



Colorado Turf Replacement Program Update

By Alexa Kelly and Dan Graeve

In response to the ongoing drought in Colorado, the General Assembly passed [House Bill 22-1151](#) to promote the efficient and maximum utilization of Colorado's water resources by decreasing the amount of irrigated turf within the state. The bill required the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) in the Department of Natural Resources to create a turf replacement program that incentivizes the voluntary replacement of nonessential irrigated turf across the state.

Information about the program's development is available in this [2022 LCS issue brief](#).

Turf Replacement Program Status

HB 22-1151 provided limited program funding and staff through June 30, 2025. By early 2024, initial funding for the program resulted in 49 total awards through multiple rounds of funding. In November 2023, the CWCB approved the inclusion of \$2 million to fund the continuation of the program through June 30, 2028, via [House Bill 24-1435](#), the annual CWCB Projects bill. The newly injected funding, in addition to July 2024 revised [program guidelines](#), will enable the possibility of the program to continue in the future.

According to a [March 2025 CWCB](#)

[Transformative Landscape Change report](#), lessons learned from the program include:

- water savings are not immediate during the vegetation establishment period;
- local programs require a high level of capacity to administer and monitor and track water use changes; and,
- landscape transformation takes time.

Application Process

Eligible entities, which included local governments, certain special districts, 501(c)(3) nonprofits, and federally recognized tribes, are required to submit an application to CWCB. The CWCB then evaluates each project based on eligibility, compliance with program requirements, and merits of the project.

Project Approval & Contracting

Applicants are required to produce a dollar-for-dollar match of state funds to be awarded a contract. Qualifying applications must also submit tax information, budget, schedule, etc., and to complete a scope of work. Given the competitiveness of the program, applications that focus on the following were favored:

- improving soil;
- applying efficient irrigation;
- limiting turf to high traffic, essential areas;
- utilizing low water demand plants;

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- applying mulch;
- long-term maintenance plans; or
- educational benefits.

Projects Funded to Date

According to the CWCB, 67 projects from 55 entities have been funded. As of September 2025, the board has dispersed a little over \$1 million in grant funding, which has leveraged an additional \$1.7 million in matching funds. The remaining grant awards are eligible until June 30, 2028. Of the existing 67 grant agreements, 39 remain active.

Primary Types of Existing Projects

The two main types of funded projects include

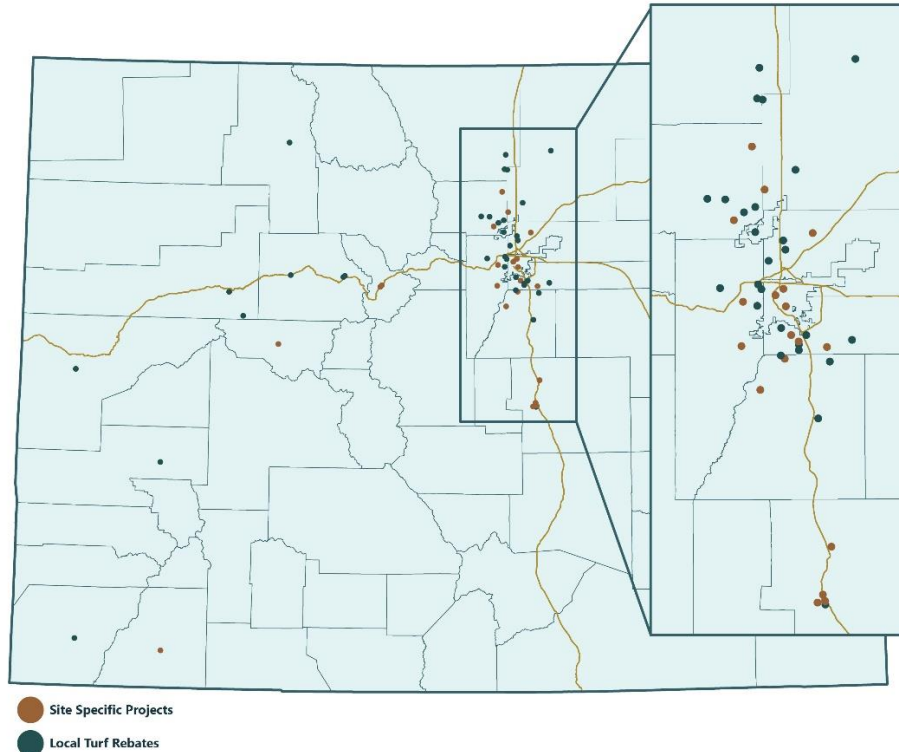
site-specific projects and incentive programs providing local turf rebates. Site-specific projects replace turf in identified, high water use areas. Rebate programs have varying requirements. Individuals may wish to contact their local municipality or water provider to inquire about available rebates.

Statewide, various projects include:

- 40 rebate programs;
- 23 site-specific projects;
- 1 program design project; and
- 3 projects classified as both rebate and site-specific.

Figure 1 shows the various locations across Colorado where projects have been funded.

Figure 1. Map of Funded Projects



Prepared by Legislative Council Staff. Data Source: [CWCB](#).