



## Conservation District Administrative Grant Guidelines

The Montana Legislature provides Montana conservation districts with coal severance tax monies for any purpose they are authorized to perform pursuant to [MCA, Title 76, Chapter 15, Part.](#)

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Conservation Resource Development Division (CARDD) administers this funding through Conservation District (CD) Administrative Grants.

### **Eligibility for CD Administrative Operations Grants**

Pursuant to state law, conservation districts (CDs) must fully utilize their available regular mill levy authority for district operations before they are eligible to receive state financial assistance. This exhaustion requirement applies only to the district's regular mill levy capacity and does not extend to any permissive mill authority, which remains available to districts for its designated statutory purposes.

CDs that meet the criteria below are eligible to apply for CD Administrative (CDA) grant funding. These standards are used to evaluate CDA funding requests.

1. CD has levied its maximum regular mill and has a need for supplemental funds for general operations. [76-15-530, MCA](#)
2. CD has submitted Annual Financial Reports to the Department of Administration- Local Government Services. [2-7-503, MCA](#)
3. CD has prepared and will submit a preliminary budget to the county clerk and recorder. [7-6-40, MCA](#)
4. District is current with submittal of monthly meeting minutes. [76-15-530, MCA](#)
5. A statement of assets including account balances and the district's plans and timeline for expending those funds.

All sources of revenue will be considered to assess need, as well as the district's assets, expenses, legal compliance, and level of conservation activities. Preferential consideration will be given to districts with the most limited resources and those implementing priority projects as identified by their constituents and included in a district planning document. Receipt of funds is not guaranteed and based on CD administrative criteria and available funding.

### **Additional CD Administrative Funding Options**

Beyond supplementary grants for district operations, additional funding opportunities are available through CD Administrative Grant funding and include:

- 1) **310 Reimbursement.** DNRC reimburses districts for each 310 application processed. Rates per application are subject to the total number of 310 reimbursement requests and available budget. Unlike the other options in this application, this is a reimbursement for the previous year's 310 work.



- 2) **MACD Dues.** CDs can opt-in for \$3,500 in funding for their upcoming Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) annual dues. By opting in, the CD agrees to supplement these funds with \$500 in non-CDA funding and is responsible for paying dues directly to MACD. Through association dues, MACD provides statewide programming and services to all CDs in Montana.
  
- 3) **Statewide or regional affiliate programs.** Affiliate programs are regional or statewide efforts that provide programming or services benefiting most Montana conservation districts. This option has additional criteria beyond what is included in these guidelines. Please reach out to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) - Conservation Districts Bureau (CDB) for more detailed information on this option.

### **Timeline**

DNRC-CDB will announce open grant cycles on the [CDB grants website](#) and through the *Conservation Matters* newsletter, additional bulletins, and direct communications. Applicants must apply for CD Administrative grant funding through the [Submittable online grant system](#). The grant application opens on March 1 and closes on May 31.

Application review and contracting typically occur from June through August. Funding awards are typically issued beginning in September, contingent on the prior fiscal year closeout.