

Report to New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Districts
New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Programs and Resources Division
<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/apr/soil-and-water-districts.html>
July 2025

OMA Notification Requirements

Remember that if you have to hold a district board meeting at a date, time or location that deviates from the information you advertised in your Open Meetings Act resolution, you must advertise it accordingly. Here are the guidelines:

Regular Meeting – 10 Days Prior

Special Meeting – 3 Days Prior

Emergency Meeting – 24 Hours Prior

June 1	Budget and budget resolution for the coming fiscal year due to DFA-LGD by June 1st, (cc: SWCC and SWCC Region Commissioner). Option: submit preliminary budget by June 1st; final budget with budget resolution by July 31st.
July 15	Point System Worksheet due to SWCC and NMDA Specialist
July 15	Deadline for providing information to the county tax assessor(s) on mill levies: -Mil levy rate resolution; -List of landowners and legal description of lands subject to mil levy.
July 30	4th quarter budget report due to DFA-LGD for the past fiscal year (cc: SWCC region commissioner and NMDA)
*July 30	Independent Public Accountant (IPA) Recommendation Form and the Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) contract must be signed and submitted to the State Auditor. This applies to Tiers 3-7.
September 1st	Annual report of activities and annual plan for the past fiscal year due to SWCC, SWCC region commissioner, and NMDA Specialist.

**Corrected Date from Previous Reports*

1. Point System Worksheet

Point System Worksheets are due July 15th, along with **all** required reporting to DFA, OSA and SWCC.

If you have any questions, please contact your SWCD specialist.

The Point System Worksheet can be found at <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/apr/saw/references-and-resources-for-swcd.html>

2. NMDA's District Opportunities grant awardees

All SWCD/WD applicants have been informed whether or not they were awarded funding. The ones that weren't selected for funding received feedback from the reviewers to help improve their application(s) for next year.

The following projects were approved for funding by NMDA.

- Hidalgo SWCD; Updating of Hidalgo SWCD Land Use Plan; \$24,750.00
- SW Quay SWCD; SW Quay SWCD Educational Coloring Books; \$2,117.50
- Guadalupe SWCD; Utilizing Drone Technology to Manage Mesquite Infestation; \$81,125.00
- Taos SWCD; Taos SWCD Forest Health Program; \$112,125.00
- Caballo SWCD; Children's Educational Activities Workbooks; \$5,372.54
- Hagerman-Dexter SWCD; Hagerman Canal Restoration; \$250,000
- McKinley SWCD; The McKinley Soil and Water Conservation District Resource Series; \$9,182.25
- Mesa & Ute Creek SWCDs; Mesa and Ute Creek SWCD Groundwater Monitoring Workshop; \$2,971.10
- Santa Fe-Pojoaque SWCD; Restoration of Eroding OHV Trails on Three Flood Control Dams' Embankments in Rio Arriba Co., NM; \$128,593.87
- Sierra SWCD; Gila Forest Fire Fuels Reduction and Safety Initiative; \$217,402.19
- Roosevelt SWCD; All about Ag Phase 2; \$7,405.00
- McKinley SWCD; The McKinley Soil and Water Conservation District Program Enhancement Project; \$19,200
- Guadalupe SWCD; Pintada Arroyo Sedimentation Mitigation Project Continuation; \$219,010.00
- Ciudad SWCD; Advancing the Residential Rainwater Harvesting Installation Program; \$14,236.20
- Chaves SWCD; Chaves SWCD Juniper Mitigation and Irrigation Restoration Initiative; \$249,999.80
- Border SWCD; Education: Pay it Forward; \$11,220.00
- Coronado SWCD; Sustainable Land Management Workshop Series; \$15,000

3. NMDA's Healthy Soil Program: Grant-funded projects begin July 15 with soil testing and assessment

NMDA received nearly 100 grant applications for Fiscal Year 2026 funding consideration, marking the largest applicant pool since program inception in 2019. Fifty-eight projects were selected for funding: 14 Eligible Entity-led projects and 44 Individual Applicant-led projects.

The period to implement an FY26 Healthy Soil Program grant-funded project is July 15, 2025 to September 30, 2026. As always, projects begin with both soil *testing* (lab-based chemical analysis of the soil) and soil *assessment* (in-field physical analysis of the soil). This is true for both Individual Applicant grantees working with a Project Sponsor (SWCD or tribal government) and for Eligible Entity grantees.

New this year: ***All projects must be invoiced for reimbursement at least quarterly.*** That requirement will help all parties involved with the grant keep pace with their paperwork during the nearly 15-month grant term.

Information pertaining to the Fiscal Year 2026 cycle remains on the Healthy Soil Program website so that those interested in applying for a Fiscal Year 2027 grant can get a sense of the application requirements. NMDA will update the website with Fiscal Year 2027 requirements in late summer or early fall. That timeframe allows Individual Applicants several *months* to complete conservation planning with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), even before NMDA launches its next online grant application in early 2026.

4. Agricultural Workforce Development Program opened June 16

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) Agricultural Workforce Development (AWD) Program grant application period opens June 16, 2025, and will continue until funds are fully allocated or by March 31, 2025, whichever comes first. Internships can begin after July 1, 2025, and must be completed by May 30, 2026.

NMDA's AWD Program offers incentives to the state's agricultural businesses to hire interns. The AWD Program is intended to provide hands-on educational opportunities for students aspiring to careers in agriculture, as well as young or beginning farmers and ranchers.

NMDA will reimburse qualified agricultural businesses up to 50 percent of the actual cost of hiring a qualified intern, not to exceed \$15,000 per internship. An agricultural business may request funding to hire as many as three interns per calendar year. Each intern must be provided with **at least one hundred thirty (130) hours** of work experience, not exceeding one (1) year in duration per intern.

Agricultural business operators, please read the [Agricultural Workforce Development FAQs](https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/agricultural-workforce-development-faqs.html) carefully before submitting an application at:
<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/agricultural-workforce-development-faqs.html>

Please note:

- NMDA will *not* match agricultural businesses with potential interns.
- Agricultural businesses must identify an intern prior to applying for funding.
- Interns must be 18 years or older by the start of the internship.
- Immediate family members of the agricultural business are NOT eligible to participate.
- Participating agricultural businesses must pay minimum wage (or higher) to each intern, as well as carry workers' compensation insurance for each intern.

For more information, please visit: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/agricultural-workforce-development.html>

5. 2025 SWCD Supervisor Elections

NMDA strongly encourages all SWCDs to schedule meetings with all county clerks whose counties are within SWCD boundaries, not just the counties where the majority of the district land lies. Each county clerk may run elections differently. Therefore, you are responsible for contacting them soon to see what they need from your district and when it's needed. The NMDA election timeline, which clearly states what is due and when, is no longer valid for SWCD elections. County clerks are in charge and will be the ones to set due dates and how to comply with the new Local Election Act.

The sooner you make contact with each county clerk within your district boundaries, the sooner you will be on the right track to the 2025 elections. Neither NMDA nor the SWCC has any input if a deadline or document is not correctly fulfilled. Each SWCD is solely responsible for its 2025 election in accordance with the Local Election Act.

The items below might be of interest to SWCDs. These items were retrieved from various sources outside of NMDA.

6. NMACD Training

Retrieved June 26 from NMACD by NMDA

You still have a few chances left to get training on CAPITAL OUTLAY and LGBMS (Local Government Budget Management System) through Department of Finance (DFA)!

We do not know when these will be offered again, so please sign up! They are free and include lunch! Registration links are on the flyers for the trainings.

Gallup- July 12
Roswell - July 23
Taos - July 26

Encourage some Supervisors to attend as well- especially the Capital Outlay portion.

Please feel free to reach out to your NMDA District Specialist or NMACD Training Specialist Jennifer Hopper with questions you have.

Also, we are working on including training for both SWCD staff and Supervisors at the NMACD Annual Meeting. That will be held October 19-22 in Albuquerque. Please start planning to attend so you can benefit from the training you have requested!

7. NM WRRRI Agricultural Water Resilience Program

Retrieved June 16 from WRRRI by NMDA

The NM WRRRI Agricultural Water Resilience Program funds projects to incentivize agricultural water conservation and resilience. The program is administered by the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (NM WRRRI) at New Mexico State University.

The New Mexico Legislature appropriated Fiscal Year 2026 funds for the program. \$4.5 million will be made available for individual projects, and the maximum award for each project is \$250,000. Project funds must be expended from September 15, 2025, through June 30, 2026. Applications are due July 28, 2025.

Eligible applicants include Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Irrigation and Conservancy Districts, Acequia and Community Ditch Associations, Watershed Districts, local governments, and tribal governments. Eligible applicants will partner with ranchers and farmers to develop and propose projects that improve the ability to manage, conserve, and efficiently apply limited water resources for agricultural production.

The informational webinar will be July 1, 2025, 3:00 - 4:30 PM MDT. [Click here to join the webinar.](https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/86248250545) (<https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/86248250545>)

To download the [Request for Applications, please click here.](https://nmwrrri.nmsu.edu/nmwrrri-agwrp/documents-nmwrrri-agwrp/RequestForApplications_NMWRRI_AgWRP.pdf) (https://nmwrrri.nmsu.edu/nmwrrri-agwrp/documents-nmwrrri-agwrp/RequestForApplications_NMWRRI_AgWRP.pdf)

8. August 1: Nominations due for FSA county committees

Published by USDA-Farm Service Agency at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-events/news/06-16-2025/nominations-now-open-farmers-ranchers-serve-usda-farm-service-agency> on 16 June 2025; retrieved and excerpted by NMDA

Nominations are now being accepted for farmers and ranchers to serve on local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees. These committees make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2025 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2025.

Elections for committee members will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA). LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction and may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

Producers interested in serving on the FSA county committee can locate their LAA through a geographic information system locator tool available at fsa.usda.gov/elections and determine if their LAA is up for election by contacting their local FSA office.

Agricultural producers may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee if they:

- Participate or cooperate in a USDA program.
- Reside in the LAA that is up for election this year.

A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages all eligible producers to nominate, vote and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agriculture community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Committee members play a key role in how FSA delivers disaster recovery, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as making decisions on county office employment and other agricultural issues.

9. Public Notice: NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau opens comment period for Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Permit #SPA-2025-00149-ABQ.

The certification request is from the United States Bureau of Reclamation for the River Mile 199 River Maintenance Project located on the Rio Grande River in Sandoval County, New Mexico. The project's primary purpose is to protect the riverside levee system at three locations where river meander bends are currently threatening the levee. The project has a secondary purpose of rehabilitating the river planform and enhancing aquatic and riparian habitat.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issues CWA Section 404 permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material. The purpose of CWA Section 401 is to ensure the discharge will comply with state water quality standards. NMED has authority under CWA Section 401 to certify, certify with conditions, or deny certification of the permit. Procedures for certification of Section 404 permits are found at 20.6.2.2002 New Mexico Administrative Code.

The 30-day comment period on this certification request will open June 16, 2025, and will close July 16, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. MDT. This public notice and associated information are posted at: <https://www.env.nm.gov/public-notices>. Formal comments for inclusion in the public record must be submitted in writing via the NMED Public Comment Portal at: <https://nmed.commentinput.com/comment/search>, or alternately in writing to:

Program Manager Watershed Protection Section Surface Water Quality Bureau New Mexico Environment Department

PO Box 5469 Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469 Email (preferred):
wpsprogram.manager@env.nm.gov

10. USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

After spring planting is complete, agricultural producers should make an appointment with their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office to complete crop acreage reports before the applicable deadline. July 15 is a major deadline for most crops, but acreage reporting deadlines vary by county and by crop.

“To ensure receipt of important safety net, disaster assistance, conservation and crop insurance program benefits, producers should file an accurate crop acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage before the deadline,” said FSA Administrator Bill Beam. “Once planting is complete, call your local FSA office to make an appointment to report your acres and take care of other FSA-related business during your appointment.”

For more information visit: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-events/news/06-06-2025/usda-reminds-producers-file-crop-acreage-reports?utm_campaign=2025AcreageReportReminder&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

11. NACD: Outreach tools available to help SWCDs

Published June 3, 2025; retrieved by NMDA from <https://tinyurl.com/2nn98mbs>

Are you ready to step up your outreach game? Having specialized software to create social media posts, handouts, and custom designs is a great place to start. This guide will aid you in navigating the most popular options and help you decide which one is the best fit.

Best of all, the NACD Outreach Subcommittee designed a brochure template that works with all three of these programs! These templates are fully customizable and allow you to easily drop in your own district logo and photos. You can follow [this link](#) and click on the instructions document for more information on how to use this framework.

Additionally, the NACD Stewardship and Education team has created additional [Canva templates and education materials](#) that are free for all districts to download and utilize.

Canva

Canva is quickly becoming one of the most popular publishing programs available because of its ease of use, web-based platform, and extensive library of templates. If you don't have significant experience with Adobe or Microsoft design products and are looking for an easy way to get started this may be the best choice for you.

Adobe InDesign

Adobe is the biggest name in graphic design and makes the most powerful tools for creating digital and print media. InDesign is more complex and is best suited for someone that has previous experience with Adobe products or time to learn how to use it.

Microsoft Publisher

Microsoft Publisher may be the name you are most familiar with on this list. Microsoft has plans to retire the current design tool in 2026, so support and new updates will be limited in the future. However, if you have a long history with Microsoft, you may feel most comfortable with this program, and it's likely already included in your district's Microsoft Office subscription.

If you're still unsure about which one of these publishing platforms is right for your district, then consider signing up for a free trial! All three of these options offer a free trial period between seven and thirty days, so you should have ample time to test the features and decide if it's worth the cost.

The membership team is always creating new resources to help districts with outreach, personnel management, and everything in between. Have any ideas for future resources that may be helpful? Reach out to us at membership@nacdnet.org, and we'd love to chat about what would help improve your district's conservation delivery system.

12. USDA to Provide \$1 Billion to Livestock Producers Impacted by Drought or Wildfire in 2023 and 2024

Retrieved May 29 from <https://tinyurl.com/5hytj3> by NMDA.

(Washington, D.C., May 29, 2025) – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins today announced the release of Congressionally mandated Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) payments to cover grazing losses due to eligible drought or wildfire events in 2023 and/or 2024. Secretary Rollins committed on May 7 to release these emergency payments by May 30, and today she is delivering on that commitment ahead of schedule.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is leveraging existing Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) data to streamline payment calculations and expedite relief. Emergency relief payments are automatically issued for producers who have an approved LFP application on file for 2023 and/or 2024, and do not have to contact USDA to receive payments.

“The Department of Agriculture is stepping up to support livestock producers by expediting disaster payments when drought and wildfires strike. Under President Trump's leadership, USDA has the backs of ranchers, and that's why we are delivering much-needed emergency relief ahead of schedule,” **said Secretary Rollins.**

The *American Relief Act, 2025*, provided funds for emergency relief payments. This program is the first of two programs authorized to assist with eligible losses suffered by livestock producers. FSA will announce additional ELRP assistance for other losses authorized by the Act, including flooding, later this summer. FSA expects demand for this first program to be great so the ELRP payments will be factored at 35%. If additional funds remain, FSA may issue a second payment.

Supplemental Disaster Assistance Timeline

USDA is fully committed to expediting remaining disaster assistance provided by the *American Relief Act, 2025*. On May 7, we launched our [2023/2024 Supplemental Disaster Assistance public landing page](#) where the status of USDA disaster assistance and block grant rollout timeline can be tracked. The page is updated regularly and accessible through fsa.usda.gov.

The Act also authorized \$10 billion in economic loss assistance to producers of covered commodities based on 2024 planted and prevented planted acres. To date, USDA has delivered more than \$7.7 billion to producers through the [Emergency Commodity Assistance Program \(ECAP\)](#). The ECAP deadline is Aug. 15, 2025.

13. Free webinar August 14: “Growing with Grants: Preparing to Win and Manage Federal Awards”

Published by the National Grants Management Association at <https://www.ngma.org/growing-with-grants>; excerpted by NMDA June 26, 2025

This complimentary presentation is for state/local/county government organizations seeking guidance on starting and growing a grants management team.

Growing with Grants: Preparing to Win and Manage Federal Awards
1 - 2:30 p.m. ET Thursday, August 14, 2025

Guidance on how to begin your government’s journey to receiving and managing federal grants, including:

- Developing a proposal strategy
- Understanding the grants lifecycle
- Creating a checklist for success
- Discussing the basics of compliance
- Exploring the use of internal staff versus consultants

Register: <https://ngma.memberclicks.net/growingwithgrantsaug2025>

Who Should Attend: Personnel in state/city/county governments in supervisory, support, accounting and compliance roles who would be involved in the management of their organization's federal grant awards.