

RCW 43.83B.415 Grants to public entities. (1) (a) The department is authorized to issue grants to eligible public entities to reduce current or future hardship caused by water unavailability stemming from drought conditions. No single entity may receive more than 25 percent of the total funds available. The department is not obligated to fund projects that do not provide sufficient benefit to alleviating hardship caused by drought or water unavailability. Projects must show substantial benefit from securing water supply, availability, or reliability relative to project costs. Projects do not need to be completed while a drought emergency order under RCW 43.83B.405(2) is in effect.

(b) Except for projects for public water systems serving economically disadvantaged communities, the department may only fund up to 50 percent of the total eligible cost of the project. Money used by applicants as a cash match may not originate from other state funds.

(c) For the purposes of this chapter, eligible public entities include only:

- (i) Counties, cities, and towns;
- (ii) Water and sewer districts formed under chapter 57.02 RCW;
- (iii) Public utility districts formed under chapter 54.04 RCW;
- (iv) Port districts formed under chapter 53.04 RCW;
- (v) Conservation districts formed under chapter 89.08 RCW;
- (vi) Irrigation districts formed under chapter 87.03 RCW;
- (vii) Watershed management partnerships formed under RCW 39.34.200; and
- (viii) Federally recognized tribes.

(2) Grants may be used to develop projects that enhance the ability of water users to effectively mitigate for the impacts of water unavailability arising from drought. Project applicants must demonstrate that the projects will increase their resiliency, preparedness, or ability to withstand drought conditions when they occur. Projects may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Creation of additional water storage;
- (b) Implementation of source substitution projects;
- (c) Development of alternative, backup, or emergency water supplies or interties;
- (d) Installation of infrastructure or creation of educational programs that improve water conservation and efficiency or promote use of reclaimed water;
- (e) Development or update of local drought contingency plans if not already required by state rules adopted under chapter 246-290 WAC;
- (f) Mitigation of emergency withdrawals authorized under RCW 43.83B.410(1);
- (g) Projects designed to mitigate for the impacts of water supply shortages on fish and wildlife; and
- (h) Emergency construction or modification of water recreational facilities.

(3) During a drought emergency order pursuant to RCW 43.83B.405(2), the department shall prioritize funding for projects designed to relieve the immediate hardship caused by water unavailability. [2023 c 287 § 1; 2020 c 168 § 5; 1989 c 171 § 4.]

Severability—1989 c 171: See note following RCW 43.83B.400.