of SWCD. See sample final reports at swwcd.org. If the Applicant cannot submit the final report by the deadline, they must submit a written request for an extension of time to SWCD staff prior to December 31, 2024, which explains the reporting delay and a proposed final submittal date. The Board will not consider future grant requests from Applicants that do not comply with this provision or submit an unacceptable final report.

10. Loans

Loans and/or loan-grant packages may be approved for water-related projects or construction, studies, educational programs, and sponsorships. The terms and security for payment will be determined at the time the loan is approved. All documents required by SWCD for the loan shall be executed before SWCD will release the approved loan amount. Documents that SWCD, at its sole discretion, may require to include, but may not be limited to, a loan agreement, promissory note, deed of trust for real property, and/or a uniform commercial code financing statement for personal property.