

FY2027 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)

FAQ Document

Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper are accepting Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) requests for Colorado projects in Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27).

CDS (previously known as earmarks) is part of the broader appropriations process conducted by the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations (the Committee). The CDS process is an opportunity for state and local government entities and nonprofits to request funding from members of Congress for specific projects in their home states. CDS funding is contingent upon a project being included in federal spending bills, and passed by both the House of Representatives and Senate. If a project is included in a spending bill that is signed into law, funding will be distributed as part of the federal appropriations process during FY27.

Senators Hickenlooper and Bennet are providing a joint application process for FY27 CDS projects. Applicants will be able to complete *one* application form which will be received by both offices. Each Senator will then review project requests and submit to the Committee on Appropriations individually. Applicants may also submit their request to their House Representative through their “Community Project Funding” process - please make sure all information is consistent if also submitting in the House.

Application Form: The application form to apply for FY27 CDS Funding is [HERE](#).

This FAQ Document has been updated to reflect Senate Appropriations Committee Guidance for FY27.

Questions: If you have additional questions, please first contact one of our regional offices. You can find office locations and contact information for [Senator Bennet's office](#) and [Senator Hickenlooper's office](#). If you are unable to contact one of our regional offices, you can reach out to directedspending@bennet.senate.gov and cds@hickenlooper.senate.gov.

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ELIGIBILITY

What are the eligibility requirements for CDS projects?

1. Submitting organizations must be either not-for-profit entities or government organizations. Individuals and for-profit entities are not eligible to apply for CDS funding. All entities must provide their EIN number to verify non-profit status.
2. Projects must fit within an account of one of the Appropriation Committee's subcommittees and accounts accepting requests. A list of the subcommittees and eligible accounts can be found at the end of this document.
3. For the best chance of success, projects should be:
 - a. Shovel-ready: Projects should be ready to begin as soon as funding has been received. Given the uncertainty surrounding when Congress will be able to pass the FY27 appropriations package, projects should be able to begin at a date beyond the start of FY27 (October 2026).
 - b. Clear and reasonably budgeted: Itemized budgets must be as detailed as possible and follow the requested format in the application.
 - c. Self-sustaining: CDS is designed as one-time funding, and applicants should be able to complete projects without the need for additional federal funds. While we will consider all projects, CDS projects should only depend on receiving money in FY27, and should have an ongoing impact on the community even after the funding has been used.
 - d. Beneficial to the wider community: Each project will be assessed based on its demonstrated level of positive impact for the community, with an emphasis on serving longstanding unmet needs.

What guidelines must Senate Offices follow when submitting CDS requests?

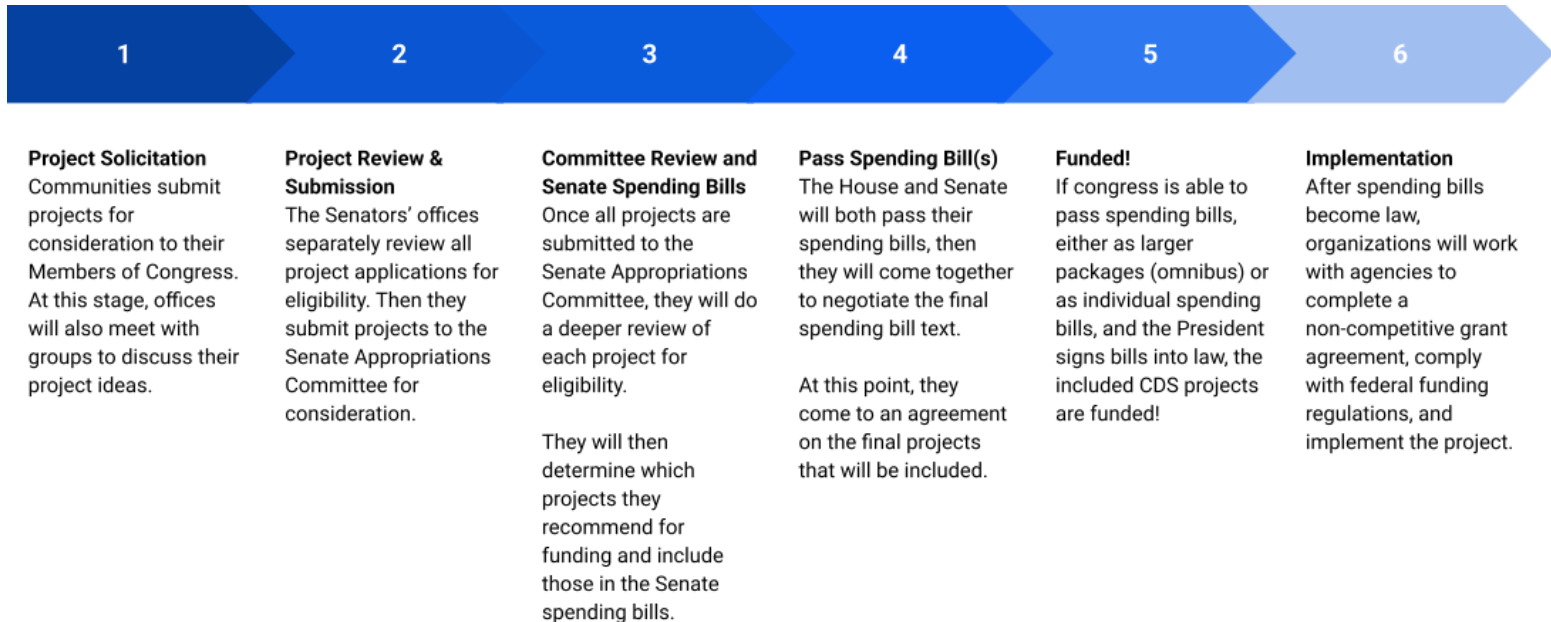
In 2021, the Committee reformed the CDS process to promote greater transparency and accountability. These reforms include:

- Funding for CDS items shall not exceed one percent of discretionary spending.
- For-profit entities are ineligible for CDS items, and Senators must certify that none of the entities for which they have requested CDS is a for-profit entity.
- Senators are required to publish their CDS requests on their website and make public their financial certification letter. The Committee will provide a link to each requesting Senator's financial certification letter and disclosure on the Committee's website.
- The Committee will require the Government Accountability Office to audit a sample of enacted CDS items and report its findings to Congress.

Please note, if your request is submitted by either Senator, your organization, a description of the project, and amount requested will be publicly listed on their website.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

What are the steps for receiving CDS funding?



If Senators Hickenlooper or Bennet request my project, am I guaranteed funding?

No, our offices requesting a project is only the first step in the process. After our offices submit requests to the Senate Appropriations Committee, the committee will review requests and determine which projects will be included in spending bills. In order to be funded, these bills must pass both the House and Senate, and then be signed into law by the President.

Can I submit projects to more than one member of Congress?

Yes, you can submit the project to members of congress who represent the project location—as long as that member is accepting project requests. If you submit the same project to multiple members of Congress, we ask that the submissions are identical.

Can I have a meeting to discuss questions specific to my proposal?

As time allows, our offices are happy to meet and discuss your project. First-time CDS applicants are especially encouraged to reach out to our offices. Please reach out as soon as possible as we will not be able to extend our submission deadline. You can find office locations and contact information for [Senator Bennet's office](#) and [Senator Hickenlooper's office](#).

Do I need a System for Award Management (SAM.gov) account to apply for funds?

While you do not need a SAM.gov account to apply for CDS funding, your organization will need an account to draw down funds if your project is funded. This process can take several months, so we encourage organizations that submit an application for CDS funding to begin

the process to create a SAM account.

What is the CDS official request form?

CDS requests must be submitted through our offices' official request form to be considered for funding. This form will allow each office to collect all necessary information to review and submit projects for consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee. The request form is available [HERE](#). Our offices will not consider requests received outside the form.

What information will I need to complete the official request form?

- Organization contact information
- A project-specific point of contact
- Detailed description of the purpose and scope of your project
- Itemized budget, broken down by categories (construction, salaries, equipment, etc.)
- Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Details on any other CDS request your organization has made or will make this year
- Any other federal funding your project has secured including federal grants, loans, or CDS from previous years.
- Letter of Support from members of your community

What jargon do I need to know?

During the application process, you are submitting a project to the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations ([the Committee](#)). The Committee is responsible for allocating how much money each federal agency has to operate.

The Committee is divided into 12 [subcommittees](#), 10 of which accept Member of Congress's CDS requests. Subcommittees then have jurisdictions over funding certain agencies throughout the government.

These agencies, in turn, have "[accounts](#)." An "account" is a funding bucket from which federal funds are disbursed and projects implemented. If your project is included in an appropriations bill that is signed into law, your organization will work with the appropriate agency to implement the grant after the President signs a spending bill.

What agencies and accounts are accepting CDS requests?

A list of the subcommittees and accounts that accepted CDS requests in FY25 is available at the end of this document.

Which subcommittee, agency and/or account should I select for my project?

You must submit your project to the Subcommittee that has jurisdiction over your project's subject matter. For example, if your project requests funding for an Emergency Operations Center, you would submit your project to the Homeland Security Subcommittee.

Within each subcommittee, you must select an account within the agency. To be eligible for funding, your project must align with an account that is accepting CDS requests. If your project does not fit within an account, even if it aligns with all of the other criteria above, it is unfortunately ineligible.

Please review the list of Senate Appropriations subcommittees and accounts along with examples of previously approved CDS projects. If you are unfamiliar with federal funding or have any questions about are confused as to which account is the best fit for your project your project may fit within, please reach out to our offices.

Where should I submit construction projects?

In FY27, the only accounts that accepted construction projects are:

- Agriculture Subcommittee: Rural Development, Community Facilities grants
- LHHS Subcommittee: Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration
- THUD Subcommittee: Community Development Fund for Economic Development Initiatives (EDI)

For example, if an education institution on the Front Range submits a project that includes construction for new learning spaces, the correct subcommittee is “THUD” and the correct account is “Community Development Fund for Economic Development Initiatives (EDI).” This is because the project is for construction (making it ineligible for education related LHHS accounts), is not in a rural community (ineligible for USDA RD), and is not a healthcare facility (ineligible for HRSA).

Where should I submit water infrastructure projects?

Water infrastructure (both drinking water and wastewater) projects should be submitted to the Interior SUBCOMMITTEE, NOT the Energy & Water subcommittee.

Do I need to provide any supporting documentation?

Yes, one letter of support is required. Support letters can be provided from the State of Colorado, local governments, Tribal governments, or other community leaders. Multiple organizations can sign the same letter. You should only submit one letter of support, and it should be submitted at the same time as the official request form.

Several subcommittees require an additional letter of support from a state agency such as Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) or the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM). Instructions for these additional letters of support are included in the official request form.

Please note that CDOT does not provide traditional letters of support for CDS applicants. Instead, CDOT provides letters to inform the federal government that the state agency will administer appropriated funds. If you are requesting a letter from CDOT, please send it to Jamie Grim, jamie.grim@state.co.us. With the request, please send the name of the applicant, the name of the project, the budget for the project, and if the project has an STIP number.

Can I amend my submission after the deadline?

You should not plan on being able to make changes to your submission after the submission deadline. However, if minor mistakes are made, please let us know as soon as possible and we can work with you to try to correct them. Major changes may not be accepted depending on how

close we are to the subcommittee's submission deadline. Once projects are submitted to the Appropriations Committee there will be no further opportunity to change them.

What types of projects were most successful the last time?

The most successful projects demonstrated qualitative or quantitative community benefits, met eligibility criteria for the CDS process, and were "shovel-ready."

For examples of previous projects selected by the Committee to be funded, please see examples from [Senator Bennet's](#) (FY23 examples) and [Senator Hickenlooper's](#) (FY24 examples) funded projects.

PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED PROJECTS

I submitted a project in FY26 but it wasn't funded. Should I resubmit my project to the FY27 request form?

If you are still interested in CDS funding, you should resubmit through this year's request form based on the project's current status.

What if I have questions about my FY26 project?

Please reach out to the members of Senator Bennet's and Senator Hickenlooper's staff that you have worked with during the CDS process so far.

My organization received CDS funding in FY22/FY23/FY24/FY26, can we apply again for the same project this year?

CDS is meant to be a one-time infusion of funding for each project.

Our project received CDS funding in FY22/FY23/FY24/FY26, but we are having difficulties working with agencies to finalize a grant agreement and draw down funds. Is there anything we can do?

Please reach out to the members of Senator Bennet's and Senator Hickenlooper's staff that you have worked with during the CDS process. They will work with you to reach out to the agency.

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

If my project is included in FY26 appropriations legislation, when should I expect funding?

Project funding will only be disbursed after the President signs the FY26 appropriations legislation into law. Projects included in a spending bill that becomes law will then work with the funding agency to complete a non-competitive grant agreement, which can take several months or more to complete depending on the scope of the projects. Agencies will need to approve the project details and scope before funds are ultimately distributed. Your organization should not expect to receive funding until Q2 2027, at the earliest.

What grant requirements will I need to abide by if my project does get funded?

Each agency has slightly different requirements, but all projects must abide by standard federal funding requirements. All CDS projects, once funded by Congress, will need to complete an agency process for final approval and release of funds—Congress appropriates the funds, agencies administer them through their typical granting process. In many cases, the process is similar to a typical agency grant application.

CDS projects are subject to all requirements for federal funds, including but not limited to:

- Work Plan and Detailed Budget - Agencies require grantees to submit project information before costs are reimbursed. For previous year examples, see guidance from [EPA](#) or [HUD](#).
- Build America, Buy America Act - Construction projects funded with federal assistance must use only iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials produced in the United States.
- Environmental Impact Study - A requirement that you should be prepared to complete an impact study or related review for the project per the requirements of the funding agency. If you have already completed an EIS at the time of your application, please clearly note that for our offices.
- State Historical Preservation Office Review
- Backend Accountability Audits

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

Can I apply for funds to be reimbursed retroactively?

No, CDS funding cannot be used retroactively. Projects should not be dependent on receiving the funds by a certain date.

Can I request the total cost of my project?

Yes, but please note some accounts require non-federal matching funds (see below). In addition, while there is not a limit on the dollar amount Senators can request per project, most projects that received funding range from \$500,000-3 million. You can apply for a phase of your project (e.g., design and engineering, or one part of a larger construction project).

Are there match requirements for CDS funding?

Many agencies have non-federal match requirements. This chart outlines match requirements from FY27.

Agency	Account	Percentage of Total Cost you can request (%)
USDA	Rural Development	Varies between 10% and 70%, please contact USDA Colorado to confirm your eligibility.
USDA	Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service	Varies between 40% and 50% for certain programs.
Army Corps of Engineers	Investigations; Construction; Operations and Maintenance	Please contact your local district (either Albuquerque or Omaha) to confirm.
Department of Homeland Security	Pre-Disaster Mitigation Projects; Emergency Operations Center Grant Program	75% and up to 90% in some cases
Environmental Protection Agency	State and Tribal Assistance Grants	80%
Department of Transportation	Highway Infrastructure Programs & Transit Infrastructure Grants	Varies depending on program

SUBCOMMITTEES & ACCOUNTS ACCEPTING CDS REQUESTS

Below is a list of Subcommittees that accepted Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) projects in FY26. They are organized by the relevant Senate Appropriations Subcommittee. Under each heading are the accounts that accept CDS which can offer examples of the appropriate types of projects.

Agriculture

- Agricultural Research Service, Building and Facilities (ARS B&F)
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Research and Facilities Act Program (NIFA RFAP)
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Salaries and Expenses (APHIS) (S&E)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Watershed Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO)
- Rural Development, Community Facilities Grants
- Rural Development, Distance Learning, Telemedicine Grants

Commerce, Justice, Science

- Department of Commerce; National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST); Scientific and Technical Research Services (STRS); External Projects
- Department of Commerce; NIST; Construction of Research Facilities; Extramural Construction
- Department of Commerce; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF); Special Projects
- Department of Justice; Office on Justice Programs; State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance; Byrne Discretionary
- Department of Justice; Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS); COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Equipment
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Safety, Security, and Mission Support

Energy & Water

- Corps of Engineers: Investigations
- Corps of Engineers: Construction
- Corps of Engineers: Operations & Maintenance
- Corps of Engineers: Mississippi Rivers & Tributaries: Investigations
- Corps of Engineers: Mississippi Rivers & Tributaries: Construction
- Corps of Engineers: Mississippi Rivers & Tributaries: Operation & Maintenance
- Bureau of Reclamation: Water and Related Resources

Financial Services

- Small Business Administration, Administrative Provision
- National Archives and Records Administration, National Historical Publications and Records Commission
- National Archives and Records Administration, Repair and Restoration
- General Services Administration, Federal Buildings Fund, Construction and Acquisition
- General Services Administration, Federal Buildings Fund, Repairs and Alterations, Major Repairs
- General Services Administration, Federal Buildings Fund, Repairs and Alterations, Basic Repairs
- Office of National Drug Control Policy, Administrative Provision (Prevention Grants)
- Office of National Drug Control Policy, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program

Homeland Security

- Federal Emergency Management Agency Pre-Disaster Mitigation Projects
- Federal Emergency Management Agency Emergency Operations Center Grant Program

Interior

- EPA, State and Tribal Assistance Grants, Clean Water SRF, Clean Water
- EPA, State and Tribal Assistance Grants, Drinking Water SRF, Drinking Water
- IHS, Sanitation Facilities Construction, Sanitation Facilities Construction
- NPS, Historic Preservation Fund Projects
- USFS, State, Private and Tribal Forestry, Forest Resource Information and Analysis
- Projects on Agency Lists
 - LWCF: Great American Outdoors Act, Land and Water Conservation Fund
 - BLM, Land Acquisition
 - FWS, Land Acquisition
 - NPS, Land Acquisition
 - USFS, Land Acquisition
 - USFS, Forest Legacy
 - LMCON: Land Management Agencies, Construction
 - BLM, Construction
 - FWS, Construction Projects, Line Item Construction
 - NPS, Construction, Line Item Construction and Maintenance
 - USFS, Capital Improvement and Maintenance, Facilities, Road and Trails
- Land Management Agencies, Local Projects and Research
 - BLM, Management of Land and Resources, Land Management Priorities
 - NPS, National Recreation and Preservation
 - NPS, Statutory and Contractual Aid

- FWS, Resource Management, Stewardship Priorities
- USGS, Surveys Investigations and Research, Special Initiatives
- BIA, Operation of Indian Programs, Special Initiatives
- EPA, Science and Technology, Research: National Priorities
- EPA, State and Tribal Assistance Grants, STAG Infrastructure Grants

Labor, HHS, Education

- Department of Labor—Employment and Training Administration—Training and Employment Services
- Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration—Program Management
- Department of Health and Human Services—Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—Health Surveillance and Program Support
- Department of Health and Human Services—Administration for Children and Families—Children and Families Services Programs
- Department of Health and Human Services—Administration for Community Living—Aging and Disability Services Programs
- Department of Education—Innovation and Improvement—Fund for the Improvement of Education
- Department of Education—Higher Education—Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

MilCon-VA

- Military Construction, Army
- Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps
- Military Construction, Air Force (including Space Force)
- Military Construction, Defense-Wide
- Military Construction, Army National Guard
- Military Construction, Air National Guard
- Military Construction, Army Reserve
- Military Construction, Navy Reserve
- Military Construction, Air Force Reserve

Transportation-HUD

- Transportation Planning, Research, and Development (TPR&D);
- Grants-in-Aid for Airports (Airport Improvement Program or AIP);
- Highway Infrastructure Programs (HIP);
- Transit Infrastructure Grants (TIG);
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grants;
- Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) Grants; and
- Community Development Fund for “Economic Development Initiatives (EDI)”.