New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute

2026-2027 Student Water Research Grant Program

Request for Proposals

The New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute is pleased to announce the 2026-2027 Student Water Research Grant Program. Awards support the training of New Mexico's future water experts through grants to university students throughout the state for their water-related research projects. Student Water Research Grants provide students with opportunities for hands-on experience in the lab and field and the skills needed to successfully complete degree programs and move into New Mexico's job sector. Many student recipients of NM WRRI grants are now established university faculty and federal laboratory scientists. Other students are now technicians and experts at every level of local, state, and federal agencies. They are also well represented in water-related aspects of private industry.

Awarded students collaborate with accomplished and knowledgeable faculty researchers and present research results at regional, national, and international forums. Research results are also published in peer-reviewed journals and other widely distributed reports. Under the guidance of their faculty advisor, a student has the opportunity to take the lead on a proposed activity that increases the scope of a faculty-led project.

Program Description

Student Water Research Grants are intended to help students initiate or supplement water resources research projects to improve understanding and management of water in New Mexico. Budgets may include, but are not limited to, expenditures for student salaries and fringe benefits, health insurance, tuition, supplies, sample analysis costs, field equipment, travel to field sites, and travel to present results at professional meetings. Funds will not be approved for faculty salaries.

Although cost-sharing is not required, institutions are encouraged to provide financial support for student research project costs.

Funding

NM WRRI intends to fund twelve awards, with each award no greater than $8,000 for the project period. Funding for these awards is provided by the New Mexico State Legislature through the State General Fund. Only direct costs are allowed; indirect costs may be shown as institutional cost share. Awards will be effective on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, and all expenses related to these projects must be expended by Wednesday, September 15, 2027.

Eligibility

All student researchers (undergraduate, master's, or doctoral students) enrolled in a degree program at a New Mexico-based public higher education institution are encouraged to apply. The proposal submission must have a faculty sponsor from the applicant's institution. Preference will be given to first-time applicants, although previous recipients of Student Water Research Grants will be considered.

Deliverables

Student grant recipients are expected to submit a poster abstract of their research project in conjunction with the NM WRRI's 71st Annual New Mexico Water Conference to be held in the fall, with the location to be announced at a future date. Information about the conference will be shared via the *New Mexico Water eNews* as event planning and coordination progress.

A project progress report will be due on Tuesday, March 16, 2027. Upon completion of the research

project, recipients are required to submit a final project report that includes a narrative of research activities and results, a report on project expenditures, and two project slides summarizing the research results. The final report will be due on Wednesday, September 15, 2027.

Proposal Deadline
Monday, August 17, 2026; 5:00 pm

Expected Award Date
Wednesday, September 16, 2026

Program Contact Information
For questions concerning the program, please contact Carolina Mijares, Sr. Program Manager, at mijares@nmsu.edu (575-646-7991), or Sam Fernald, NM WRRI Director, at afernald@nmsu.edu (575-646-4337).

Proposal Content
Proposals must be submitted via email to Carolina Mijares at mijares@nmsu.edu as an attachment. The "Subject" line of the email message should read "**2026-2027 NM WRRI Student Grant Proposal**." Proposals must be created with 12 pt. Times New Roman font using one-inch margins and single-spaced text. *Proposals that do not adhere to these guidelines may not be considered for review.*

Proposals will consist of the following:

1. First page
   Student PI: Include name, address, email, and telephone number; department, degree in progress, and expected graduation date
   Faculty Sponsor: Include name, address, email, and telephone number
   Title of Project: Use a concise descriptive title that clearly reflects a specific relationship to a water resources problem.
   Research Category: Provide a research category that most closely applies to the proposed project. Research categories include, but are not limited to, the groups provided in **Attachment A**.
   Focus Categories: Choose a maximum of three focus categories, which may include, but are not restricted to, the list provided in **Attachment B**, with the preferred focus category first.
   Keywords: Enter keywords of your choice, descriptive of the work.
   Problem Statement and Objectives: State briefly the project's goals and objectives. This section should not exceed two paragraphs.

2. Second page
   Methodology: Provide a review of the methods to be used. This section should not exceed two paragraphs.
   Expected results and significance: Indicate the results, benefits, or information expected to be gained from the project and how they could be used. This section should not exceed two paragraphs.
   If references are needed, include them on page 2.

3. Third page
   Budget components not to exceed $8,000. Use the following format:

Salary	(identify individuals and estimated percentage of time and month/hours, and the rate of compensation proposed)
Fringe Benefits	(use rates/amounts conforming with your university's current F&A rates)

Health Insurance	(a maximum of $600 ($200/mo. for up to three months) can be requested for health insurance coverage for graduate assistantships)
Travel	(provide estimated costs showing the number of trips required, the type of trip, and using rates approved by your university's travel policy). Costs associated with attending the NM WRRI's 71st Annual New Mexico Water Conference may also be included in travel.
Supplies	(indicate separately the amounts estimated for laboratory, field and/or computer supplies)
Services	(justify any services, e.g., laboratory analysis)
Equipment	(identify individually any item having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of more than $5,000 per unit)
Other	(itemized costs not included elsewhere, such as tuition, computer charges, communications, analysis, equipment maintenance, manuscript page charges, or other costs as appropriate)
Total	(not to exceed $8,000)

ATTACHMENT A

RESEARCH CATEGORY

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

CLIMATE AND HYDROLOGIC PROCESSES

ENGINEERING

GROUND-WATER FLOW AND TRANSPORT

SOCIAL SCIENCES

WATER HAZARDS AND CLIMATE VARIABILITY

WATER POLICY, PLANNING, AND SOCIOECONOMICS

WATER QUALITY

WATER SCARCITY AND AVAILABILITY

WATER TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

WATERSHED AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WATER LITERACY

OTHER _____

FOCUS CATEGORIES

ACID DEPOSITION
AGRICULTURE
CLIMATOLOGICAL PROCESSES
CONSERVATION
DROUGHT
ECOLOGY
ECONOMICS
EDUCATION
FLOODS
GEOMORPOLOGICAL PROCESSES
GEOCHEMICAL PROCESSES
GROUNDWATER
HYDROGEOCHEMISTRY
HYDROLOGY
INVASIVE SPECIES
IRRIGATION
LAW, INSTITUTIONS, AND POLICY
MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING
METHODS
MODELS
NITRATE CONTAMINATION
NON-POINT POLLUTION
NUTRIENTS
RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES
RECREATION
SEDIMENTS
SOLUTE TRANSPORT
SURFACE WATER
TOXIC SUBSTANCES
TREATMENT
WASTEWATER
WATER QUALITY
WATER QUANTITY
WATER SUPPLY
WETLANDS
OTHER _____