



New Mexico Department of the Environment (NMED) Strategic Water Supply Grant Program

**2026 Request for Applications
August 20, 2026**



RFA At-a-Glance

Program Information	
Funding Available	Up to \$35 million (subject to legislative appropriation and availability of funds)
Eligible Applicants	Counties, municipalities, political subdivisions of the State, state agencies, state institutions of higher education, and federally recognized Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos located wholly or partially within New Mexico
Application Package	Appendices A-D and a project-specific Project Narrative for one of the five project categories: • Construction Projects • Design Pilot • Environmental Documentation and Demonstration • Feasibility Assessments • Research Projects
Estimated Award Ranges	Vary by Project Category in Section 1.4
Project Performance Period	4 Years
Application Release Date	August 20, 2026
Application Deadline	October 20, 2026
Applicant Information Webinar (Optional)	September 2, 2026
Questions Due	September 9, 2026
Application Submission	Electronic submission via Submittable Application Portal
Website	https://www.env.nm.gov/strategic-water-supply/strategic-water-supply-grant/
Program Email	StrategicWater@env.nm.gov



Introduction

This Request for Applications is applicable to all eligible entities, including federally recognized Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. Applicants should complete the application materials applicable to their selected Project Category. If selected for funding, Tribal Applicants may execute a Tribal-specific Grant Agreement that reflects Tribal governmental authorities while maintaining the same programmatic requirements and evaluation criteria described in this RFA.

Before You Apply

Applicants are encouraged to:

- Review the eligibility requirements in Section 2.
- Review Section 1.4 and determine which Project Category best represents the proposed project.
- Review the corresponding Project Narrative for your project (**Appendices E-I**).
- Review the additional application package materials (**Appendices A-D**).
- Review the Project Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Rubrics (**Exhibit D**).
- Review the Sample Grant Agreement (**Exhibit B** or **Exhibit C**, as applicable).
- Create a Submittable login and begin preparing the application package and supporting documentation well in advance of the application deadline.

Application Package Overview

A complete application package includes:

- **Appendix A** – Workplan
- **Appendix B** – Procurement Plan (Form 1A)
- **Appendix C** – Board Authorization Form
- **Appendix D** – Budget Workbook
- **Appendices E-I** – Applicable Project Narrative
- Required supporting documentation identified in the applicable Project Narrative

Reference materials available to Applicants include:

- **Exhibit A** – Application Checklist
- **Exhibit B** – Sample Grant Agreement
- **Exhibit C** – Sample Tribal Grant Agreement
- **Exhibit D** – Project Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Rubrics

Refer to Section 3 for complete application instructions. Links to application materials can be found in the Appendices section.



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Section 1. Program Overview

1.1. Background and Legislative Authority

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is soliciting applications for Round 2 funding under the Strategic Water Supply (SWS) Program. The program was established pursuant to the Strategic Water Supply Act (NMSA 1978, §§ 72-12C-1 through 72-12C-4), which authorizes NMED to award grants and enter into contracts for eligible projects involving treated brackish water to enhance New Mexico's freshwater resources. The Act also established the SWS Program Fund to support implementation of eligible projects. Funding for this solicitation is provided through legislative appropriations to NMED.

The SWS Program supports projects across the full project development continuum, from early-stage feasibility assessment and research through pilot testing, environmental documentation, final design, and construction. By investing in projects at varying stages of development, NMED seeks to advance a diverse portfolio of projects capable of increasing water supply reliability while supporting innovation, regional resilience, and responsible stewardship of New Mexico's water resources.

This Request for Applications (RFA) establishes the requirements for Round 2 funding under the SWS Grant Program. Federally recognized Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos located wholly or partially within New Mexico are eligible Applicants under this RFA. Unless otherwise specified, references throughout this RFA to Applicants, Eligible Entities, Grantees, and Recipients include eligible Tribal governments.

1.2. Program Purpose

The purpose of the SWS Program is to provide financial assistance for eligible projects that advance the planning, research, development, demonstration, design, permitting, and construction of strategic water supply projects involving treated brackish water to enhance New Mexico's freshwater resources.

Consistent with the Strategic Water Supply Act, the program is intended to support projects that strengthen New Mexico's long-term water resilience and advance state, Tribal, and local government economic development goals, including by supporting the reliability and resilience of critical water infrastructure. Through this RFA, NMED seeks to fund projects that:

- Advance strategic water supply projects from planning through implementation;
- Develop, test, or demonstrate technologies and approaches for producing or utilizing treated brackish water;
- Generate lasting environmental, community, and economic benefits for New Mexico.
- Increase the availability and reliability of New Mexico's freshwater resources; and
- Support projects that are technically feasible, financially viable, and capable of long-term operation.



Strategic Water Supply projects may also support or advance priorities identified through existing state, Tribal, regional, or local water planning efforts. These may include, for example, the New Mexico 50-Year Water Action Plan, State Water Plan, Regional Water Plans or Regional Water Security Plans, Tribal water plans, 40-Year Water Development Plans, and other local or regional water supply or infrastructure plans. Applicants are encouraged, where relevant, to consider how proposed projects relate to applicable water plans, infrastructure priorities, or other established water resource planning efforts.

1.3. Definitions and Key Terms

For purposes of this Request for Applications (RFA), the following definitions apply.

Additional Contact: Any additional representative the Applicant wishes to include. Be sure to include a brief explanation of their role in the project. If needed, copy and paste the Additional Contact table to add more contacts.

Applicant: An Eligible Entity that submits an application for funding under this RFA. The Applicant executes the Grant Agreement with NMED, receives grant funds, and is responsible for all grant administration, financial management, reporting, and compliance requirements.

Application: The complete package of materials submitted in response to this RFA, including all required forms, narratives, attachments, certifications, and supporting documentation.

Authorized Representative: The Authorized Representative will be the official representative of the Applicant. They must have the authority to sign and submit this application on behalf of the Applicant.

Award: A grant approved by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) under the Strategic Water Supply Program.

Brackish Water: Groundwater containing not less than one thousand parts per million of dissolved solids.

Consultant: An individual or organization retained by the Applicant to provide professional or technical services under a contract.

Contractor: An individual or organization that provides construction, technical, or other services under a contract funded in whole or in part by grant funds.

Eligible Entity: A county, municipality, political subdivision of the State, state agency, state institution of higher education, or federally recognized Indian Nation, Tribe, or Pueblo located wholly or partially within New Mexico that is eligible to apply for funding under this RFA, as described in Section 2.1.

Eligible Project: A project that satisfies the eligibility requirements established by the Strategic Water Supply Act and this RFA. Eligible projects are described in Section 2.3,



Eligible Projects, and must fall within one of the Project Categories described in Section 1.4.

Fiscal Contact: The Fiscal Contact will be the primary contact for any budget or financial questions that cannot be answered by the Project Manager.

Grant Agreement: The legally binding agreement executed between NMED and the successful Applicant that establishes the terms and conditions of the grant award.

Performance Period: The period during which grant-funded work must be completed, as specified in the Grant Agreement.

Procurement Contact: The Procurement Contact will be the primary contact for any questions related to the Applicant's procurement plan and processes.

Project Category: One of the five funding categories established under this RFA. Descriptions of each Project Category are provided in Section 1.4, Project Categories.

Project Manager/Technical Contact: The Project Manager will be the primary point of contact for any questions related to the content of the application including the project narrative, workplan, key milestones, budget, and any other technical information related to the project.

Project Partner: An organization that collaborates with the Applicant in planning or implementing the proposed project. Project Partners may include eligible entities, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, private organizations, or other technical partners. A Project Partner is not the grant recipient and does not have an independent legal relationship with NMED under the Grant Agreement.

Project Team: The Applicant, Project Manager/Technical Contact, Project Partners, and other organizations identified in the application as contributing to project planning or implementation.

Public Entity: As defined in the Strategic Water Supply Act, a county, municipality, political subdivision, state agency, or state institution of higher education. For purposes of this RFA, federally recognized Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos are also eligible Applicants as provided in Section 2.1.

Request for Applications (RFA): This solicitation issued by NMED requesting applications for funding under the Strategic Water Supply Program.

Strategic Water Supply Act: Sections 72-12C-1 through 72-12C-4 NMSA 1978, as amended.

Strategic Water Supply (SWS) Program: The grant and contract program administered by NMED to provide financial assistance for eligible projects under the Strategic Water Supply Act.



Technology Provider: An organization that develops, owns, licenses, or supplies proprietary technologies, equipment, or treatment processes that may be incorporated into a proposed project.

Vendor: An individual or organization that supplies commercially available goods or routine services under a procurement contract.

For purposes of this RFA, Project Partners are distinct from Consultants, Contractors, Technology Providers, and Vendors. Identification of an organization within an application does not constitute selection or approval to perform grant-funded work. Procurement of goods or services using grant funds must comply with all applicable federal and state procurement requirements unless an authorized exemption or exception applies.

1.4. Project Categories

Applications will be accepted under one of the following project categories.

Detailed project-specific application requirements, required narrative questions, expected deliverables, evaluation criteria, and required supporting documentation are provided in the corresponding Project Narrative identified below. See Table 1 to review the applicable Project Narrative before preparing an application.

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how the proposed project supports critical infrastructure development, potentially by showing how the proposal aligns with and supports adopted local, regional, Tribal, or statewide planning efforts, including Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plans (ICIPs), Regional Water Plans, the 50-Year Water Action Plan, Tribal water planning efforts, or other applicable planning documents, where appropriate.

1.4.1. Construction Projects

A Construction Project includes the development, expansion, or implementation of a full-scale brackish water treatment facility and related infrastructure. Eligible projects may include new construction, expansion of existing facilities, or replacement of major infrastructure components. Construction projects should have a completed Feasibility Assessment or Facility Plan, with permitting and design substantially complete or already underway. Design activities may be included as part of a construction project but will not be funded as a stand-alone construction project under this category.

1.4.2. Design Pilot

A Design Pilot project involves creating a small-scale prototype of a full-scale brackish water treatment project or its components. Design Pilots are intended to refine design criteria, assist in site selection, evaluate treatment technologies or methodologies, and demonstrate that the proposed system can achieve treatment objectives prior to full-scale implementation. Projects may include fabrication or construction of pilot facilities, testing equipment and treatment approaches, and analysis of pilot performance data.



1.4.3. Environmental Documentation and Demonstration

An Environmental Documentation and Demonstration project supports compliance with applicable state or federal environmental requirements necessary to advance a Strategic Water Supply project toward implementation. Eligible activities may include environmental impact analyses, technical studies, testing, permitting support, and other documentation required to satisfy regulatory requirements. A basic Feasibility Assessment should already have been completed, and there should be a reasonable expectation that the project will proceed toward implementation.

1.4.4. Feasibility Assessment

A Feasibility Assessment examines the viability of a potential brackish water project, evaluates alternative solutions to achieve the project objectives, and determines the most suitable option for further action or investment. Feasibility assessments may evaluate technical, economic, financial, operational, and legal or regulatory feasibility and should advance planning to a stage where design, construction, or implementation of a brackish water treatment facility or project can commence.

1.4.5. Research Projects

A Research Project involves developing innovative technologies and processes to improve brackish water treatment methods. Projects may include research to develop devices, equipment, processes, or technologies that expand understanding of new brackish water treatment methods, infrastructure, and management approaches. Research should focus on advancing innovative technologies or methodologies toward practical use and should have a realistic potential to scale to full implementation, contributing to increased availability of freshwater resources within New Mexico.

Table 1. Summary of Project Categories and Project Narrative Appendices.

Project Category	Project Narrative
Construction Projects	Appendix E – Construction Project Narrative
Design Pilot	Appendix F – Design Pilot Project Narrative
Environmental Documentation and Demonstration	Appendix G – Environmental Documentation and Demonstration Project Narrative
Feasibility Assessment	Appendix H – Feasibility Assessment Project Narrative
Research Projects	Appendix I – Research Project Narrative

1.5. Award Ranges

Up to **\$35 million** is anticipated to be available through this RFA. Funding is subject to legislative appropriation, program availability, and final approval by NMED. NMED



anticipates making awards across all five project categories as described below (see Table 2).

Table 2. Estimated Funding Allocation and Award Ranges for Each Project Type.

Project Category	Anticipated Award Range
Construction Projects	\$2,000,000–\$10,000,000
Design Pilots	\$1,000,000–\$3,000,000
Environmental Documentation & Demonstration	\$750,000–\$2,000,000
Feasibility Assessments	\$250,000–\$2,000,000
Research Projects	\$250,000–\$750,000

These funding targets are provided for planning purposes only. NMED reserves the right to adjust funding allocations, award amounts, and the number of awards based on application quality, project readiness, available funding, and program priorities.

1.6. RFA Schedule

Table 3 below provides the **estimated** schedule for the RFA release, administrative threshold review, technical evaluation, and award announcements.

Table 3. Estimated Schedule for RFA Release and Award Announcements

Milestone	Date
RFA Release	August 20, 2026
Applicant Webinar (Optional)	September 2, 2026
Applications Due	October 20, 2026
Administrative Threshold Review*	October 2026
Technical Evaluation*	October–November 2026
Award Announcements*	December 2026

* Dates are estimates only and subject to change without necessitating an amendment to the RFA.



Section 2. Applicant and Project Eligibility

2.1. Eligible Entities

The following Eligible Entities may apply for funding under this RFA, consistent with the Strategic Water Supply Act:

- Counties;
- Municipalities;
- Political subdivisions of the State;
- State agencies;
- State institutions of higher education; and
- Federally recognized Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos located wholly or partially within New Mexico.

Unless otherwise specified, references throughout this RFA to Eligible Entities, Applicants, Grantees, or Recipients include federally recognized Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos located wholly or partially within New Mexico. If selected for funding, Tribal Applicants may execute a Tribal-specific Grant Agreement.

Each application must identify a single Applicant that will serve as the grant recipient. The Applicant will execute the Grant Agreement with NMED, receive grant funds, and be responsible for all grant administration, financial management, reporting, and compliance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and grant requirements.

Eligible Entities are encouraged to collaborate on regional or multi-jurisdictional projects. Joint applications are permitted; however, one Eligible Entity must be designated as the Applicant and assume responsibility for all grant requirements.

2.2. Partnerships and Project Team Members

Collaboration among Eligible Entities, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, consultants, engineering firms, technology providers, private organizations, and other technical experts is encouraged where it strengthens project planning, technical approach, regional coordination, or successful project implementation.

Applicants may identify Project Partners and other Project Team members within their applications and describe their anticipated roles and responsibilities. All organizations that participated in developing the proposed project or application should be identified.

Identification of a Consultant, Contractor, Vendor, Technology Provider, Project Partner, or other organization within an application does not constitute selection or approval of that entity to perform grant-funded work, nor does it satisfy applicable procurement requirements.



Any goods or services procured using grant funds must comply with applicable procurement requirements, including the New Mexico Procurement Code or applicable Tribal procurement requirements, as appropriate, unless an authorized exemption or exception applies. Applicants are encouraged to consider procurement requirements during project development and should avoid structuring projects in a manner that unnecessarily limits competition or predetermines future procurement decisions.

If grant-funded work will be performed by an organization other than the Applicant, the Applicant should clearly describe the anticipated relationship (e.g., Project Partner, Consultant, Contractor, Vendor, or Technology Provider) and explain how applicable procurement and grant requirements will be satisfied. NMED will evaluate proposed project structures for consistency with program requirements prior to award.

2.3. Eligible Projects

To be eligible for funding under this RFA, a proposed project must:

- Be submitted by an Eligible Entity identified in Section 2.1.
- Fall within one of the Project Categories described in Section 1.4.
- Be consistent with the purposes of the Strategic Water Supply Act.
- Advance the exploration, production, or treatment of brackish water to enhance New Mexico's freshwater resources.
- Demonstrate how the project will support state, Tribal, or local government economic development goals, consistent with the Strategic Water Supply Act.
- Comply with applicable federal, state, Tribal, and local laws, regulations, permitting requirements, and other legal requirements.
- Be capable of being completed within the grant Performance Period.
- Include all information required by this RFA.

Applicants should select the single Project Category that best represents the primary purpose of the proposed project. Project-specific application requirements and required supporting documentation are provided in the applicable Project Narrative (**Appendices E-I**). Applicants should also review **Exhibit D: Project Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Rubrics** when preparing their application.

2.4. Eligible Activities

Eligible activities vary by Project Category. Applicants should refer to the applicable Project Narrative (**Appendices E-I**) for project-specific eligibility requirements, required supporting documentation, and detailed application instructions. Depending on the selected Project Category, eligible activities may include:

- Feasibility assessment and facility planning;
- Applied research and technology development;
- Pilot testing and demonstration projects;



- Environmental documentation, permitting, and regulatory compliance;
- Engineering and design;
- Construction and installation of eligible infrastructure;
- Project management;
- Public outreach and stakeholder engagement;
- Monitoring, testing, and performance evaluation; and
- Other activities approved by NMED that directly support completion of the proposed project.

2.5. Eligible Costs

Grant funds may be used for reasonable, allowable, and allocable costs necessary to complete the approved project, including:

- Personnel;
- Professional and technical services;
- Equipment and materials;
- Construction costs, where applicable;
- Laboratory analysis and testing;
- Travel directly related to project implementation;
- Public outreach;
- Environmental documentation and permitting; and
- Other costs approved by NMED included in the executed Grant Agreement.

All costs must comply with the Grant Agreement, applicable State requirements, and any additional requirements identified in this RFA.

2.6. Ineligible Activities and Costs

Examples of ineligible activities or costs include:

- Costs incurred before execution of the Grant Agreement unless specifically authorized by NMED;
- Routine operation and maintenance not directly related to the funded project;
- Lobbying or political activities;
- Fines, penalties, or legal settlements;
- Costs prohibited by State law or the Grant Agreement; and
- Any other activities or costs determined by NMED to be ineligible.

NMED reserves the right to determine the eligibility of proposed projects and costs based on the Strategic Water Supply Act, this RFA, and applicable State requirements.



Section 3. Preparing and Submitting an Application

This section describes the process for preparing and submitting an application, including information on creating a Submittable account. Applicants should review eligibility criteria in Section 2 before preparing an application.

3.1. Required Application Package Components

Applicants must submit the required application package components described below including Appendices A-D and a completed Project Narrative corresponding to the selected Project Category (see Appendices E-I). Appendix A-D are the same for all project types, while Project Narrative Appendices differ by Project Category.

All applications must include the following:

- Completed Submittable application form;
- Completed Workplan (**Appendix A**);
- Completed Procurement Plan (Form 1A) (**Appendix B**);
- Completed Board Authorization Form (**Appendix C**);
- Completed Project Budget Workbook (**Appendix D**);
- Completed Project Narrative corresponding to the selected Project Category (**Appendices E-I**);
- All required project-specific attachments identified in the applicable Project Narrative; and
- Any additional required or optional documentation identified in the application materials.

Links to the application package documents can be found in the Appendices section. Applications that do not include all required components may be determined incomplete and may not advance to technical evaluation.

3.1.1. Workplan

Applicants should complete **Appendix A: Workplan**, which provides a summary of the proposed project and documents the overall implementation approach. Appendix A includes the proposed project schedule, major tasks and milestones, and anticipated project outputs and outcomes.

Project outputs are the direct products, deliverables, or completed activities expected to result from the proposed project. Examples may include completed feasibility assessments, engineering or design documents, pilot systems, research reports, environmental documentation, permits obtained, infrastructure constructed, or treated water supply generated.

Project outcomes are the broader environmental, operational, economic, or community benefits the project is expected to achieve. Examples may include increased water supply



reliability, improved drought resilience, protection of freshwater resources, economic development, improved project readiness, environmental stewardship, or other measurable public benefits.

Applicants should identify outputs and outcomes that are appropriate for the proposed Project Category. Successful Applicants will report on approved outputs and outcomes throughout the grant Performance Period in accordance with the executed Grant Agreement.

3.1.2. Procurement Plan

Applicants should complete **Appendix B: Procurement Plan (Form 1A)**. The Procurement Plan should identify anticipated procurements, procurement methods, and the Applicant's planned approach for complying with applicable procurement requirements. Applicants should consider procurement requirements during project development to support timely project implementation.

3.1.3. Budget Workbook

Applicants should complete **Appendix D: Budget Workbook** to identify anticipated project costs by budget category. The Budget Workbook should be consistent with the proposed scope of work, Workplan, Project Narrative, project schedule, and requested funding amount.

Explanations supporting major budget items should be incorporated into the applicable Project Narrative. Budget information should demonstrate that requested costs are reasonable, necessary, allowable, and directly support completion of the proposed project.

3.1.4. Project Narrative

Applicants should only complete the Project Narrative Appendix (**Appendices E-I**) for their selected Project Category. Each Project Narrative contains project-specific application requirements, narrative questions, required supporting documentation, and evaluation criteria for each Project Category.

3.2. Preparing and Submitting an Application

Applicants should review the steps below before preparing an application.

3.2.1. Preparation and Submission Steps

Applicants should only begin preparing their applications after confirming Applicant eligibility, proposed project eligibility, and determining the Project Category of the proposed project.

Step 1: Applicants should create a free Submittable account and select the application form for the appropriate Project Category. The Submittable form gathers key project



information and lays out the process for uploading each component of the application package. See Section 3.2.2 below for Submittable instructions.

Step 2: Applicants should prepare all application materials as a coordinated application package. Information provided throughout the application should be consistent, with the proposed scope of work, project schedule, budget, procurement approach, and anticipated project outputs and outcomes aligned across all application materials.

Step 3: Applicants should thoroughly review their application materials to ensure consistency and completeness across all application materials.

Step 4: Applicants should upload all application components to the Submittable application form. See Table 4 for guidelines on naming application materials.

Step 5: Applicants should ensure all application components are successfully uploaded to Submittable.

Step 6: Applicants should submit their application before the submission deadline identified in Section 1.6. Applications received after the published deadline or determined to be incomplete may not advance to administrative review.

Table 4. Filing naming convention for application materials.

File Name	Required
Applicant Name_Workplan.pdf	✓
Applicant Name_Procurement_Plan.pdf	✓
Applicant Name_Board_Authorization_Form.pdf	✓
Applicant Name_Budget_Workbook.xlsx	✓
Applicant Name_Project_Narrative.pdf	✓
Applicant Name_[Descriptive Name of Supporting Documentation].pdf	As needed

Additional naming guidelines:

- Applicants may use an abbreviation or shortened version of their name as long as it is consistent.
- Additional project-specific supporting documentation should be included using logical file names.
- Applicants should not password-protect or encrypt submitted files unless specifically requested by NMED.



3.2.2. Submittable Instructions

NMED is accepting applications for this RFA through the Submittable platform. NMED may not consider emailed materials in the final application package. Applications that do not include all required components may be determined incomplete and may not advance to technical evaluation. Additionally, if an Applicant is selected to receive grant funding, most of the grant management will happen through Submittable.

[Link to Submittable Application Portal](#)

- Creating a Submittable account is free and easy.
- Submittable works best on Google Chrome, Firefox, and Safari. Internet Explorer is not supported. Please make sure you are using a supported browser.
- Each Project Category has its own application. Applicants should select the application that is most appropriate for their proposed project.
- An individual with a key project role (i.e., the project manager or the authorized representative) should be the first person to create an account and start the Submittable application. This person will be the one responsible for final submission of the completed application.
- Once the Application is started, they can add collaborations to the application. Each collaborator will need their own Submittable account.
- Applicants can save a draft of the application while they work. The application form does not need to be completed all at once. The application form should auto-save every few seconds, but Applicants are responsible for ensuring their work is saved properly.
- The Submittable application form includes fields for Applicants to share key project and applicant information that is not requested in the application Appendices. Applicants must complete all required fields in the Submittable form to submit an application.
- Applicants will receive notifications about their submission by email. Please be sure to [safelist](#) notification emails from Submittable and check the email you used to sign up for your Submittable count regularly.
- Applicants are encouraged to thoroughly review applications before submitting. However, Applicants who submit their application before the deadline may request to [edit their submission](#) or they may [withdraw](#) their submission and resubmit. Requests to edit submissions are not guaranteed and will be approved on a case-by-case basis. Applications that are withdrawn and not resubmitted may not be reviewed.
- Applicants should submit questions regarding application content by following the instructions in Section 6.1 of the RFA.
- For technical questions related to Submittable, Applicants should use the [Submitter Resource Center](#) or contact [Submittable Customer Support](#).



Section 4. Application Review and Award Process

This section describes the process NMED will use to review, evaluate, and select applications for funding under the Strategic Water Supply Program.

4.1. Administrative Threshold Review

Following the application deadline, NMED will conduct an administrative review of each application to determine whether it is complete, eligible, and responsive to the requirements of this RFA.

The administrative review may include verification that:

- The Applicant is an Eligible Entity;
- The proposed project is an Eligible Project;
- All required application components have been submitted;
- Required certifications and authorizations have been provided;
- The application was submitted by the published deadline; and
- The application otherwise complies with the requirements of this RFA.

NMED may contact Applicants to clarify administrative matters or request minor administrative corrections that do not affect the substance of the application. Applications determined to be incomplete or non-responsive may be removed from further consideration.

4.2. Technical Evaluation

Applications determined to be administratively complete will advance to technical evaluation.

NMED will convene one or more evaluation panels to review eligible applications. Evaluation panels may include NMED staff, technical experts from other state agencies, subject matter experts, and contractor support retained by NMED to assist with application review. All reviewers will be required to comply with applicable conflict of interest and confidentiality requirements. Evaluation panels may include representatives from organizations such as:

- New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)
- Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
- Economic Development Department (EDD)
- Indian Affairs Department (IAD)
- Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)
- New Mexico State University (NMSU)
- New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech)



4.2.1. Conflict of Interest

Applications will be assigned to reviewers based on the applicable Project Category and the technical expertise needed to evaluate the proposed project. Reviewers will evaluate applications using the project-specific evaluation criteria and scoring rubrics referenced in the applicable Project Narrative and provided in **Exhibit D: Project Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Rubrics**.

NMED will implement appropriate procedures to identify, disclose, and manage actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest throughout the application review process. Individuals with a conflict of interest, including those affiliated with an Applicant, Project Partner, or other organization participating in a submitted application, will not participate in the review, scoring, or funding recommendation for that application. NMED may assign reviewers to specific Project Categories or applications, modify evaluation panel membership, or take other appropriate measures to ensure a fair, objective, and impartial evaluation process.

Reviewer scores and recommendations, together with available funding, program priorities, project readiness, and other considerations described in this RFA, will be considered by NMED in developing final funding recommendations.

4.3. Evaluation Criteria

Applications determined to be complete and eligible will undergo technical evaluation. While specific evaluation criteria and point values vary by Project Category, all applications will be evaluated using the general evaluation categories described in Table 5 below. Detailed evaluation criteria, point values, and project-specific considerations are referenced in the applicable Project Narrative (**Appendices E-I**) and provided in **Exhibit D: Project Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Rubrics**.

Table 5. Overview of Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Category	General Description
Project Summary and Technical Approach	Evaluates the overall quality of the proposed project, including the project need, objectives, technical approach, and alignment with the goals of the Strategic Water Supply Grant Program.
Budget and Cost Reasonableness	Evaluates whether the proposed budget is reasonable, well-supported, and appropriate for the proposed scope of work and anticipated outcomes.
Environmental Benefits	Evaluates the anticipated environmental benefits of the proposed project, including its potential to enhance New Mexico's freshwater resources, reduce environmental impacts, or achieve other program objectives.
Community Benefits and Stakeholder Engagement	Evaluates anticipated public benefits, stakeholder and community involvement, partnerships, and other factors that support successful project implementation and long-term value.



Evaluation Category	General Description
Innovation (where applicable)	Evaluates, where appropriate, the extent to which the project incorporates innovative technologies, approaches, or practices that advance the Strategic Water Supply Grant Program's objectives.
Project Readiness	Evaluates the Applicant's readiness to successfully implement the proposed project, including planning, feasibility, schedule, and overall preparedness.
Project Management and Execution	Evaluates the Applicant's capacity to successfully manage and complete the proposed project, including organizational capability, project management approach, and team qualifications.

4.4. Funding Recommendations and Schedule

Following completion of the technical evaluation, NMED will develop funding recommendations based on reviewer scores and recommendations, available funding, program priorities, geographic distribution, project readiness, and other considerations determined appropriate by NMED. NMED also reserves the right to consider other publicly available information relevant to the proposed project in support of its evaluation and funding recommendations.

NMED reserves the right to request additional information, conduct discussions with Applicants, negotiate project scopes, schedules, or budgets, or decline to make awards within any Project Category.

NMED anticipates selecting projects for funding in December 2026, with Grant Agreements expected to be executed and awards made by April 2027, subject to completion of all legal, administrative, and programmatic requirements.

4.5. Award Notification

Following completion of the evaluation process, NMED will notify all Applicants in writing of the outcome of their application.

Applicants selected for funding will receive a written Notice of Selection from NMED. Selection for funding does not constitute authorization to begin work or incur reimbursable costs. Awards are contingent upon successful negotiation and execution of the **applicable Grant Agreement** between the Applicant and NMED, satisfaction of all applicable legal and administrative requirements, and the availability of funding.

Applicants not selected for funding will receive written notification that their application was not selected for award.

NMED reserves the right to make no awards, make partial awards, negotiate modifications to the proposed scope of work, project schedule, budget, or funding amount prior to execution of the applicable Grant Agreement, or otherwise determine final awards consistent with the Strategic Water Supply Act, this RFA, and available funding.



Funding allocations among Project Categories are illustrative and may be adjusted by NMED based on the number, quality, and funding needs of eligible applications received.

Section 5. Grant Administration

Applicants selected for funding will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement with NMED prior to beginning work. This section provides a summary of key grant administration requirements to assist Applicants in understanding the responsibilities associated with receiving an award.

Applicants are encouraged to review the Sample Grant Agreement (**Exhibit B**) and, if applicable, the Sample Tribal Grant Agreement (**Exhibit C**) to understand the general terms and conditions that may apply to grant awards. Following award, successful Applicants will receive additional grant administration guidance, forms, and templates from NMED.

5.1. Grant Agreement

Applicants selected for funding must execute the applicable Grant Agreement with NMED before grant-funded work may begin. The Grant Agreement will establish the approved scope of work, budget, project schedule, reporting requirements, reimbursement procedures, and other terms and conditions governing the award. No costs incurred prior to execution of the applicable Grant Agreement will be reimbursed unless expressly authorized by NMED.

5.2. Financial Management and Reimbursement

The Strategic Water Supply Grant Program is administered on a cost-reimbursement basis unless otherwise approved by NMED. Grant recipients are responsible for maintaining adequate financial records and submitting reimbursement requests supported by documentation demonstrating that costs were incurred in accordance with the executed Grant Agreement. Additional reimbursement procedures and required forms will be provided by NMED following award.

5.3. Procurement Requirements

Grant recipients are responsible for complying with all applicable procurement requirements identified in the Grant Agreement, including the **New Mexico Procurement Code** or **applicable Tribal procurement requirements**, as appropriate, when procuring goods or services using grant funds.

Identification of a consultant, contractor, vendor, technology provider, or Project Partner within an application does not satisfy applicable procurement requirements or authorize selection of that entity following award.

Grant recipients should consider procurement requirements during project planning to avoid delays in project implementation. Additional procurement guidance, templates, and resources will be provided by NMED following award.



5.4. Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be required to submit periodic progress reports, financial information, deliverables, and other documentation identified in the Grant Agreement.

Reporting requirements are intended to document project progress, expenditures, performance, and completion of grant-funded activities.

Reporting schedules, report templates, and submission procedures will be provided by NMED following award.

5.5. Project Monitoring

NMED may monitor grant-funded projects throughout the Performance Period to verify compliance with the Grant Agreement and evaluate project progress. Monitoring activities may include review of reimbursement requests, progress reports, supporting documentation, project deliverables, meetings, and site visits, as appropriate. Grant recipients are expected to cooperate fully with NMED during project monitoring activities.

5.6. Records Retention and Audit

Grant recipients shall maintain financial records, procurement records, supporting documentation, and other project records in accordance with the Grant Agreement and applicable legal requirements. Grant recipients shall provide NMED or its authorized representatives with reasonable access to records necessary to verify compliance with the Grant Agreement and applicable laws. Additional record retention and audit requirements are described in the Sample Grant Agreement (**Exhibit B**) and, if applicable, the Sample Tribal Grant Agreement (**Exhibit C**).

5.7. Grant Modifications

Changes to the approved scope of work, budget, project schedule, or other material terms of the Grant Agreement require prior written approval from NMED. Grant recipients should notify NMED as soon as practicable when circumstances arise that may affect project implementation. Procedures for requesting grant modifications will be provided following award.

Section 6. Administrative Information

6.1. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this RFA must be submitted in writing using the [Contact Us](#) form on the NMED website. To ensure all Applicants have access to the same information, NMED reserves the right to post responses to questions, clarifications, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and other information related to this RFA on the Strategic Water Supply Program website. Applicants are responsible for reviewing any posted information prior to submitting an application.



6.2. Public Records

Applications submitted in response to this RFA are subject to applicable New Mexico public records laws.

Applicants should clearly identify any information they believe to be confidential, proprietary, or otherwise exempt from public disclosure. NMED will evaluate requests for confidential treatment in accordance with applicable law but cannot guarantee that information identified as confidential will be withheld from disclosure.

6.3. Reservation of Rights

NMED reserves the right to:

- Amend, modify, suspend, or withdraw this RFA;
- Extend, revise, or cancel application deadlines;
- Request clarification or additional information from Applicants;
- Reject any or all applications;
- Determine the eligibility of Applicants, projects, activities, and costs;
- Make full awards, partial awards, awards for less than the amount requested, or no awards;
- Negotiate modifications to proposed project scopes, budgets, schedules, funding amounts, or other terms prior to execution of the applicable Grant Agreement;
- Cancel this solicitation at any time; and
- Take any other action determined to be in the best interest of the State of New Mexico and consistent with the Strategic Water Supply Act.

6.4. RFA Amendments

NMED reserves the right to amend this RFA at any time prior to the application deadline.

Any amendments, clarifications, or other official communications related to this RFA will be posted on the Strategic Water Supply Program website. Applicants are responsible for monitoring the Strategic Water Supply Program website and incorporating any published amendments or clarifications into their application. Only written amendments or other written communications issued by NMED shall be considered official modifications to this RFA.

6.5. Disclaimer

This RFA is intended solely to solicit applications for funding under the Strategic Water Supply Program and does not constitute a commitment by NMED to award funding or execute a Grant Agreement. In the event of any inconsistency between this RFA and the executed Grant Agreement, the terms and conditions of the executed applicable Grant Agreement shall govern.



6.6. Availability of Funding

Funding under this RFA is subject to the availability of appropriated funds and execution of Grant Agreements. Nothing contained in this RFA shall be construed as obligating NMED to expend funds or award grants beyond the funding made available for the Strategic Water Supply Grant Program.



Appendices

The Appendices can be downloaded at the links below.

Core Application Components

- [Appendix A – Workplan](#)
- [Appendix B – Procurement Plan \(Form 1A\)](#)
- [Appendix C – Board Authorization Form](#)
- [Appendix D – Budget Workbook](#)

Project Narratives by Project Type

- [Appendix E – Construction Project Narrative](#)
- [Appendix F – Design Pilot Project Narrative](#)
- [Appendix G – Environmental Documentation and Demonstration Project Narrative](#)
- [Appendix H – Feasibility Assessment Project Narrative](#)
- [Appendix I – Research Project Narrative](#)

Exhibits

Exhibits are for reference only and should not be included in the application package.

[Click here to download the Exhibits.](#)

- **Exhibit A** – Application Checklist
- **Exhibit B** – Sample Grant Agreement
- **Exhibit C** – Sample Tribal Grant Agreement
- **Exhibit D** – Project Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Rubrics