

Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposals

NM WRI Faculty Water Research Grant Program

Closing Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:00 p.m. MT

The New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (NM WRI) requests proposals from water research faculty at New Mexico-based universities. Funds will be made available by the U.S. Geological Survey as part of the 104(b) grant program through the Water Resources Research Act to support research that improves the planning and management of the waters of the state of New Mexico. For fiscal year 2026, NM WRI anticipates funding up to four projects with a maximum award of \$45,000 per proposal. The final number of awards and project dollar amounts awarded will be determined based on the availability of funds. Funding availability is contingent upon the U.S. Department of the Interior's disbursement of appropriations to the Water Resources Research Act Program Annual Base Grants Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Applications.

This RFA is issued under the provisions of section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-242), as amended by Public Laws 101-397, 104-147, 106-374, and 109-471. Section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to administer program grants to the New Mexico WRI established under the provisions of section 104 of the Act.

New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute USGS 104(b) Request for Proposals, FY2026

The NM WRI Faculty Water Research Grant Program is designed to provide funds for water-related research projects that have the potential to attract more substantial outside funding if the initial research proves successful. Investigators who are beginning their research careers are encouraged to submit proposals, as are investigators proposing new or novel approaches to solving water resources problems. Investigators are encouraged to budget funds to emphasize the support of graduate students working on the project.

All water-related research topics are eligible for funding. Proposed projects must identify a significant water resources problem and conduct applied or basic research that will be part of the proposed solution. In addition, proposals may include dissemination, delivery, and generation of research that informs and enhances existing public, private, and stakeholder water planning and management processes. Principal investigators must hold a faculty position at a New Mexico university.

Deadline

Tuesday, September 8, 2026; 5:00 p.m.

Project Eligibility

Successful proposals will further the objectives established under [Section 104\(b\) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984](#).

Section 104(b) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 mandates that the Institutes or Centers engage in competent, applied, and peer-reviewed research to improve water supply reliability, explore new ideas addressing water problems, facilitate entry into the water resources field for new scientists and engineers, and disseminate research findings to water managers and the public. The Act mandates Institutes to collaborate with other colleges and universities in the state to address regional water and land issues, as well as work with regional institutes and organizations to enhance overall effectiveness and promote coordination.

Proposals should promote the national mission and objectives of the U.S. Geological Survey, which are focused on providing water-quality and quantity information, understanding water availability, addressing the influence of climate on water resources, and responding to water-related emerging needs.

Proposals received from a principal investigator or co-investigator who has a delinquent technical completion report will not be reviewed. Failure to complete a report jeopardizes future funding for the NM WRI 104(b) grant program and will impact the PI's eligibility for future funding from NM WRI.

Specific proposal review criteria are listed below under Review Policy.

Proposal Submission

All proposals must be submitted through the PI's university's grants and contracts office. Please contact NM WRI if you have any questions.

Sam Fernald, Director

afernald@nmsu.edu

575-646-4337

Carolina Mijares, Senior Program Manager

mijares@nmsu.edu

575-646-7991

Project Cost, Duration, and Match

The maximum award will be \$45,000 in direct costs for a one-year project. Funding is awarded for one year at a time only. NM WRI-funded projects are considered seed-money projects designed to attract external funding after the initial research period. The initial proposed research may be designed to be conducted during a multiple-year period, but the proposal must be written such that a distinct segment is completed by the end of the first year. Renewal request proposals are reviewed and evaluated in the same manner as new proposals, with no priority guaranteed.

Each applicant must match each federal dollar with not less than one dollar from non-federal sources. The matching funds must be obligated during the period of performance. Matching funds may contain indirect costs and non-federal salaries and benefits. Indirect costs may be applied to both qualifying federal and non-federal direct costs and used to satisfy part of the matching requirement under the non-federal share. Indirect costs are distributed based on Modified Total Direct Costs, as defined in 2 CFR Part 200.68.

Federal funds shall not be used to pay indirect costs.

Reporting Requirements

Each project must culminate in a final technical completion report due at the end of the project period. Final technical completion reports must follow the procedural and editorial guidelines found at <https://nmwrri.nmsu.edu/nm-wrri-supported-research/documents/external-documents/peguide.pdf>. Authors must provide the NM WRRI with an electronic file containing the draft report. After peer review, the report will be published as part of the NM WRRI technical completion report publication series and also provided via the Institute's webpage. Investigators are encouraged to pursue publication of the findings of their project in other media, especially their professional scientific journals, and to make presentations at professional meetings and conferences. Investigators are asked to notify the NM WRRI of any subsequent publications that may result from the project. Investigators should acknowledge the source of funding with the following statement in all publications:

This report is based upon work supported by the U.S. Geological Survey through the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute under Grant/Cooperative Agreement #G21AP10635.

The recipient is also responsible for ensuring that every publication of material (including World Wide Web pages) based on or developed under this Agreement, contains the following disclaimer:

The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Geological Survey or New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Geological Survey or New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute.

The **Annual Program Report** (due August 31, 2027) for each award shall consist of the following components:

- 1) **RESEARCH:** A synopsis of the funded research project completed during the reporting period.
- 2) **PUBLICATIONS:** A list of all reports published during the reporting period as a result of the awarded project.
- 3) **INFORMATION TRANSFER PROGRAM:** A brief description of information transfer activities supported by this funded research project.
- 4) **STUDENT SUPPORT:** A summary of the number of students supported by this project.
- 5) **NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS:** Provide a brief description of any especially notable achievements and awards resulting from work supported by this project.

Review Policy

The NM WRRI Faculty Water Research Grant review panel, which is comprised of the Institute's Program Development and Review Board (PDRB) and other highly qualified water experts, will review proposals and make funding recommendations to the NM WRRI director. Proposals should be written for those with a general water-research background.

PIs are expected to be accountable for carrying out the activities described in the funded project. Thus, individual projects should include clearly stated goals, specific

descriptions of the activities that the PI intends to perform, and a plan in place to document the outputs of those activities.

The review panel will evaluate submitted proposals based on the following criteria:

1. Does the proposal clearly identify a water resources problem?
2. Does the proposed research focus on advancing the science needed to solve the problem and/or a significant and identifiable element of the problem?
3. Does the proposal address a water challenge, and is the research designed to resolve on-the-ground water issues?
4. Does the proposal include dissemination, delivery, and generation of research that informs and enhances existing public, private, and stakeholder water planning and/or management processes?
5. Are the proposed project activities completely described?
6. Are the project outputs clearly stated?
7. Does the proposed work provide for the involvement and training of students?
8. Does the proposed work have widespread applicability to problems relevant to New Mexico and the region?
9. Is the proposal likely to lead to additional and more substantial funding from other sources?
10. Has the investigator demonstrated through his/her training, experience, and publications the qualifications needed to produce a successful project?
11. Is the proposed budget reasonable, and does it emphasize the support of graduate students?
12. Does the literature review support the work proposed?

Proposal Content

All proposals must be submitted through the PI's university's grants and contracts office.

Proposals shall be submitted electronically as an MS Word document and a .pdf copy of the same document, both attached to an email message addressed to mijares@nmsu.edu. On the "Subject" line of the email message, include "FY2026 104(b) Research Program." Proposals will consist of the following:

1. Two letters must accompany the proposal: An Authorization Letter and a signed Matching Funds Commitment Letter. These letters may be emailed to mijares@nmsu.edu or mailed to:

NM WRI FY2026 – 104(b) Research Program
New Mexico State University
PO Box 30001, MSC 3167
Las Cruces, NM 88003-0001

- a) Authorization Letter: The authorization letter should be on departmental letterhead with original or certified digital signatures. The letter should indicate whether the entire proposal or any segment of it has been, or will be, submitted to organizations other than the NM WRI for the purposes of obtaining funds. The NM WRI strongly encourages the pursuit of outside funding. Submission to other agencies does not preclude consideration of the proposal by NM WRI,

though duplicate funding for the same work would not be awarded. The proposed budget should reflect cost-share match contributions of 1:1. Indicate the source and nature of those contributions in this letter and include relevant signatures. The letter must contain signatures of the principal investigator, co-investigators if any, department head(s), and the appropriate college dean(s) or research center director(s) as prescribed by your university.

- b) The applicant must also provide an institutionally signed Matching Funds Commitment Letter signed by an official authorized to commit the applicant to the required 1:1 cost-share match. This letter will be sent to the USGS as required by the program.

Proposals should be created with 12 pt. Times New Roman font using one-inch margins and single-spaced text. All graphics must be embedded in the text.

2. Pages One and Two

Simple Language Summary. In 250 words or less provide a project summary that would be understandable to an individual without specific expertise in the research topic.

Project Period. Proposed starting and ending dates (the anticipated project period is October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027).

Name of Principal Investigator and Affiliation. Include name, address, e-mail, and telephone number for principal investigator and co-investigators, if any.

Title. Use a concise but descriptive title that clearly reflects a specific relationship to a water resources problem.

Project Type. Research, Information Transfer, or Education and Outreach

Congressional District. Provide the Congressional district where the work will be performed.

WRI Science Priority. Choose from the following categories the one that most closely applies: Water Scarcity and Availability; Water-Related Hazards and Climate Variability; Water Quality; Water Policy, Planning, and Socioeconomics; Water Technology and Innovation; Workforce Development and Water Literacy; or Watershed and Ecosystem Function.

USGS Cross-Discipline Landscape. Arctic, California Bay-Delta, Chesapeake Bay, Columbia River, Everglades, Great Lakes, Gulf Coast, Klamath, Puget Sound, Salton Sea, Upper Mississippi River, or none of the mentioned.

Geographic Study Area. Provide the geographic study area.

USGS Cross-Discipline Science Topic. Climate, Energy, HABs, Indian Water Rights, Natural Hazards, Oceans/Coastal/Great Lakes, STEM, Water Challenges, or Other.

Keywords. Select primary, secondary, and tertiary keywords from the list provided in Attachment A.

Student Support Breakdown. Provide the number of post-docs, graduate, and undergraduate students who will be supported by federal funds. Separately provide a grand total of all students supported by the proposed project, including any students that are supported entirely by matching funds.

Abstract. Provide a brief description of the problem, methods, and objectives limited to 5,000 characters, including spaces.

Statement of Critical Water Resource Problem. State briefly the regional or state problem to be addressed by the project, including an explanation for the research, who wants it, and why. This section should not exceed two paragraphs.

Statement of the Results, Benefits Expected. Indicate the results, benefits, or information expected to be gained from the project and how they could be used. Describe in detail any long-term, large-scale plans that might be explored as a result of this proposal, including possible external funding sources. This section should not exceed two paragraphs.

3. Pages Three through Five: Main Body

Nature, Scope, and Objectives, including a timeline of activities. This section should contain two major sub-sections. The first is a description of the specific water problem to be addressed, in greater detail than the brief summary on the first page. It should also describe, in non-technical terms, the relevance of the proposed project to the problem. The relevancy and responsiveness of the project to existing or foreseeable local, regional, or national water resource problems is one of the principal means by which federal and state governmental officials evaluate the effectiveness, importance, and value of water resources research programs. The second sub-section should describe the specific project objectives.

Methods, Procedures and Facilities. Provide sufficient information to permit evaluation of the technical adequacy of the approach to satisfy objectives. If the proposed budget includes the purchase of a major item of equipment, a description of the equipment with justification for the need must be included in this section.

Related Research. Using a review of literature, show the similarities and dissimilarities of the proposed research to completed or ongoing activities on the same or related topics.

4. Page Six: Other Research Support and Training Potential

Other Research Support. Include a brief summary of involvement by the investigator(s) in other current project support, pending proposals to other funding agencies, amount of grant or proposal, and current status. Show the relationship, if any, between your proposed project to your present involvement in other projects.

Training Potential. Give a detailed explanation of the ways your project will promote a strong training program in the area of water resources. Include the number of graduates or undergraduates you expect to train and the degrees and field of specialty you anticipate will result from their participation on the project.

5. Pages Seven and Eight: Financial Plan Summary

Submit a Budget Breakdown (Attachment B) and Budget Justification (Attachment C) using the following line items. All categories should contain adequate detail as to the use of funds. If the project is designed to last for more than one year, a budget estimate for each year, with the required match for each year, and a total for the project should be included. Non-NM WRII contributions to each category, if applicable, should be shown. Note: Indirect costs may not be requested as recoverable costs to the project, but can be included as a cost-share/matching contribution. The matching requirement for this program is 1:1 and should be included in the summary.

1. Salaries and Wages: Identify individuals when known, and categories of salaries and wages, estimated percentage of time and month/hours, and the rate of compensation proposed for each. If the rate of pay shown is higher than the current rate of pay, include an explanation. The use of NM WRII funds to supplement research salaries resulting in compensation above the regular salary rate is not allowed. NM WRII funds may not provide salary for investigators during the regular academic year, but could be requested for up to two months of summer salary. The Institute does not allow the budgeting of NM WRII funds for non-university consultants, nor the hiring of university faculty on a consulting basis for extra compensation.
2. Fringe Benefits: Use rates/amounts in conformance with normal accounting procedures. Explain the costs and the basis of the rate computations. Indicate whether the rates are estimated for application purposes or whether they are fixed or provisional rates for billing purposes.
3. Tuition for graduate and undergraduate students
4. Supplies: Indicate separately the amounts estimated for laboratory, field and/or computer supplies. Provide details on any specific item that represents a significant portion of the proposed amount. If fabrication of equipment is proposed, list parts and costs separately from other items.
5. Nonexpendable Equipment: Identify individually any item having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of more than \$5,000 per unit. Each item must be described and justified as to the specific need for the project.
6. Services or Consultants: The Institute does not allow the budgeting of its funds for non-university consultants, nor hiring faculty for consulting for extra compensation.
7. Travel: All estimated costs should be itemized showing the number of trips required, and the type of trip (field, scientific meeting, conference), using rates approved by your university's travel policy. A maximum of \$2,500 per year will be authorized for active participation at professional meetings or conferences.
8. Other Direct Costs: Itemize costs not included elsewhere, such as computer and other machine use charges, communications, analysis, equipment maintenance, manuscript page charges, or other costs as appropriate.
9. Total Direct Costs: Total amount requested from the NM WRII.
10. Indirect Costs: Shown as a cost share contribution only, based on the applicant's approved rate agreement.

11. Total Estimated Costs: Total cost of the project, including NM WRII funding request and cost share contribution.
6. Page Nine: Data Management Plan (DMP)

Proposals must include no more than a one-page description of how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. A valid DMP may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed (e.g., "No data are expected to be produced from this project"), as long as the statement is accompanied by a clear justification. Guidance on data management plans is available from the USGS Data Management website here: <https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/data-management-plans>
7. Beginning on Page Ten: Investigator(s) Qualifications

Investigator(s) Qualifications. A Biographical Sketch (limited to three pages) must be provided separately for each individual designated as principal investigator or co-principal investigator through the use of SciENCv ([Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae](#)). PIs must prepare, save, certify, and submit these documents as part of their proposal packet.
8. Pages Eleven through Twelve: Research References

KEYWORDS

AGRICULTURE
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
ATMOSPHERIC DEPOSITION
CLIMATOLOGICAL PROCESSES
CONSERVATION
DROUGHT
ECOLOGY
ECONOMICS
EDUCATION
FLOODS
GEOMORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES
GEOCHEMICAL PROCESSES
GROUNDWATER
HYDROGEOCHEMISTRY
HYDROLOGY
IRRIGATION
LAW, INSTITUTIONS, AND POLICY
MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING
METHODS
MICROPLASTICS
MODELS
NITROGEN
NON-POINT POLLUTION
PFAS
PHOSPHORUS
RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES
RECREATION
SEDIMENTS
SOLUTE TRANSPORT
SURFACE WATER
TERRESTRIAL INVASIVE SPECIES
TOXIC SUBSTANCES
TREATMENT
WASTEWATER
WATER BUDGET
WATER SUPPLY
WETLANDS

BUDGET BREAKDOWN*

Principal Investigator:

Project Title:

Cost Category		Federal	Non-Federal	Grand Total
Total Salaries and Wages for:		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Principal Investigator		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Regular Investigators		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Post Docs		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Graduate Students		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Undergrad Students		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Director		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Admin Assistants		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Fringe Benefits for:		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Principal Investigator		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Regular Investigators		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Post Docs		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Graduate Students		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Undergrad Students		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Director		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Admin Assistants		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tuition for:		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Graduate Students		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Undergrad Students		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies				\$0.00
Equipment				\$0.00
Services or Consultants				\$0.00
Travel				\$0.00
Other Direct Costs				\$0.00
Total Direct Costs:		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Indirect Costs Federal		XXXX		\$0.00
Indirect Costs Non-Federal		XXXX		\$0.00
Amount Proposed at Institute				
University		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Amount Proposed at Other				
University		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Amount Proposed		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION*

Note: Please include details regarding both Federal and Matching funds in each section below.

Project Title:

Salaries and Wages for PIs. Provide personnel, title/position, estimated hours and the rate of compensation proposed for each individual.

Federal**Matching**

Salaries and Wages for Graduate Students. Provide personnel, title/position, estimated hours and the rate of compensation proposed for each individual. (Other forms of compensation paid as or in lieu of wages to students performing necessary work are allowable provided that the other payments are reasonable compensation for the work performed and are conditioned explicitly upon the performance of necessary work. Also, note that tuition has its own category below and that health insurance, if provided, is to be included under fringe benefits.)

Federal**Matching**

Salaries and Wages for Undergraduate Students. Provide personnel, title/position, estimated hours and the rate of compensation proposed for each individual. (Other forms of compensation paid as or in lieu of wages to students performing necessary work are allowable provided that the other payments are reasonable compensation for the work performed and are conditioned explicitly upon the performance of necessary work. Also, note that tuition has its own category below and that health insurance, if provided, is to be included under fringe benefits.)

Federal**Matching**

Salaries and Wages for Others. Provide personnel, title/position, estimated hours and the rate of compensation proposed for each individual.

Federal**Matching**

Fringe Benefits for PIs. Provide the overall fringe benefit rate applicable to each category of employee proposed in the projects. Note: include health insurance here, if applicable.

Federal**Matching**

Fringe Benefits for Graduate Students. Provide the overall fringe benefit rate applicable to each category of employee proposed in the projects. Note: include health insurance here, if applicable.

Federal**Matching**

Fringe Benefits for Undergraduate Students. Provide the overall fringe benefit rate applicable to each category of employee proposed in the projects. Note: include health insurance here, if applicable.

Federal**Matching**

Fringe Benefits for Others. Provide the overall fringe benefit rate applicable to each category of employee proposed in the projects. Note: include health insurance here, if applicable.

Federal**Matching**

Tuition for Graduate Students. Provide time & amount. In-state or Out-of-state tuition?

Federal

Matching

Tuition for Undergraduate Students. Provide time & amount. In-state or Out-of-state tuition?

Federal

Matching

Supplies. Indicate separately the amounts proposed for laboratory and field supplies, followed by a breakdown of the supplies in each category (amounts per unit, # of units, cost per unit).

Federal

Matching

Equipment. Identify non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one (1) year and an acquisition cost of more than \$5,000 per unit. If fabrication of equipment is proposed, list parts and materials required for each, and show costs separately from the other items. A detailed breakdown is required.

Federal

Matching

Services or Consultants. Identify the specific tasks for which these services, consultants, or subcontracts would be used. Provide a detailed breakdown of the services or consultants to include personnel, time, salary, supplies, travel, etc. A breakdown is required for each cost.

Federal

Matching

Travel. Provide the purpose and estimated cost for all travel. A separate breakdown should be provided for each trip, and it should include the destination, number of personnel, number of days, per diem rate, lodging rate, mileage and mileage rate or airfare (whatever is applicable). Please indicate the source you used for the per diem rate (e.g. <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>). Failure to provide the necessary information for each project has the potential to delay the entire award.

Federal**Matching**

Other Direct Costs. Itemize costs not included elsewhere, including publication costs. Costs for services and consultants should be included and justified under “Services or Consultants” (above). Please provide a detailed breakdown for costs listed under this category.

Federal**Matching**

Indirect Costs. Provide negotiated indirect (“Facilities and Administration”) cost rate. If indirect costs are provided, please include a copy of your current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement so the rate can be verified.

Federal**Matching**

Amendment No. 1

**Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposals
NM WRI Faculty Water Research Grant Program**

Original RFP Issued: June 30, 2026

Amendment Issued: July 20, 2026

Purpose of Amendment

The purpose of this amendment is to revise the proposal submission deadline and project performance period for the Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposals for the NM WRI Faculty Water Research Grant Program.

This extension is intended to provide prospective applicants with additional time to prepare and submit competitive proposals.

Except as expressly modified by this Amendment No. 1, all terms, conditions, eligibility requirements, proposal preparation instructions, and evaluation criteria contained in the original Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposals for the NM WRI Faculty Water Research Grant Program remain unchanged.