



Water System Regionalization Assistance Program

The New Mexico Environment Department is partnering with state agencies, local governments, utilities, and technical assistance providers across the state to provide resources and expertise in supporting sustainable water and wastewater utility operations and to ensure New Mexicans have access to safe and reliable water.

Forms of Regionalization

Regionalization efforts take many forms from informal resource sharing to formal shared governance agreements to physical consolidation of water systems. NMED is exploring how different forms of regionalization will serve communities in New Mexico.

Informal Cooperation

Resource sharing such as equipment, bulk purchases, and staff.



Contractual Assistance

Formal agreements for shared operations and management.



Shared Governance

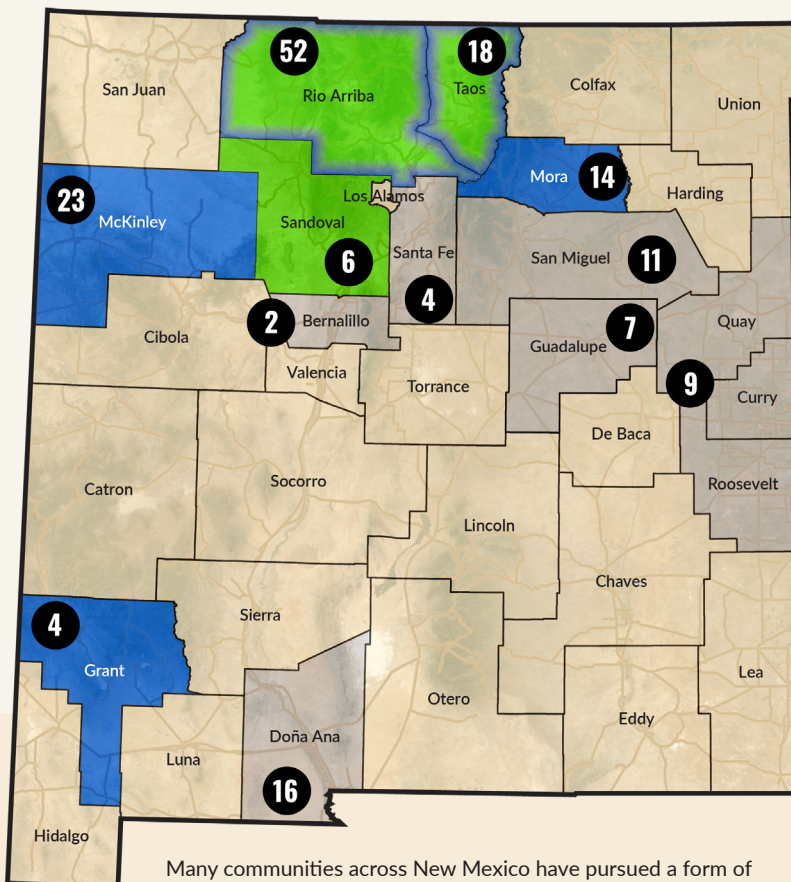
Creation of a regional water utility where individual systems can remain independent.



Ownership Transfer

One system transferring ownership to another system to form one entity which can include interconnections or physical consolidation.

Current and Future Regionalization Efforts



Many communities across New Mexico have pursued a form of regionalization or are currently collaborating on current or future regionalization efforts.

Benefits of Regionalization



Long-term cost savings

Collaborating systems can increase purchase power and decrease costs through joint purchasing.



Shared resources

Increasing the economy of scale can create efficiencies and cost savings.



Water quality and compliance

Consolidating resources and staff expertise can increase capacity to ensure water quality and compliance.



Sustainable water infrastructure

Through cost savings and consolidating resources, systems can make long-term investments.

Water Systems:

- Counties with Completed Projects
- Counties with Current and Future Projects
- Counties with Future Projects
- Counties with Current Projects
- Number of Community Partners

2024

Accomplishments to date

Awarded initial \$1 million special appropriation to kick start regionalization assistance efforts.

- Supported a pilot project in McKinley County through the NW New Mexico COG to provide technical assistance.
- Hired ERG, Inc. to assess statewide regionalization needs and to develop a recommendations report for a statewide technical assistance program to support regionalization.
- Held three Water Leadership Institute training workshops for 43 water systems.

2025

NMED requests \$2.75 million to:

- Develop a full service Water Systems Regionalization Assistance Program to support water systems that want to pursue a form of regionalization in navigating the process from start to finish.
- Implement a water system regionalization pilot project.
- Develop an updated and comprehensive utility operator training curriculum.
- ERG will deliver the final recommendations report for a statewide technical assistance program to support regionalization.

2026

Implement the new Water Systems Regionalization Assistance Program

- Develop and implement the new Water Systems Regionalization Assistance Program.
- Provide training opportunities for communities to build technical, managerial, and financial capacity.
- Fund direct, hands-on technical assistance to help communities in navigating through their specific form of regionalization process.

2027 & Beyond

- Sustain long-term state funding to continue building upon progress to date to ensure every New Mexican community has safe and reliable water utilities.



Investment Goals

NMED's goals align with the New Mexico 50-Year Water Action Plan and the New Mexico Integrated Water Financing Plan and include working through partnerships across the state to create a systemic approach to assessing water system needs that will foster long-term sustainability.



Working Together Through Partnerships



"Work in rural communities relies on effective partnering, and the commitment, dedication, and resilience of community members. Combine these essential ingredients with the dedicated work done by NMED, RCAC, and other entities across New Mexico, we have a real chance to make sustainable safe drinking water a reality for many New Mexicans."

Ramón Lucero, RCAC

