The New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (NM WRRI) is located at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The New Mexico Legislature established NM WRRI in 1963, and it was approved under the 1964 federal Water Resources Research Act. NM WRRI's mission is to develop and disseminate knowledge that will assist the state and nation in solving water problems. NM WRRI funds research and demonstration projects conducted by researchers, faculty, and students from universities across the state to address water issues critical to New Mexico and the region.

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Download and Preview Application Documents from NM WRRI AgWRP website :

- **Application Preview**
- **Itemized Budget Template**
- **Monitoring and Water Impact Assessment Agreement**

SECTION 1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1.1. Program Purpose: The NM WRRI Agricultural Water Resilience Program (AgWRP) implements in part Action A2 of the New Mexico 50-Year Water Action Plan to incentivize agricultural water conservation. The goal of this action is to maintain the resilience of New Mexico agriculture and provide food security in a future with less available water. To achieve this goal, NM WRRI will implement projects that improve farmers' and ranchers' ability to manage, save, and efficiently apply limited water resources for agricultural production.

This funding opportunity is posted on the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute website at https://nmwrri.nmsu.edu/nmwrri-agwrp/funding-opportunities.html. The AgWRP website includes the link to the application submission portal at https://nmwrri.grantplatform.com/, a downloadable itemized budget Excel file, and the Monitoring and Water Impact Assessment Agreement. Any updates to the Request for Applications (RFA), questions, answers, and addenda will also be included on the website. For more information about the program, refer to the website above.

1.2. Funding: Funding for selected projects is provided through New Mexico State Fiscal Year 2027 Special Appropriations. The total funding for projects in this RFA is $9 million, with a maximum award of $300,000 per project. Unless the project already has water monitoring equipment installed, projects are recommended to include a budget of 5-15 percent of the total

amount requested for water monitoring equipment (impact monitoring equipment, setup/installation, etc.) for monitoring and water impact assessment data and reporting (see Section 3). Applicants may contact NM WRRI for additional guidance on the materials needed for water-impact monitoring. Awarded projects will be selected through a competitive grant process for eligible New Mexico entities. Eligible applicants are not required to contribute to the project costs; however, a 25 percent non-state or non-federal match, as cash or in-kind match, is desirable.

1.3. Project Duration: The expenditure phase requires that all project funds be expended from September 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. The research phase includes the initial phase, plus an additional year for water impact assessment data collection and monitoring led by NM WRRI.

1.4. Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants, partnered with ranchers and farmers, are New Mexico-recognized public entities, including:

- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Irrigation and Conservancy Districts
- Watershed Districts
- Acequia and Community Ditch Associations
- Tribal Governments
- Local Governments
- and other recognized public entities

New Mexico ranchers and farmers must coordinate with an eligible applicant to develop grant proposals that involve and/or support their land, livestock, and associated operations.

1.5. Funded Activities Scope: Project applications should include new approaches, technological tools, or infrastructural improvements related to agricultural water conservation. Activities should improve infrastructure reliability, operational flexibility, use-efficiency, conservation, or resilience of water resources without increasing depletions. Eligible applicants are encouraged to propose innovative projects that fit the purpose of the program and address regional agricultural needs related to water. For more detailed examples and additional information, refer to Appendix A.

Projects must support New Mexico food security and the long-term continuation of New Mexico agricultural production. Projects must address one or more of the following regionally appropriate water resilience objectives:

- Increase water efficiency to optimize the use of diminished water supplies.
- Improve reliability of water supply or infrastructure.
- Conserve water to decrease basin depletions and support long-term water sustainability.

- Improve groundwater sustainability.
- Implement new approaches and technologies to improve irrigation and stockwater timing and management.
- Support voluntary adoption of drought-tolerant, lower water-use crops.
- Create operational flexibilities that adapt to changing climate and drought.

1.6. Application Evaluation Criteria: Evaluation Factors	Points Available
1. Includes a partnership between a rancher or farmer and a public entity/eligible applicant for funding distribution, project coordination, and reporting.	10
2. Clearly demonstrates the ability to manage, save, and efficiently apply limited water resources for agricultural production, supporting water conservation, resilience, and food security.	10
3. Clearly identifies the problem that is being addressed with the project approach to improve water conservation, efficiency, or resilience.	10
4. Clearly presented goals and objectives with specific descriptions of the project activities, outlined methods, and defined technical approach to produce deliverables that fulfill the project's objectives and expected results.	10
5. Clearly demonstrates potential for broader community impact and community engagement. Community engagement activities may include hosting a site visit, participating in a field day, training or workshops, and contributing to New Mexico Water eNews for sharing experiences, success stories, photos, and videos with other community members.	10
6. Clearly demonstrates capacity, including subcontractors if needed, to design, specify, install, and operate the project, including specialized technical or engineering expertise where required. Applicants also demonstrate that all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained or will be obtained within the project timeline.	10
7. Clearly demonstrated project schedule and project fits within timeframe of budgeted appropriation (all project funds must be expended by June 30, 2027).	10
8. Water savings and/or water resilience impact clearly stated with an estimate of anticipated benefits. Clearly describes how water savings, withdrawals, or water use will be measured and reported to NM WRRI, including the use of appropriate equipment. Where available, proposals may provide information, data, or reasonable estimates of past water use or withdrawals or demonstrate the capacity to provide such information to support impact assessment and evaluation.	10
9. Details a reasonable budget that is aligned with the project scope and reflects good use of public resources.	10
10. Includes signed Monitoring and Water Impact Assessment Agreement between the eligible applicant, the partner, and NM WRRI that shows the applicant agrees to interact with the NM WRRI water impact analysis and scientific assessment coordination efforts (https://nmwrri.nmsu.edu/nmwrri-agwrp/documents-nmwrri-agwrp/fy-2027/MonitoringandWaterImpactAssessmentAgreement_NMWRRI_AgWRP.pdf).	10
Total Points Available	**100**

1.7. Review Panel: The NM WRRI AgWRP Review Panel is comprised of highly qualified water experts, topic area experts, and members of the NM WRRI Program Development and Review Board (PDRB) that includes representation of major universities and water-involved agencies in New Mexico. The AgWRP Review Panel will review proposals and make funding recommendations to the NM WRRI Director. Proposals should be written for those with general knowledge of agriculture and water.

1.8. Application Timeline:

- Tuesday, May 5, 2026 – Application portal opens.
- Wednesday, May 20, 2026, 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm MDT – Informational Webinar with Q&A.
- Monday, June 29, 2026, by 5:00 pm MDT – Applications must be submitted via https://nmwrri.grantplatform.com/
- Friday, August 14, 2026 – Applicants will be notified regarding the status of their application.
- Tuesday, September 1, 2026 – Fully executed projects begin.

1.9. Reporting: Eligible applicants are accountable for carrying out the activities described in the funded project and are required to document the outputs of those activities. Accepted projects are required to complete progress reports and a final report. NM WRRI will provide templates with all required components and details to streamline reporting. Progress reports will include a brief status update for each task with a straightforward description of project activities. The progress reports will also provide the opportunity to discuss any changes to the schedule, personnel, proposed tasks, or spending plan. The final report will include a final status report for each task, a summary of monitoring data and results, project photos, including before-and-after photos, a discussion of lessons learned, and any recommendations to NM WRRI for future projects.

1.10. Application Questions: NM WRRI will hold an informational webinar with Q&A on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, from 3:00 – 4:30 pm MDT.

Eligible applicants who have additional questions regarding this RFA may email questions to NM WRRI AgWRP (agwrp@nmsu.edu), subject line: "FY27 AgWRP Application Questions." For broader access through inclusion in the frequently asked questions posted on the project website, question submittals are requested by 5:00 pm MDT, Monday, May 18, 2026.

Answers to frequently asked questions will be posted on the NM WRRI AgWRP website at https://nmwrri.nmsu.edu/nmwrri-agwrp/funding-opportunities.html by 5:00 pm MDT on Wednesday, June 3, 2026. It is the responsibility of all eligible applicants to check the website for the most recent updates, including addenda.

SECTION 2. APPLICATION

2.1. Application Requirements (nmwrri.grantplatform.com)

B.1. Eligible Applicant Information: Include eligible entity category, name, mailing address, county, phone number, and email.

C.1. Rancher or Farmer Partner Information: Include last name, first name, mailing address, county, phone number, and email. Include the information for all partners.

D. Project Information:

D.1. Project GPS Location: Latitude and Longitude. If the latitude and longitude are in degrees, minutes, and seconds, then please use your browser to convert to decimal latitude and longitude.

D.2. Project Acreage: Enter the total project area in acres.

D.3. Number of farms and ranches that the project serves.

D.4. Project Site Location and Detailed Address (maximum 100 words): Provide detailed information about the project location, including the address and clear directions for accessing the property. Include any relevant landmarks, entry points, or special access instructions that would help identify and reach the site.

D.5. Project Background and Significance (maximum 400 words): Provide a brief background of the project and explain its importance, including the problem being addressed and its significance to water resources management and water conservation at the community, regional, or state level.

D.6. Project Description (maximum 400 words): Describe overall project (including key activities, anticipated outcomes, etc.).

D.7. Project Goals and Objectives (maximum 400 words): Please provide your project goals and objectives in bullet points. Include clear, specific, and measurable objectives where possible.

D.8. Implementation Plan (maximum 500 words): Please describe the methods that will be used to implement the project. Focus on how the work will be carried out and demonstrate the capacity to complete the project.

D.9. Does the project and its implementation stages include community engagement activities (site visits, field days, workshops, trainings, etc.)?

D.9.1. If yes, describe the Community Engagement Activities (maximum 300 words).

D.10. Project Schedule and Milestones Summary: Activities or tasks may span multiple months. Briefly describe in a few words.

D.11. Does the project require any permits or approvals?

D.11.1. If yes, explain needed permits or approvals and why they may be required (maximum 200 words).

D.11.2. If yes, are all required permits/approvals expected to be obtained within the project timeline?

D.12. Projected Amount of Water Saved (Include Units): For unit example: Gallons, Acre-Foot, etc.

D.13. Water Savings Estimation or Calculation Method Description (maximum 400 words): Explain how you calculated the projected amount of water saved, including any previous estimates or information, if available.

D.14. What method and which equipment will you use to measure the water savings impact (maximum 400 words)? Please describe how you will use the equipment already installed or how you will use 5-15 percent of the total budget requested for water monitoring equipment (impact monitoring equipment, setup/installation, subscriptions, etc.) for water impact assessment data and reporting.

D.14.1. If yes, is any equipment already installed at the project site?

D.15. Number of watersheds impacted by the project.

D.16. Overall Anticipated Outcomes and Impacts (maximum 400 words): Describe the overall expected outcomes and results of the project, including measurable results and potential impacts on water resources and conservation.

D.17. Cited References: (optional)

E. Budget:

E.1. Budget Summary: Complete the budget table provided in the application. Enter the subtotals for each budget category AgWRP and Match. Add together these two numbers and enter them in the Subtotal column. The totals at the bottom will sum automatically.

Download the Itemized Budget Excel Spreadsheet from https://nmwrri.nmsu.edu/nmwrri-agwrp/funding-opportunities.html to create the project budget. Refer to the Itemized Budget Excel Spreadsheet for examples of cost types and the level of detail to be included in your budget. Ensure that your budget totals correctly, and all budgeted costs are justified. Costs must be solely related to the project proposed, justified, and allowable as described in “Eligible Reimbursement Items” below. Awarded recipients will be reimbursed for costs incurred upon submittal of detailed invoices, proof of payment, and other supporting documentation (e.g., subcontractor invoices, timesheets, receipts, etc.). Payments will be made to the

awarded recipient after NM WRRI receives a complete invoice package and reviews the completed work. Payment may be withheld for failure to complete timely project reports or other project deliverables stated in the awarded grant document. Final project invoice payments will be withheld until the project's Final Report is accepted by NM WRRI.

E.1.1. Eligible Reimbursement Items: Items eligible for reimbursement under the NM WRRI AgWRP include, but are not limited to:

- Direct administrative costs up to 10 percent, exclusively within the context of the project, as approved in the project work plan, are allowable under this award; indirect (F&A) costs are not permitted.
- Itemized hourly wages for work on the project, supplies that are permanently affixed to the project or expended in their entirety during the project term, equipment rental, travel, and subcontractor services as approved in the project work plan.
- Implementation of on-the-ground measures to improve New Mexico agriculture and provide food security in a future with less available water, as approved in the project work plan, including but not limited to installing efficient irrigation systems, drip irrigation systems, farm water tanks, monitoring technology for soil management, fencing, etc. Contractor and subcontractor rates must be disclosed and reflect current fair market rates.
- Gross receipts tax.

E.1.2. Ineligible Reimbursement Items: The following items are not eligible for reimbursement under an awarded NM WRRI AgWRP grant:

- Ongoing maintenance and monitoring beyond the contract period.
- Funding for projects required under administrative and/or judicial order.
- Costs, including personnel costs, of securing additional sources of project funds.
- Indirect costs, as well as unallowable costs such as penalty fees or damages (other than pay for work performed), attorney fees, administrative fees, and credit card fees (e.g., processing fees, late fees), are ineligible for reimbursement in accordance with 2.61.6.8 NMAC.
- Lobbying.
- The purchase of ranch and farm machinery (e.g., squeeze chutes, tractors, mowers, excavators, plows, bale wagons, trailers, etc.) is not permitted unless applicants provide clear justification demonstrating a direct and measurable contribution to AgWRP objectives.

E.2. Capital Equipment (Anything greater than $5,000): The purchase of ranch and farm machinery (e.g., squeeze chutes, tractors, mowers, excavators, plows, bale wagons,

trailers, etc.) is not permitted unless the applicants provide clear justification demonstrating a direct and measurable contribution to AgWRP objectives.

E.3. Upload Itemized Budget Excel Spreadsheet.

F. Attachments:

F.1. Monitoring and Water Impact Assessment Agreement: Include a signed Monitoring and Water Impact Assessment Agreement for each project partner.

F.2. Project Map (recommended): Upload a map of the project area. Maps may be computer-generated or hand-drawn.

F.3. Letters of Support (optional): Include letters of support from key project participants and supporters, such as contractors, landowners, public lands managers, watershed groups, user groups, and other agency partners as attachments to your application. Letters of support must state the role or contribution in the project for that specific partner or individual, where applicable, and must be unique (i.e., no form letters).

F.4. Other Supplemental Materials (optional): Combined all materials such as photos, reference documents, etc., in one PDF file.

G. Additional Questions:

G.1. Project Activity Category.

G.2. Technology/Technique/System Category.

2.2. Application Submission: All applications must be submitted through the application portal at https://nmwrri.grantplatform.com/ by 5:00 pm MDT on Monday, June 29, 2026.

For questions about this RFA, please contact NM WRRI AgWRP at agwrp@nmsu.edu.

SECTION 3. DATA AND REPORTING FOR MONITORING AND WATER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This section presents the general data collection and reporting framework; however, specific requirements may be adjusted or refined depending on project characteristics and program needs.

- Awarded applicants will participate in standardized data collection, telemetry, and reporting framework coordinated by the NM WRRI under AgWRP. This framework ensures consistent, high-quality data acquisition to evaluate water savings, system performance, and water resilience outcomes.
- Data collected will include hydrological, meteorological, water quality, operational, agricultural, and geospatial data, as well as historical data (if available). Data will be provided by awarded applicants through periodic reporting using a standardized

template. Applicants will be able to update and submit new data during each reporting cycle.

- Water withdrawal is one of the important measurements for the AgWRP project, representing the total volume of water extracted from sources such as wells, rivers, or storage systems. It can be measured using flow meters, pump discharge estimates, or tank level monitoring systems (Ranchbot, Gallagher, etc.). Collecting this data from awarded applicants is essential for accurately assessing water use, evaluating project impact, and improving water management efficiency.
- All collected data will be used to quantify water savings, evaluate system performance, and assess contributions to agricultural water resilience. Results may be incorporated into reports, decision-support tools, and peer-reviewed scientific publications.
- Additional details on data categories and examples are provided in Appendix B. The listed data types are illustrative and not exhaustive; additional data may be requested as needed. Data requirements may vary by project, and certain data types will be collected only where applicable and when available.

Appendix A: Activities Suitable for Funding

Eligible funding examples for ranchers and farmers: Below is a list of potential ideas, approaches, systems, methods, techniques, and technologies for ranchers and farmers to consider; other ideas may also be eligible for consideration and support. Categories and examples of funded activities include:

Improving Stockwater Management

- Upgrading and installing modern drinking water systems such as closed-top, covered, insulated, or shaded water tanks to reduce evaporation.
- Using shade balls in livestock drinking ponds, stock tanks, troughs, and storage tanks to reduce evaporation losses.
- Implementing and installing water storage monitoring systems (e.g., Ranchbot and Gallagher) to track water levels and improve water management.
- Sediment removal systems and filtration systems.
- Installing or upgrading windmills and solar-powered pumps for livestock drinking water.

Improving Ranch Management

- Implementation and installation of virtual fencing (VF) systems to improve livestock distribution and grazing management.
- Installing automated stock tank systems for efficient livestock water management.
- Using smart irrigation systems in ranches to improve pasture productivity.
- Supporting the cultivation of drought-resistant and low-water consumption cover, hay, and forage crops and species.
- Implementation of brush control practices to reduce invasive woody vegetation, improve rangeland health, and enhance water availability and soil moisture retention.
- Installing barriers to protect riparian areas from overgrazing and prevent uncontrolled livestock access.
- Reducing invasive vegetation (such as salt cedar, Russian olive, and Siberian elm) to reduce water consumption and increase availability for other uses.
- Enhancing ranch soil quality using organic and natural fertilizers/amendments to enhance forage growth, soil health, improve water retention, and increase water use efficiency.
- Improving rangeland ecosystem resilience by implementing practices such as rotational grazing. Improving ranches and pastures with drought-tolerant and nutrient-rich, hay, and cover crops for healthier livestock.

Monitoring and Surveillance Technology

- Using drones to monitor ranches and livestock and detect potential issues.
- Installing smart sensors to track animal movement and analyze behavior to help identify overused water sources, detect early signs of water stress, and improve water and grazing management.
- Installation of on-site weather stations to monitor key climatic variables.

Integrating Agriculture, Livestock, and Wildlife

- Wildlife-Supportive Water Management Technologies and Eco-Friendly Systems, including guzzlers and wildlife drinkers with shade balls to reduce evaporation and improve water quality.
- Installing and using processing units to convert agricultural crop waste into low water-use livestock feed.

Livestock Infrastructure

- Development, rehabilitation, or maintenance of wells for livestock purposes.
- Establishing, installing and upgrading shade structures to protect livestock from harsh weather and reduce their water consumption.
- Establishing and installing manure collection systems for conversion to fertilizer, compost, and biogas production to mitigate water quality impacts.

Improving Water Use Efficiency in Irrigation

- Converting or upgrading irrigation systems to smart drip, subsurface, bubbler, sprinkler, or other irrigation technologies to the latest, more efficient models.
- Lining channels, rehabilitating, and upgrading open channels and canals, and installing modern pipes and connectors to improve water conveyance efficiency and prevent leakage.
- Installing covers or shade balls over open irrigation channels or water tanks to reduce evaporation.
- Using suction pumps to remove sediment and modernize filtration systems for irrigation water.
- Adopting soil moisture conservation farming techniques, such as plastic mulching or organic mulching.

Agricultural Water Management Improvement

- Installing sensors, well meters, water gauges, and soil moisture probes.
- Installing automated irrigation gates and upgrading pipes in open irrigation channels and canals to improve water distribution efficiency.
- Installation of on-site weather stations to monitor key climatic variables.

Reducing Dependence on Irrigated Water Supplies

- Adopting and cultivating drought-resistant and low water use crop varieties.
- Providing support and incentives for crop conversion, encouraging farmers to replace high water consumption crops with low water consumption alternatives.

Extending Local Water Supplies and Water Quality Improvement Systems

- Development, rehabilitation, or maintenance of wells for irrigation purposes.
- Infrastructure for rainwater harvesting, capturing, and diversion, including tanks or artificial lakes and ponds for collecting and storing rainwater.

- Using non-conventional water sources such as brackish groundwater and cost-effective small-scale water treatment and desalination systems such as reverse osmosis (RO) and de-ionization systems.
- Using magnetic treatment systems to improve water and nutrient absorption by crops.
- Using solar-powered water treatment systems and desalination for protected agriculture (e.g., greenhouses).
- Infrastructure for agricultural drainage water collection, including drainage channels, water basins, drain pipes, trenches, and artificial lakes.
- Reducing invasive vegetation (such as salt cedar, russian olive, and siberian elm) to reduce water consumption and increase availability for other uses.

Improving Soil Health and Water Retention

- Using fertigation systems (i.e., smart fertilizer injection and mixing with irrigation) to improve the efficiency of water and fertilizer use.
- Improving soil health using organic fertilizers/amendments and green manure to increase water retention capacity.
- Applying bio-stimulants to enhance soil health, promote microbial activity, stimulate nutrient absorption, and enhance water-holding capacity.

Protected Agriculture Technologies and Upgrades

- Upgrading cooling and ventilation systems in greenhouses to improve water and energy efficiency.
- Installing smart drip irrigation systems in greenhouses to reduce water loss and waste.
- Using renewable energy systems (solar energy) for water pumping, cooling, and lighting in greenhouses.
- Supporting soilless farming systems such as aquaponics and aeroponics to reduce water consumption.
- Using and installing nanofiltration (NF) and ultrafiltration (UF) systems for irrigation water filtration.
- Solar-powered water treatment systems and desalination for protected agriculture systems.

Modern Technologies to Support Farming and Irrigation

- Installing agricultural weather stations to track local climate and improve irrigation scheduling.
- Installing thermal cameras to detect leaks, blockages, and other irrigation problems.
- Using smart irrigation controllers for optimized water use.
- Using multi-depth moisture sensors for more effective irrigation scheduling.
- Using drones for irrigation process monitoring, pest and disease monitoring, crop spraying, and fertilization.

Additional Water and Irrigation Technologies to Support Food and Agricultural Production

- Upgrading pumps, sprinklers, center pivots, emitters, drippers, wheel lines, laterals, and irrigation networks to the latest, more efficient models and versions.

Appendix B: Table of Monitoring Data Categories and Key Variables

The following table presents example data types and variables used to evaluate project performance and measure impact. Data requirements may be adjusted based on project-specific conditions and program needs.

Data Type	Examples / Variables
Hydrological Data	Current Water withdrawal, water level (tanks/troughs), flow rate, water use, evaporation rates, soil moisture sensors
Water Quality Data	Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) and pH, and others
Meteorological Data	Air temperature, relative humidity, solar radiation, wind speed, precipitation
Operational Data	Livestock water consumption, irrigation timing and volume, system performance, irrigation type, flumes, weirs
Agricultural Data	Crop types, Cattle breeds, number of livestock
Geospatial Data	GPS coordinates, site boundaries
Imagery Data	Site photos (before/after), periodic monitoring images, GIS maps, remote sensing (if available)
Site Data	Area, Water source type (groundwater, surface water, hauled water), infrastructure description and type.
Connectivity Data	Connectivity conditions (e.g., good, limited, or no connectivity), telemetry type (cellular, satellite)
Historical Data	Water withdrawal records, previous water consumption, baseline conditions, if available.