

## CHAPTER 209

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**GOVERNMENT - COUNTY**


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**HOUSE BILL 24-1006**

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Velasco and Snyder, Bird, Boesecker, Brown, Clifford, Duran, English, Froelich, Garcia, Hamrick, Herod, Jodeh, Joseph, Lieder, Lindsay, Lukens, Lynch, Mabrey, McCormick, McLachlan, Ricks, Rutinel, Story, Weinberg, Weissman, McCluskie, Amabile, Catlin, Ortiz, Titone, Willford;  
also SENATOR(S) Cutter and Will, Jaquez Lewis, Ginal, Bridges, Exum, Fields, Gonzales, Marchman, Michaelson Jenet, Priola, Roberts, Fenberg.

**AN ACT**

**CONCERNING ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES TO APPLY FOR WILDFIRE-RELATED GRANT MONEY, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

**SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 23-31-321** as follows:

**23-31-321. Wildfire mitigation and preparedness - rural grant navigator grant program - creation - administration - reporting - definitions.** (1) **AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:**

(a) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS CREATED IN SECTION 24-1-125.

(b) "FOREST SERVICE" MEANS THE COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 23-31-302.

(c) "NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION" OR "NGO" HAS THE MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 24-37.5-102 (20).

(d) "RURAL GRANT NAVIGATOR GRANT PROGRAM" OR "COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM" MEANS THE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED UNDER SUBSECTION (2)(a) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) (a) THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL ESTABLISH A RURAL GRANT NAVIGATOR GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE GRANT MONEY FOR NONGOVERNMENTAL

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*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.*

ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING GRANT WRITING ASSISTANCE, TO RURAL COMMUNITIES SEEKING TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL OR STATE GRANTS RELATED TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS.

(b) ON OR AFTER MARCH 1, 2025, AN NGO ASSISTING ONE OR MORE RURAL COMMUNITIES WITH OBTAINING FEDERAL OR STATE GRANTS RELATED TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION OR PREPAREDNESS MAY APPLY TO THE FOREST SERVICE FOR GRANT MONEY IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES THAT THE FOREST SERVICE ESTABLISHES PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION FOR THE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.

(3) (a) THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL CONSULT WITH NGOS THAT CURRENTLY ASSIST OR ARE SEEKING TO ASSIST COLORADO COMMUNITIES WITH WILDFIRE MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS TO DEVELOP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR THE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.

(b) THE CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3)(a) OF THIS SECTION MUST:

(I) BE COMPLETED AND POSTED ON THE WEBSITE OF THE FOREST SERVICE ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 28, 2025; AND

(II) INCLUDE CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM:

(A) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR NGO APPLICANTS ASSISTING RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SEEKING FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT MONEY FOR WILDFIRE MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS;

(B) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS; AND

(C) PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTED NGOS, INCLUDING REQUIREMENTS FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN SELECTED NGOS TO ENSURE NONDUPLICATION OF EFFORTS AND FOR PERIODIC REPORTING.

(c) (I) AFTER THE FOREST SERVICE HAS CREATED THE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM, THE FOREST SERVICE, TO THE BEST OF ITS ABILITY, SHALL CONSULT ON EFFECTIVE USES OF THE GRANT MONEY AND SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES WITH:

(A) THE DEPARTMENT;

(B) THE DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL CREATED IN SECTION 24-33.5-1201 (1)(a);

(C) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE;

(D) A RURAL COUNTY ON THE WESTERN SLOPE;

(E) A RURAL COUNTY ON THE EASTERN PLAINS; AND

(F) A RURAL COUNTY IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE STATE.

(II) THE FOREST SERVICE, IN CONSULTATION WITH SELECTED NGOs, SHALL DEVELOP METRICS TO HELP THE FOREST SERVICE ASSESS THE SUCCESS OF THE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.

(4) (a) ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1, 2026, AND ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1 EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT SUMMARIZING THE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM TO THE WILDFIRE MATTERS REVIEW COMMITTEE CREATED IN SECTION 2-3-1602 (1)(a) OR, IF THE COMMITTEE NO LONGER EXISTS, TO BOTH THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AGRICULTURE, WATER, AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES. THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL POST COPIES OF THE REPORTS ON ITS WEBSITE.

(b) NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), THE WRITTEN REPORT SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (4)(a) OF THIS SECTION CONTINUES INDEFINITELY.

**SECTION 2. Appropriation.** For the 2024-25 state fiscal year, \$300,000 is appropriated to the department of higher education for use by the Colorado commission on higher education and higher education special purpose programs. This appropriation is from the general fund and is based on an assumption that the department will require an additional 0.4 FTE. To implement this act, the department may use this appropriation for the Colorado state forest service at Colorado state university. Any money appropriated in this section not expended prior to July 1, 2025, is further appropriated to the department of higher education for the 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28 state fiscal years for the same purpose.

**SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Approved: May 20, 2024