

# *Colorado* WATER FUNDING GUIDE

*Produced and Sponsored by:*

**THE DITCH AND RESERVOIR COMPANY ALLIANCE,  
THE COLORADO AG WATER ALLIANCE, AND  
MICAELA FENTON**



**Colorado Ag Water Alliance**  
"Committed to the preservation of agriculture through the wise use of Colorado's water resources"





# *Introduction*

## **COLORADO WATER FUNDING**

Colorado's water is highly variable and increasingly important. More water users across the state are realizing the necessity of adequate storage, integrated conservation practices, structurally sound infrastructure, efficient management and measurement, and delivery systems. For many entities, these are critical additions or updates for a system, but funding typically is not readily available and grant and loan programs are essential to implementation. Water users are becoming more aware of funding opportunities with the help of digitizing grant applications, however both the Colorado Ag Water Alliance and the Ditch and Reservoir Company Alliance heard a need from water users that a comprehensive list of such financial opportunities would help companies do more efficient research. It was then that CAWA and DARCA teamed up to make this happen.

This funding guide came together with the help of several sponsors who are supportive of projects and companies in their communities and basin for progress and efficiency in the water world.

**AMBER WEBER, DARCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**[DARCACONFERENCE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DARCACONFERENCE@GMAIL.COM)/ 719-688-9941**

**GREG PETERSON, CAWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-**

**[COAGWATER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:COAGWATER@GMAIL.COM)/ 720-244-4629**



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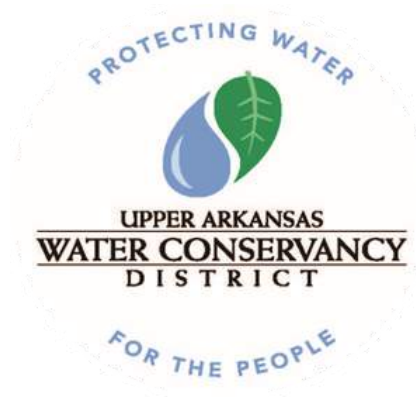


# Sponsors

## COLORADO WATER FUNDING

We want to highlight our sponsors, who truly helped make this guide a reality. The organizations listed below are instrumental partners in the water world and have graciously supported our efforts.

*Thank you!*



EbersoleMEDIA



# Funding Guidance

## COLORADO WATER FUNDING

We know how challenging the grant process can be. The organizations below are experienced and provide grant writing and management assistance for project proponents.



**Chelsey Nutter, ARWC Executive Director**

**[chelsey@arkcollaborative.org](mailto:chelsey@arkcollaborative.org)**

**719-539-5486**

**[www.arkcollaborative.org](http://www.arkcollaborative.org)**



## Colorado Ag Water Alliance

*"Committed to the preservation of agriculture through the wise use of Colorado's water resources"*

**Greg Peterson, CAWA Executive Director**

**[coagwater@gmail.com](mailto:coagwater@gmail.com)**

**720-244-4629**

**[www.coagwater.org](http://www.coagwater.org)**



**Amber Weber, DARCA Executive Director**

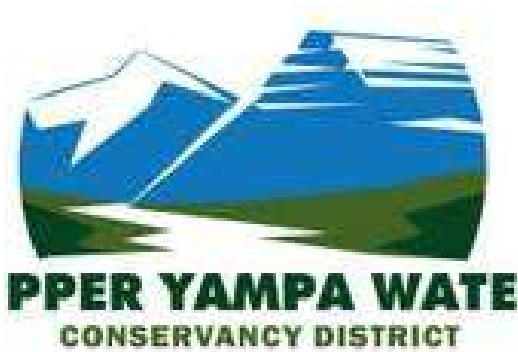
**[darcaconference@gmail.com](mailto:darcaconference@gmail.com)**

**719-688-9941**

**[www.darca.org](http://www.darca.org)**



# Region-Specific WATER OPPORTUNITIES



## WATER MEASUREMENT MINI GRANT

The Upper Yampa has a \$500 Mini-grant Program for the installation of mandated water control or measuring devices within the District's boundaries. You can apply for this grant for each device (i.e. for a headgate and flowmeter) Each grant will cover only 50% of the total cost incurred per installation, up to \$1,000.

**Karina Craig, Office Manager**  
[kcraig@upperyampawater.com](mailto:kcraig@upperyampawater.com)

## CONSERVANCY DISTRICT PROGRAM

The Upper Gunnison provides financial assistance for projects that enhance water supply or improve stream conditions. Projects must have a 50% match. Water supply projects that provide benefits for agricultural, municipal, domestic, environmental or recreational uses are considered eligible. Examples of projects include water system efficiency improvements, delivery structure or system improvements, construction of new storage impoundments, enlargement or rehabilitation of existing impoundments, and restoring or enhancing riparian habitat.

**Jill Steele, Office Manager**  
[jill@ugrwcd.org](mailto:jill@ugrwcd.org)



## NON-POINT SOURCE FUNDING

The nonpoint source program funds projects that help restore and protect waterbodies from nonpoint source pollution impacts, specifically selenium, sediment, pathogens and/or nutrients. In the past, the program has been used to fund irrigation improvements like converting from flood to sprinklers.

**Christa Trendle, Project Coordinator**  
[christa.trendle@state.co.us](mailto:christa.trendle@state.co.us)

# Region-Specific

## WATER OPPORTUNITIES



### COLORADO HEALTHY RIVERS

The Fund grants money to on-the-ground projects that contribute to cleaner water, healthier wildlife habitat, and improved recreation throughout our State and is administered through Colorado Water Conservation Board in association with the Water Quality Control Division and the Colorado Watershed Assembly.

**Diane Kielty, Program Manager**

**[info@coloradowater.org](mailto:info@coloradowater.org)**

### THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

In Western Colorado, the Conservancy has joined with farmers, municipalities and other partners to test a large-scale approach to this water bank concept. The Nature Conservancy has been involved in projects with the Grand Valley Water Users Association, and have also helped fund ditch improvement projects for irrigators on the Western Slope.

**Aaron Derwingson, Water Project Manager**

**[aderwingson@tnc.org](mailto:aderwingson@tnc.org)**



**COLORADO WATER TRUST**

### COLORADO WATER TRUST

Colorado Water Trust has worked with all types of water users, including agricultural users, municipalities, water providers, and industrial users, to lease or enter into water use agreements to bolster streamflows. Compensation for use of water includes protection of the water right against abandonment and diminishment of historical consumptive use while under lease, headgate and delivery system upgrades, and enhance streamflows on local streams.

**Mickey O'Hara, Resources Engineer**

**[mohara@coloradowatertrust.org](mailto:mohara@coloradowatertrust.org)**

# Statewide WATER OPPORTUNITIES

## WATER PLAN GRANTS

The purpose of the Water Plan Grant funding is to make progress on the critical actions identified in the Colorado's Water Plan (CWP) and its Measurable Objectives. Preference is given to projects that have multiple benefits, multiple purposes, and involve multiple stakeholders. Applications deadlines are August 1 and February 1.

**Please visit <http://cwcb.state.co.us/LoansGrants>**



## ATM WATER GRANTS

The purpose of the program is to assist in developing and implementing creative alternatives to the traditional purchase and transfer of agricultural water. These alternative methods could include: interruptible supply agreements, long-term rotational fallowing, water banks, deficit/partial irrigation practices, alternate cropping types, and coupling conservation easements with an ATM. ATM projects addressing municipal and industrial demand, nonconsumptive needs, compact compliance, and groundwater sustainability are all eligible. Applications are accepted year-round.

**Please visit <http://cwcb.state.co.us/LoansGrants>**



## WATER SUPPLY RESERVE FUND

This program provides grants and loans to assist Colorado water users in addressing their critical water supply issues and interests. The funds help eligible entities complete water activities, which may include competitive grants for: (1) Technical assistance; (2) Studies or analysis of, consumptive and nonconsumptive water needs, projects or activities; (3) and Structural and nonstructural water projects or activities. Requests for funds from the Account must be approved by at least one of Colorado's nine basin roundtables.

**Please visit <http://cwcb.state.co.us/LoansGrants>**





# Statewide WATER OPPORTUNITIES



## CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

Grant funds to assist partner efforts that advance the priority areas identified in our Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This program has awarded grants to agricultural operations, but you must attend the Partners in the Outdoors Conference, have matching funds (in-kind and/or dollar for dollar), and be a collaborative effort, including at least one partner organization. Applications are due in May and can request funding between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

**Carley Engfer, Partnership Program Assistant**  
[dnr\\_cpwparkers@state.co.us](mailto:dnr_cpwparkers@state.co.us)





# *Federal Funds, State & Local Offices*

## **WATER OPPORTUNITIES**



### **AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT**

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps American Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land.

**Clint Evans, State Conservationist**

**[clint.evans@co.usda.gov](mailto:clint.evans@co.usda.gov)**

### **CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS**

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIGs) support the development and testing of promising new conservation technologies and approaches, with the goal of making them available for use as quickly as possible by conservation-minded farmers and ranchers nationwide. Grantees must match 50 percent of the funds provided by the CIG award through non-federal in-kind or cash contributions, and are also responsible for providing the necessary technical assistance. NRCS provides technical oversight for the project.

**Mike Bennett, CIG Program Manager**

**[nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov)**



### **CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

CSP offers farmers the opportunity to earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, rotational grazing, ecologically-based pest management, buffer strips, and the transition to organic farming – even while they work their lands for production. Payments are capped at \$40,000 per year, or \$200,000 over the life of the 5-year contract.

**Visit your local NRCS Field Office**

**<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov>**



# *Federal Funds, State & Local Offices*

## **WATER OPPORTUNITIES**



### **ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES**

EQIP participants install or implement structural, vegetative, and management practices – like improving irrigation efficiency, restoring pasture, or nutrient and pest management – on eligible agricultural land and nonindustrial private forestland. In return, NRCS provides financial cost-share assistance and technical assistance through a contractual agreement.

**Visit your local NRCS Field Office**

**<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov>**

### **REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**

Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the NRCS, state agencies, and non-governmental organizations work together to provide financial and technical assistance to farmers to install conservation activities to tackle priority natural resource concerns in a state or region. Unlike many other NRCS programs, farmers and ranchers do not apply directly for funding through RCPP. Instead, partner entities submit project proposal.

**Visit your local NRCS Field Office**

**<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov>**



### **EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

Provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes, or other natural disasters, and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures during periods of severe drought. The natural disaster must create new conservation problems that Federal assistance is, or will be, required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

**Visit your local Field Office**

**<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Colorado/programs/index>**

# *Federal Funds, State & Local Offices*

## **WATER OPPORTUNITIES**



### **CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM**

Provides a voluntary program to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, CCC provides participants rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

**Visit your local Field Office**

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Colorado/programs/index>

### **CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

CREP targets high-priority conservation concerns identified by a State, and federal funds are supplemented with non-federal funds to address those concerns. In exchange for removing environmentally sensitive land from production and establishing permanent resource conserving plant species, farmers and ranchers are paid an annual rental rate along with other federal and state incentives as applicable per each CREP agreement. Participation is voluntary, and the contract period is typically 10–15 years.

**Visit your local Field Office**

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Colorado/programs/index>





# Federal Funds, State & Local Offices

## WATER OPPORTUNITIES



### WATER SMART GRANT

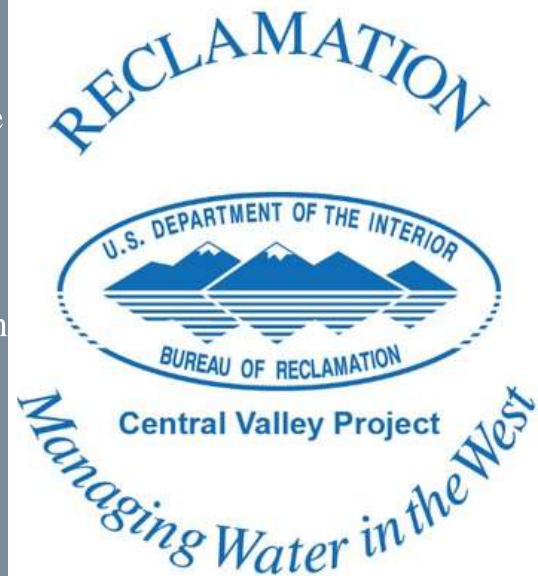
Through WaterSMART, Reclamation works cooperatively with states, tribes, and local entities as they plan for and implement actions to increase water supply through investments to modernize existing infrastructure. Past projects have included piping and lining ditches, improve ditch operations through automation, telemetry for measuring devices and headgates, regulating reservoirs, irrigation scheduling, and soil moisture and groundwater monitoring.

**Signe Snortland, Area Manager**  
[jsnortland@usbr.gov](mailto:jsnortland@usbr.gov)

### SALINITY BASIN FUNDING

Our complex irrigation systems were built a century ago with a huge amount of hard work and cooperation. Funding programs available now can help you build an irrigation system that sustains agriculture in the Lower Gunnison Basin well into the future. This program can provide significant funding for piping irrigation canals with the intent to reduce the amount of salt entering the Colorado River.

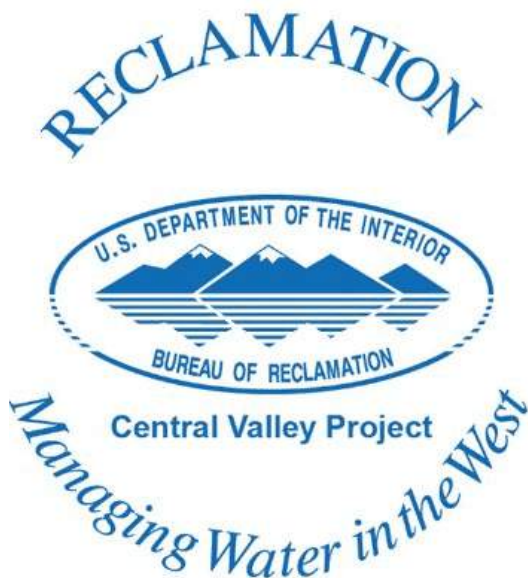
**Andrew Limbach Western Colorado Area Office**  
[alimbach@usbr.gov](mailto:alimbach@usbr.gov)



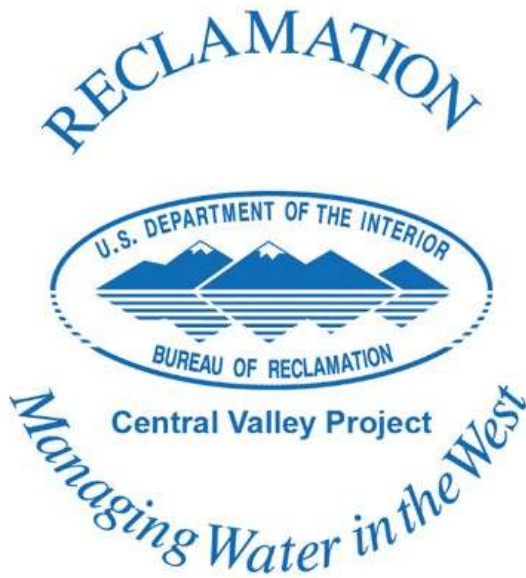
### WATER AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

This program provides 50/50 cost share funding to irrigation and water districts, tribes, states and other entities with water or power delivery authority. Projects conserve and use water more efficiently; increase the production of hydropower; mitigate conflict risk in areas at a high risk of future water conflict; and accomplish other benefits that contribute to water supply reliability in the western United States.

**Signe Snortland, Area Manager**  
[jsnortland@usbr.gov](mailto:jsnortland@usbr.gov)



# Federal Funds, State & Local Office WATER OPPORTUNITIES



## WATER MARKETING STRATEGY

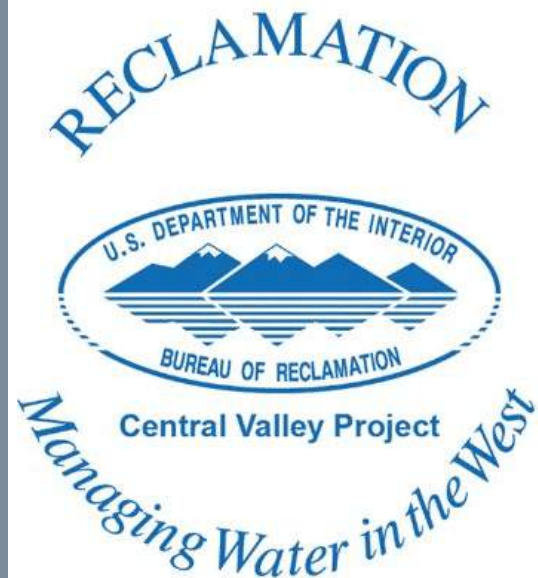
Provides assistance to states, tribes, and local governments to conduct planning activities to develop water marketing strategies that establish or expand water markets or water marketing activities between willing participants, in compliance with state and Federal laws.

**Signe Snortland, Area Manager**  
[jsnortland@usbr.gov](mailto:jsnortland@usbr.gov)

## SMALL-SCALE WATER EFFICIENCY PROJECTS

Provides 50/50 cost share funding to irrigation and water districts, tribes, states and other entities with water or power delivery authority for small water efficiency improvements that have been identified through previous planning efforts. Projects eligible for funding include installation of flow measurement or automation in a specific part of a water delivery system, lining of a section of a canal to address seepage, or other similar projects that are limited in scope.

**Signe Snortland, Area Manager**  
[jsnortland@usbr.gov](mailto:jsnortland@usbr.gov)





# Non-Agricultural WATER OPPORTUNITIES

The organizations and grants below are not specific to agriculture. The reason they are included here is that working agricultural lands provide a significant benefit to open space, habitats, water quality, and scenic views. In many areas, sustaining ag can be the best means for sustaining conservation in general.

There are certain improvements that can be made to irrigation systems and agricultural operations that provide an environmental or recreational benefit. It is helpful to organizations like those below to invest in agriculture to meet their objects, and they may be able to provide valuable resources and project administration. Many of these organizations do not have grant programs but have provided funding to agricultural irrigation projects in the past. It may be worth engaging these groups to see if your project overlaps with their organizational goals.

It may also be beneficial to talk with producers who have worked with these organizations and we can help provide those connections.



## HABITAT RESTORATION GRANTS

Funding for projects on land with a conservation easement that improves and restores Colorado's rivers, streams, wetlands, and critical habitat.

**Chris Yuan, Senior Program Officer**  
**[cyuanfarrell@goco.org](mailto:cyuanfarrell@goco.org)**

## CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE GRANTS

Conservation Excellence grants foster exploration of pressing needs in today's conservation community, including engaging local communities to support land conservation, the stewardship of orphaned conservation easements, collaboration among land trusts, and more.

**Alex Castino, Program Officer**  
**[acastino@goco.org](mailto:acastino@goco.org)**



## TROUT UNLIMITED

Trout Unlimited staff actively partner with willing agricultural producers to upgrade aging irrigation infrastructure, which often provide a direct benefit to coldwater fisheries.

**Drew Peternell, Colorado Director**  
**[Drew.Peternell@tu.org](mailto:Drew.Peternell@tu.org)**

# Non-Agricultural WATER OPPORTUNITIES



## DUCKS UNLIMITED

The eastern plains of Colorado, the San Luis Valley and North Park are a prime example of the state's top-quality migration habitat and Ducks Unlimited focuses on working with partners to restore and protect shallow wetland habitat. Ducks Unlimited have helped support the construction of recharge ponds for augmentation water and are involved with restored irrigated meadows.

**Greg Kernohan, Conservation Director**  
[gkernohan@ducks.org](mailto:gkernohan@ducks.org)

## GATES FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Gates Family Foundation's Natural Resource initiative will partner strategically with groups to support land conservation, water resource protection and management, increased land trust capacity, citizen stewardship and ecosystem services demonstration opportunities. Please note that Gates initiative grant funding is not an opportunity for ongoing operating or program support, nor does the Foundation accept unsolicited proposals for funding in these areas.

**Russ Schnitzer, Senior Program Officer**  
[rschnitzer@gatesfamilyfoundation.org](mailto:rschnitzer@gatesfamilyfoundation.org)



## WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

The foundation's goal is to ensure flourishing rivers and tributaries throughout the Colorado River Basin by designing a flexible water management system that addresses current and future regional water needs, while rewarding efficient water use and restoring river health. Specifically, the foundation has been working to establish an Upper Basin water bank to incentivize conservation and secure public and private funding for agriculture and urban water conservation.

**Please visit**

**<https://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/>**



# Loan Program

## WATER OPPORTUNITIES



### WATER PROJECT LOAN PROGRAM

Approximately \$50 million is available annually for the CWCB Water Project Loan Program, which provides low-interest loans to agricultural, municipal and commercial borrowers for the design and construction of raw water projects in Colorado. A minimum loan request of \$100,000 is recommended. For agricultural projects, the interest rate is 1.8%. Eligible projects include new construction or rehabilitation of existing water storage and delivery facilities, such as: reservoirs, ditches & canals, pipelines, river diversion structures, water rights purchases, and hydropower. Applications are accepted year-round.

**Please visit <http://cwcb.state.co.us/LoansGrants>**

### CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUNDING

A low-interest loan program that can support eligible projects that include improvements to nonpoint source pollution and watershed pilot projects. BMP activities at concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) are not eligible unless they implement a National Estuary Program Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

**Please visit [info@cwrpda.com](mailto:info@cwrpda.com)**



### SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The 7(a) program is a flexible tool that can be used to finance a variety of business purposes. The proceeds of a 7(a) guaranteed loan may be used to purchase machinery, fixtures, and supplies; make improvements to land and buildings; finance receivables and augment working capital; acquire and start businesses; and refinance existing debt under certain conditions. The regular 7(a) program's maximum loan amount is \$5 million. There is no minimum amount. SBA's 50% to 90% guaranty helps provide entrepreneurs access to capital.

**Steven White**

**[steven.white@sba.gov](mailto:steven.white@sba.gov)**

# Loan Program

## WATER OPPORTUNITIES



### WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUND

The Water Quality Improvement Fund provides money for water quality improvement projects using civil penalties from water quality violations, this includes storm water management training and best practices training to prevent or reduce the pollution of state waters. Eligible applicants: Governmental agencies, Publicly owned water systems, Private not-for-profit public water systems, Not-for-profit watershed groups, Not-for-profit storm water program administrators, Not-for-profit training providers, Private landowners impacted by a water quality violation.

**Please visit:**

**<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/water-quality-improvement-fund>**

### CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust was formed in 1995 by the Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA) to help Colorado's ranchers and farmers protect their agricultural lands and encourage the intergenerational transfer of ranches and farms. CCALT works with landowners to develop conservation easements that protects Colorado's agricultural land, heritage and families for future generations by conserving working rural landscapes.

**[info@ccalt.org](mailto:info@ccalt.org)**



### DIRECT FARM OWNERSHIP USDA FARM

A loan made to eligible applicants to purchase, enlarge, or make capital improvements to family farms, or to promote soil and water conservation and protection. Maximum loan amount is \$300,000. A percentage of direct farm ownership loan funds is targeted for beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged applicants.

**Contact local county Service Agency FSA**

**<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Colorado/programs/index>**



# Loan Program

## WATER OPPORTUNITIES



### FARM OPERATING & EQUIPMENT LOANS

By providing access to credit, FSA's Farm Loan Programs offer opportunities to family-sized farmers and ranchers to: Start, improve, expand, transition, market, and strengthen family farming and ranching operations; Beginning farmers, racial and ethnic minority farmers and women producers Value-added, direct sale, organic, and specialty crop operations; Young People actively involved in agricultural youth organizations needing financial assistance for income-producing, educational, agricultural projects; Urban farmers and roof-top producers; Operations using alternative farming methods such as hydroponics, aeroponics, vertical farming, and freight container farming.

**Contact local county Service Agency FSA**

**<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Colorado/programs/index>**

