**Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant**

**Federal Fiscal Year 2025: Watershed Project Implementation**

**Request for Applications (RFA)**

**Amendment 1 (changes in red)**

**Amendment 2 (changes in green)**

NMED does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age or sex in the administration of its programs or activities, as required by applicable laws and regulations. NMED is responsible for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning non-discrimination requirements implemented by 40 C.F.R. Part 7, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972. If you have any questions about this notice or any of NMED’s non- discrimination programs, policies or procedures, you may contact:

Non-Discrimination Coordinator

New Mexico Environment Department

1190 St. Francis Dr., Suite N4050

P.O. Box 5469

Santa Fe, NM 87502

(505) 827-2855

nd.coordinator@env.nm.gov

If you believe that you have been discriminated against with respect to a NMED program or activity, you may contact the Non-Discrimination Coordinator identified above or visit our website at [www.env.nm.gov/non-employee-discrimination-complaint-page](http://www.env.nm.gov/non-employee-discrimination-complaint-page) to learn how and where to file a complaint of discrimination.

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# **1. Program Overview**

Nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water quality degradation in the United States and poses a substantial problem for the health of New Mexico’s streams, rivers, and lakes. To address this problem, funds are available under Section 319(h) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) through a competitive project selection process.

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) is now accepting applications for on-the-ground projects to produce measurable improvement in water quality by 2028 and in the longer term. Projects must implement portions of completed watershed-based plans (WBPs), wetlands action plans (WAPs), post-fire response plans, or Category 4B demonstrations, support monitoring in National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) watersheds designated by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), or a current EPA-approved Tribal Nonpoint Source Management Plan (NPSMP) as an eligible alternative to a 9-element WBP. Projects may implement more than one of these types of plans. Projects that implement WBPs or Category 4B demonstrations must address specific, impaired waters identified in the *2024-2026 State of New Mexico CWA §303(d)/§305(b) Integrated Report* available at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/303d-305b>. Projects that implement WAPs must address specific threats to wetlands or wetland restoration priorities identified in WAPs. Projects that implement post-fire response plans must address pollutants originating from a burned area in the watershed of one or more streams with a coldwater or coolwater aquatic life designated use and a fire severity outside the natural range of variability for the affected forest types. Projects that support monitoring efforts in NWQI watersheds are also eligible. More about the NWQI is available at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/national-water-quality-initiative>. Projects that implement a Tribal NPSMP must be consistent with these plans.

WBPs are listed at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wbp/> and WAPs are listed at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wap> and through the mapping interface at <https://gis.web.env.nm.gov/oem/?map=swqb>. New Mexico’s only Category 4B demonstration (for aluminum, copper, and mercury in Sandia Canyon) is available at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/303d-305b/>, under the heading “2024-2026 Supporting Documents and Websites.”

# **2. Funding**

Funding for selected projects will be provided through Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 grant funds. NMED anticipates that approximately $1,000,000 in Federal funds will be available to support projects identified through this application process, contingent upon Congressional appropriation.

Project terms of three years or less are preferred. Project terms are not expected to exceed four years.

**Match requirements**

Grantees are required to contribute **at least 10%** of the total project cost as a cash or in-kind match. The grant award may cover no more than 90% of the total project cost. For example, if the total project cost is $100,000, the maximum amount of grant funds the project could receive would be $90,000; the grantee must provide a match of at least $10,000.

Examples of acceptable match include hourly salaries of personnel paid from non-federal sources, a projection of the fair market value of time donated to project-related activities (e.g. writers, youth group volunteers, environmental organizations, etc.), fair market value for utilization of privately-owned equipment, etc.

***Note****: salaries and equipment derived from federal funds cannot be used to meet match requirements.*

# **3. Eligibility**

The following are entities are eligible to submit an application:

* Local Public Bodies – as defined by NMSA 13-1-67 and includes soil and water conservation districts, municipalities, political subdivisions of the state, tribal governments, post-secondary educational institutions etc.,
* Vendors of the Riparian, Aquatic, and Wetland Restoration Services Price Agreement (#40-00000-23-00037) or other applicable statewide price agreement,
* Vendors on any federal General Services Agreement (GSA) scheduled award with services applicable to this application, and
* Vendors on a National Association of State Purchasing Officials (NASPO) award with services applicable to this application.

If you are not an entity in either one of these categories, please partner with an eligible entity to submit an application for this round of funding.

Eligible waters for this application include the following:

1. Waters within a WBP area that have:
	1. Assessment Units (AUs) listed as impaired in Appendix A of the 2024-2026 State of New Mexico Clean Water Act Section 303(d)/Section 305(b) Integrated Report ([Integrated Report](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/303d-305b/)), and
	2. one or more U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) to describe at least one current impairment.
2. Wetlands described within WAPs.
3. AUs listed in Category 4C in Appendix A of the Integrated Report.
4. AUs listed in Category 4B in Appendix A of the Integrated Report.
5. AUs or other stream sections impacted by wildfire, that meet all of these requirements:
	1. The fire occurred in 2020 or later ~~2023 or 2024~~.
	2. The fire occurred outside the range of natural variability for affected forest types. The evaluation committee will determine whether a wildfire occurred outside the range of natural variability in consultation with forest ecology and hydrology specialists.
	3. The burned area is at least partly in the watershed of one or more waters with a coldwater or cool water designated use.
	4. The burn area is 5,000 acres or more, as determined by the agency which managed the wildfire.
6. Waters within a current EPA-approved Tribal NPSMP.

Eligible projects must be in the areas covered by watershed-based plans or alternative watershed-based plans accepted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) available at https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wbp/, advance restoration plans and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) available at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/tmdl/>, wetlands action plans listed at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wap> and through the mapping interface at <https://gis.web.env.nm.gov/oem/?map=swqb>, or post-fire response plans which the applicant will provide and/or develop in cooperation with NMED. Water quality standards (including designated uses) are available at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wqs>.

NMED expects that some post-fire response plans, particularly Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) plans, only cover activities in the first year after the fire, only cover land managed by the Forest Service, or only include activities which are already fully funded. In cases where a post-fire response plan is found inadequate because the proposed work extends beyond the term of the plan, is located downstream of the area covered by the plan, or is not discussed in the plan because the plan was designed to allocate a specific Forest Service budget, NMED may choose to work with the applicant to develop a post-fire plan that includes minimum elements for “Alternatives to Nine-Element Watershed-based Plans” listed in EPA’s *Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories* (available at <https://www.epa.gov/nps/319-grant-current-guidance>).

# **4. Timeline**

This Request for Applications was released on January 24, 2025 and will have a 60-day open period to receive applications. This funding opportunity will be posted on the New Mexico Environment Department website <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/watershed-protection-section/funding-opportunities> including any updates to this Request for Applications (RFA), questions and answers, and addendums.

**Applications are due by 5:00 pm Mountain Daylight Time (MDT) on April 3, 2025.**

The table below summarizes the deadlines associated with this funding opportunity:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Date Posted or Deadline** |
| RFA Open for Applications | January 24, 2025 |
| Submission Deadline for Questions | February 14, 2025 at 5:00 pm MST |
| Questions and Answers Posted | February 20, 2025 at 5:00 pm MST |
| Application Deadline | **April 3, 2025 at 5:00 pm MDT** |
| Applicant Notifications of Selections | *Approximately May 21, 2025* |

**Notification**

The SWQB anticipates that applicants will be notified of award within approximately sixty days of the application due date. Scores and comments on the applications will be provided upon request once the contracts and agreements have been finalized.

Applicants will submit applications using **Attachment A: Application Form for Local Public Bodies** or **Attachment B: Application Form for Vendors on Price Agreement**, as applicable. **Attachment A-1: Budget Tables for Local Public Bodies** and **Attachment B-1: Budget Tables for Vendors on Price Agreement** are optional Excel versions of the budget tables to submit with application instead of the budget tables included in the application forms.

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into a contract agreement with NMED, following the format in **Attachment C: Memorandum of Agreement Template for Local Public Bodies** or **Attachment D: Contract Template for Vendors on Price Agreement**.

NMED staff will work with selected applicants to adapt their applications into project work plans which will be attached to their agreements. Project work plans are subject to approval by U.S. EPA, and agreements (including work plans) are subject to approval by NMED. **NMED anticipates project implementation work may begin in September 2025.**

# **5. Application Questions**

Applicants who have questions regarding this RFA must email questions to the SWQB Program Manager at wpsprogram.manager@env.nm.gov, subject line: **“FY25 Implementation Application Questions,”** no later than **5:00 pm Mountain Standard Time on February 14, 2025**.

A final list of all questions and answers submitted during the open Q & A period will be sent to interested parties who submitted questions and posted on the SWQB website <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/watershed-protection-section/funding-opportunities> by **5:00 PM Mountain Standard Time on February 20, 2025. It is the responsibility of all applicants** to check the SWQB website for the most recent updates, including questions and answers and addendums.

**NMED-SWQB personnel are not authorized to discuss this RFA with applicants. Contact regarding this RFA with any NMED-SWQB personnel except as described above may result in disqualification.**

# **6. Application Instructions**

## a. Application Format

Applications must be submitted electronically as specified in Section 7. Application Submission. All responses to application questions must be submitted using the provided application templates, either **Attachment A: Application Form for Local Public Bodies** or **Attachment B: Application Form for Vendors on Price Agreement** as applicable to your entity. Application templates are available on the NMED website <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/watershed-protection-section/funding-opportunities>. Application attachments are limited to no more than 10 pages, including maps, photos, and letters of support but excluding the application itself. Attachments and appendices exceeding the 10-page limit may not be reviewed by the evaluation committee.

## b. Application Instructions by Section

### A. Project Title

(Not Scored) Provide a descriptive project title using 15 words or less. Include the name of the waterbody and type of activity. For example, Trout Creek Aquatic Habitat Improvement Project or Agua Fria Restoration Project.

### B. Applicant Information

(Not Scored) Provide your organization title and address. The signatory’s name is the person who can contractually oblige your entity or organization. Provide the signatory’s title, phone number, and email address. Provide your organization’s federal tax ID number, SAM.gov Unique Entity Identification Number (UEI Number), New Mexico Business Tax Identification Number (BTIN), and your SHARE Vendor Identification Number, if known. Ensure that your entity profile on SAM.gov has an active registration and is available to view publicly. Applicants will be screened using SAM.gov and NMED will not do business with any entity that is debarred or not in good standing on SAM.gov.

### C. Start and End Dates

(Not Scored) State the planned beginning and ending dates of the project. The project start date shall be September 1, 2025 or later and project end date shall be no later than June 30, 2028.

### D. Project Manager

(Not Scored) Identify a project manager who will be responsible for oversight of the approved project including: administering contracts; ensuring technical viability of the project; ensuring funds expended are within the budget and in accordance with applicable law; and ensuring that quarterly fiscal and technical progress reports, and a final report, are submitted to NMED.

### E. Key Persons

(50 points) Identify all key persons including the project manager who will be responsible for completing work plan tasks, including any subcontractors. Briefly describe qualifications of each key person. In describing qualifications, include past accomplishments related to each person’s role in the project. If necessary, add rows for additional key persons and delete unused rows.

### F. Plan Citation

(25 points) Provide the title of the WBP, WAP, alternative plan, Category 4B Demonstration, and/or (if available) post-fire rehabilitation plan that includes the proposed project or components thereof. Provide one or more internet links to the relevant plan(s). Add rows for additional plans as necessary.

This funding opportunity is for implementing plans of the following types:

1. Watershed-Based Plans (WBPs) or Alternative WBPs listed at https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wbp/;
2. Wetlands Action Plans (WAPs) listed at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wap>;
3. Completed Advance Restoration Plans listed at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/tmdl/>;
4. Category 4B Demonstrations. New Mexico’s only Category 4B demonstration (for aluminum, copper, and mercury in Sandia Canyon) is available at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/303d-305b/>, under the heading “2024-2026 Supporting Documents and Websites”; and/or
5. Post-fire response plans for waters affected by recent major wildfire.
6. EPA-accepted Tribal NPSMPs

### G. Project Area

(50 points) Identify the stream reach or reaches and/or wetlands within your proposed project area. For streams, provide the assessment unit name and ID number from the [Integrated Report](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/303d-305b/). Provide latitude and longitude coordinates for the project. For wetlands, state the wetland name and provide the latitude and longitude of the center of the wetland or project area if multiple wetlands. State the 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) of the watershed or watersheds where the proposed project is located. Applicants may look up 12-digit watersheds at <https://gis.web.env.nm.gov/oem/?map=swqb> (select “Watershed Boundary Dataset” under the “Legend” tab). State the number of stream miles and/or wetland acres that will be improved by the project, and acres of upland watershed to be directly improved by the project. Provide one or more photos of the project area, demonstrating the problem area(s) to be addressed.

### H. Project Area Map

(50 points) Insert a map of the HUC 12 watershed where the project will take place that includes the project location, geographical markers such as streams, monitoring locations, and locations within the project area where actions, including Best Management Practices (BMPs) or management measures, are anticipated to occur. The map must include a title, legend, scale bar, and north arrow. Additional maps may be included to zoom in on the project area to show additional details of the proposed project. The Surface Water Quality Bureau OpenEnviroMap tool may be a starting point: <https://gis.web.env.nm.gov/oem/?map=swqb>.

### I. Problem Description

(75 points) Describe the cause(s) of impairment as described in the Integrated Report in the streams (Assessment Units) and/or wetlands listed in Section G. Project Area, that will be addressed by the project or impairments prevented, for streams potentially impacted by wildfire. For wetlands, describe the stressors that have been identified. Briefly describe what you know about the sources contributing to the impairment. Include land use, nonpoint sources of pollution, and related water quality problems in the watershed. If a Rapid Assessment Method (RAM) has been used to assess the wetland, summarize the RAM results in the narrative. Cite one or more sections in the plan identified in Section F. Plan Citation that contain more information on the water quality or wetland condition problem. If necessary, add rows for more assessment units or wetlands included in the project area. Delete unused rows from the table.

### J. Goals

(75 points) State one or more pollutant load reduction goals, hydrologic goals, or wetland condition goals for the project. An example pollutant load reduction goal is that a proposed project will reduce nitrogen loading by an estimated 1.5 pounds per day on average. An example hydrologic goal is that a proposed project will increase the critical low flow by 0.1 cubic feet per second. An example wetland condition goal is that the wetland’s Ecological Condition Ranking as determined with a RAM for that type of wetland will increase from C (fair condition) to B (good condition). Provide a brief explanation (around 100 words) of how the goals were developed. Cite one or more sections from the plan or plans identified in Section F. Plan Citation that contain more information on the pollutant load reduction, hydrologic, or wetland condition goals. If necessary, add rows for more goals for the project. Delete unused rows from the table.

### K. Management Measures and Measures of Success

(75 points) A “management measure” is a physical change to a site (often called a “best management practice” or BMP), a change in land management, or other non-physical change such as a land-use ordinance or outreach program that brings about improvement or protection of water quality. Descriptions of management measures is a required element of WBPs and are typical components of WAPs, Alt WBPs and other planning documents.

Briefly state each management measure of the proposed project, describe how the management measures will be implemented, and how they will contribute to pollutant load reduction, improved hydrologic function, or wetland condition. Cite one or more sections in the plan or plans identified in Section F. Plan Citation that support the selected management measures. Applicants are encouraged to cite technical publications such as the Wetlands Technical Guides at [https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wetlands-technical-guides](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wetlands-technical-guides/) as sources of more information on management measures. Additional technical resources that may be useful to cite supporting BMPs are listed in Appendix C of the New Mexico Nonpoint Source Management Plan ([https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/nps-plan](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/nps-plan/)). Education and outreach activities are considered a category of management measure as well as activities that build community capacity for addressing nonpoint source pollution such as supporting local watershed coordinators and leveraging community resources (e.g., local minority-serving institutions, community organizations, and businesses).

Describe the indicators that will be used to measure project success. Example categories of indicators include: 1) direct water quality measurements used to detect changes in water quality and assess water quality against water quality standards; 2) measurements of environmental parameters such as ground cover or canopy cover that will be used to model changes in pollutant loading or evaluate wetland condition; 3) implementation monitoring of successful installation or adoption of management measures coupled with load reduction estimates associated with those measures; 4) for wetlands direct measurement of soils, hydrology or plants that indicate wetland improvements; and 5) improvement in RAM metric scores and/or RAM overall ranking for restored wetlands. Applicants are encouraged to select the most practical means of documenting project success. Direct measurement of water quality may not always be practical, as the scientific rigor required to detect statistically significant changes can be resource intensive. Monitoring should be adequately planned and supported by clearly identified task(s) in the implementation schedule and costs to carry out these tasks in the budget.

Responses should tie directly to the WBP elements g., h., and i., or monitoring components in other plans identified in Section F. Plan Citation, related to establishing goals and measuring progress. Project activities that involve the collection, production, and use of environmental data or metrics **must** be conducted under a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), approved by EPA, prior to data collection. Example project QAPPs are available at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/qapps>. SWQB Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) described at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/sop> should be used to collect water quality data that NMED can use to assess water quality standards attainment, when practical.

### L. Complementary Programs and Match

(25 points) Describe other state, federal, or private programs or partners that will contribute effort or funding for the project toward the 10% of the total project budget that must be made up of nonfederal funds, in-kind labor, equipment, services, or other items of value that the applicant or other project partners will contribute to the project. Federal contributions do not count toward the minimum 10% nonfederal contribution.

### ~~M. Socioeconomics~~

~~(50 points) Describe how the project will benefit the community. Include a screenshot of the~~ [[~~EJScreen~~](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/)](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/) ~~demographic index for the project area. The demographic index in~~ [[~~EJScreen~~](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/)](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/) ~~is a combination of percent low-income and percent minority for a census block group. To capture a screenshot of this index for your project area, navigate to~~ [[~~EJScreen~~](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/)](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/) ~~and first select the “Reports” tab in the upper left corner of the legend and “Draw an Area” for the project area. Go back to the “Maps” tab in the upper left corner of the legend and select “Socioeconomic Indicators” and then “Demographic Index.” The map should populate the demographic index over your selected project area. Capture a screenshot and include this in the application.~~

### N. Permits

(50 points) List any permits, certifications, and environmental or cultural clearances that will be needed to implement the project. Describe any progress that has already been made to obtain those permits, certifications and clearances. This information is requested so that the Evaluation Committee can evaluate readiness of the proposed project. Costs of any permits, certifications, and environmental or cultural clearances completed **prior to** entering into a contract are not reimbursable. The implementation schedule must clearly identify permitting tasks allow adequate time to complete these tasks prior to beginning on-the-ground tasks.

### O. Implementation Schedule

(75 points) Describe the tasks necessary to achieve project results. Minimize the number of tasks for the project overall. Examples of tasks to be included, as applicable to your project, are: project reporting, project design, QAPP development and approval, permitting, project construction, final-walk through (with NMED Project Officer), and project administration. Task descriptions must include the person responsible for implementation, planned task start dates and completion dates, a deliverable for each task (for example, completed management measures), and a brief description of how the task will be accomplished. Add or delete rows from the table as necessary.

Environmental monitoring, modeling, compilation of data from literature or electronic media, and collection of data supporting the design, construction, and operation of environmental technology conducted with support of funds administered by EPA must be conducted under a QAPP approved by EPA. **If any of these are proposed, include a task early in the project term to develop a QAPP, or to extend the term of or otherwise revise an existing approved QAPP. Allow at least ninety days, following the submittal to SWQB, for completion of this task.**

**Include a task for reporting.** Quarterly reports and a final report are required. Quarterly reports must include a brief status update for each task and discussion of any schedule changes, personnel changes, problems encountered, and proposed task or budget changes (if applicable). The final report must provide a final status report for each task, summaries of monitoring data and results, project photos (including before/after photo pairs), discussion of lessons learned, and recommendations to EPA and NMED applicable to future projects.

For projects from Vendors of the Price Agreement #40-00000-23-00037 or other applicable price agreement, add the Price Agreement Item Number to the implementation schedule table. There may be more than one item that covers completion of each task. For example, a “Project Construction” task might include price agreement item numbers 20 (Mechanical Placement or Relocation of Rocks), 23 (Mechanical Placement or Relocation of Trees for Channel Structures), 40 (Mechanical Equipment Mobilization/Demobilization), 41 (Unspecified Mobilization or Materials Hauling), and 52 (Field Supervision), depending upon the specifics of the project.

### P. Letters of Support

(100 points) 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 this application in Section R. Attachments. Letters of Support must state the role or contribution in the project for that specific agency or individual, where applicable, and must be unique (i.e., no form letters).

### Q. Budget

(300 points) Complete the budget tables provided in the application. If preferred, **Attachment A-1: Budget Tables for Local Public Bodies** and **Attachment B-1: Budget Tables for Vendors on Price Agreement** are optional Excel versions of the budget tables to submit with application instead of the budget tables included in the application forms. Revise the budget line items to fit your project where there are examples of types of costs included in the lines. Ensure that your budget totals correctly and is consistent between both budget tables, i.e., the total funding amounts requested are the same as the overall totals in both tables and everything adds correctly. Cost compliance and acceptability is determined pursuant to [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E) because funds are federal Clean Water Act Section 319.

Personnel hourly rates are capped at $91.95 per hour or $735.60 per day.

The total for the CASH OR IN-KIND MATCH column **must equal at least 10%** of the total project cost.

Complete the Cost by Deliverables Table. The tasks and deliverables listed in the application (Section O. Implementation Schedule) are the same tasks and deliverables that shall be listed in the Cost by Deliverables Table. The sum of all costs in the Cost by Deliverables Table must match the total project budgets in 319 Funds, Cash or In-Kind Match, and Total Budget. Add more tasks and deliverables as necessary to the Cost by Deliverables Table. Provide notes about the budget where necessary to clarify costs.

*For projects of Local Public Bodies*: Complete the Budget Table by category and complete the Cost by Implementation Task and Deliverables Table.

*For projects of Vendors of the Price Agreement*: Complete the Cost by Implementation Task and Deliverables Table and the Cost by Price Agreement Services Table.

### R. Attachments

(Not Scored) Attach any supporting documents to your application in this section. Application attachments are limited to no more than 10 pages, including maps, photos, and letters of support but excluding the application itself. Attachments and appendices exceeding the 10-page limit may not be reviewed by the evaluation committee.

# **7. Application Submission**

Applications must be received electronically by the SWQB no later than **5:00 pm MDT on April 3, 2025.** Email applications to SWQB’s Watershed Protection Section (WPS) Program Manager at wpsprogram.manager@env.nm.gov with the subject line: **“FY25 Implementation Application.”**

The email properties header will reflect the date and time submissions are received. Application submissions received after the deadline will not be considered eligible. NMED is not responsible for any errors or delays caused by technology-related issues, even if they are caused by NMED.

Applications submitted via any other method, including but not limited to fax, mail, or in-person deliveries, will not be accepted.

# **8. Application Scoring**

The table below shows the points available for each section of the application.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Points Available** |
| 1. Project Title
 | Not scored |
| 1. Applicant Information
 | Not scored |
| 1. Start and End Dates
 | Not scored |
| 1. Project Manager
 | Not scored |
| 1. Key Persons
 | 50 |
| 1. Plan Citation
 | 25 |
| 1. Project Area
 | 50 |
| 1. Project Area Map
 | 50 |
| 1. Problem Description
 | 75 |
| 1. Goals
 | 75 |
| 1. Management Measures and Measures of Success
 | 75 |
| 1. Complementary Programs and Match
 | 25 |
| 1. ~~Socioeconomics/Disadvantaged Community Impact~~
 | ~~50~~ |
| 1. Permits
 | 50 |
| 1. Implementation Schedule
 | 75 |
| 1. Letters of Support
 | 100 |
| 1. Budget
 | 300 |
| 1. Attachments
 | Not scored |
| **Total Points** | **950 ~~1000~~** |
| Priority Points (0 or 50 points) | 0 or 50 |

## Priority Points

Applicants may receive priority points for projects that address post-fire impacts. Projects will receive full priority points for addressing wildfire impacts provided all the following are true:

* The fire occurred in 2020 or later ~~2023 or 2024~~.
* The fire occurred outside the range of natural variability for affected forest types. The evaluation committee will determine whether a wildfire occurred outside the range of natural variability in consultation with forest ecology and hydrology specialists.
* The burned area is at least partly in the watershed of one or more waters with a coldwater or coolwater aquatic life designated use.
* The burned area is 5,000 acres or more, as determined by the agency which managed the wildfire.

Projects that don’t address such impacts will receive zero points for addressing wildfire impacts. Projects that address wildfire impacts of fires older than 5 ~~2~~-years within a WBP area are allowed and still encouraged.

# **9. Application Evaluation Criteria**

## a. Evaluation

Applications received by the deadline will be reviewed using a three-phase process, described below. Late applications will not be considered for review.

**Phase I – Minimum requirements review**

The SWQB will determine if eligibility requirements are met. Any application found to be ineligible will be eliminated from further evaluation.

**Minimum requirements:**

* Complete application: Application form submitted via email as Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF document.
* Eligible applicant: either a local public body or vendor on price agreement (including #40-00000-23-00037) and demonstrates ability to provide sufficient match.
* Eligible project: a project that implements elements of a WBP, alternative-WBP, Tribal NPSMP, WAP, and/or post-fire response.

**Phase II – Evaluate applications**

Only those applications found to pass Phase I will be considered in Phase II. NMED may request clarification from one or more applicants. The clarifications will be made in writing for evaluation purposes. The response to the request for clarification will be considered along with the original application for scoring.

Applications will be evaluated by a committee with technical expertise in watershed management and water quality protection from NMED and at least one member from another state or federal agency or non-profit organization. The Evaluation Committee will review and score project applications using the evaluation criteria below.

**Phase III – Select finalist(s)**

After scoring, applications are ranked and selected based on their rank and available funding.

## b. Application Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Committee will select projects for funding that have the highest likelihood of successful implementation during the project term and demonstrate the ability to make the most improvements to water quality overall, based on the evaluation criteria as described below.

1. **A. Project Title** – Not Scored
2. **B. Applicant Information** – Not Scored
3. **C. Start and End Dates** – Not Scored
4. **D. Project Manager** – Not Scored
5. **E. Key Persons** – 50 points

Roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of the Key Persons are well described and appropriate to accomplish the goals of the project. Past performance of Key Persons indicates a high probability of successful project completion.

1. **F. Plan Citation** – 25 points

Citation, including website link(s), for planning documents that fully support the project, improvement of water quality, and project selection rationale. Plan cited ensures funding eligibility and is either a WBP, alternative-WBP, Tribal NPSMP, WAP, Category 4B demonstration, Advance Restoration Plan, or post-fire planning document.

1. **G. Project Area** – 50 points

Assessment Unit names and ID numbers, wetlands name (if applicable), GPS coordinates, and HUC 12 watershed(s) are all clearly defined for the entire project area. The number of stream miles, wetland acres (if applicable), and upland watershed acres (if applicable) are all clearly defined for the project area. Photos of the project area are included and clearly demonstrate the need for the project.

1. **H. Project Area Map** – 50 points

Project map included in application shows the HUC 12 watershed where the project takes place, streams, project monitoring locations, and clearly identifies locations where the project actions will take place. The project map includes a title, legend, scale bar, and a north arrow.

1. **I. Problem Description** – 75 points

Assessment Unit ID numbers or wetland coordinates and names are clearly identified. Impairment causes are as described in the Integrated Report. Wetland stressors are listed clearly. Problem description clearly and effectively describes the rationale for selecting the project. Logical and clear reasoning describe the sources contributing to the impairment(s). Land use, nonpoint sources of pollution and other related water quality problems in the watershed are clearly described. If applicable, results of a Rapid Assessment Method are thoroughly and clearly described. Planning documents are clearly cited and relevant.

1. **J. Goals** – 75 points

Assessment Unit ID numbers or wetland coordinates and names are clearly identified. Current impairment cause, potential impairment cause if a post-fire project, or wetlands stressor is identified for each goal. The goals are reasonable and likely to make a difference in the impairment status of the water body. One or more pollutant load reduction goals, hydrologic goals, or wetland condition goals are stated for the project and are achievable and measurable within the project term. A brief explanation of 100 words or less is included to describe how the goals were developed. One or more sections from the plan or plans identified in Section F. Plan Citation were used in the explanation.

1. **K. Management Measures and Measures of Success** – 75 points

One or more management measures are proposed for the project. The management measure(s) are thoroughly described and clearly demonstrate how they will be implemented, contribute to pollutant load reduction, improved hydrologic function, or wetland condition. Plans as identified in Section F. Plan Citation are cited and clearly support the management measure. Measures of success that will be used as indicators to measure project success are clearly identified, reasonable, and likely to actually measure success of the project during the project term.

1. **L. Complementary Programs and Match** – 25 points

Other state, federal, or private programs or partners that will contribute effort or funding for the project toward the 10% of the total project budget that must be made up of nonfederal funds, in-kind labor, equipment, services, or other items of value that the applicant or other project partners will contribute to the project are clearly described and likely to be successfully completed by the project partners.

1. **~~M. Socioeconomics~~** ~~– 50 points~~

~~Projects that will result in environmental or economic benefits for the local community will receive 10 points. Description of the project location within underserved communities or organizations engaged in the project, and how an underserved community is benefitting from the project is clearly described and the project provides meaningful impact to those communities and organizations. A screenshot from~~ [~~EJScreen~~](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/) ~~of the demographic index for the project area is included. Projects areas in the 50~~~~th~~ ~~to 80~~~~th~~ ~~percentile or greater in the National Demographic Index will receive 25 points.~~

1. **N. Permits** – 50 points

All permits, certifications, and environmental or cultural clearances that will be needed to implement the project are clearly listed and thoroughly described. Any progress that has already been made to obtain those permits, certifications and clearances is clearly described. The project is likely to be successful based on existing progress towards obtaining permits, certifications, and clearances, and there are no potential barriers to permit approvals, such as agency delays, that could delay the project.

1. **O. Implementation Schedule** – 75 points

The tasks necessary to achieve project results are clearly described and reasonable to achieve project success. The number of tasks for the project is minimized and reasonable for the project. Project tasks for project reporting, project design, permitting, project construction, final-walk through (with NMED Project Officer), development of a QAPP (if applicable), and project administration are included in the table. Task descriptions include the person responsible for implementation, reasonable planned task start dates and completion dates, deliverable for each task, and a brief description of how the task will be accomplished that is reasonable and clear.

For projects from Vendors of the Price Agreement #40-00000-23-00037 or other applicable price agreement, the Price Agreement Item Number is included for each task in the implementation schedule table and more than one Price Agreement Item Number is included if necessary.

1. **P. Letters of Support** – 100 points

Letters of support are unique, not form letters, that clearly demonstrate stakeholder support for the project and are attached in Section R. Attachments in the application. Letters of support are from contractors, landowners (especially for projects that include private lands), public lands managers, watershed groups, user groups, and other agency partners and clearly state their role or contribution in the project.

1. **Q. Budget** – 300 points

Both budget tables are completed using either the application form or the Excel budget tables form, include reasonable, clear, and allowable reimbursable costs related solely to the project, and total correctly and consistently between both tables. The matching funds proposed for the project are allowable and acceptable as the non-federal match. All tasks and deliverables are listed and thoroughly considered for what costs are necessary to complete each task and deliverable. Costs are compliant with [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E).

1. **R. Attachments** – Not Scored

# **[Attachment A: Application Form for Local Public Bodies](https://www-q.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2025/02/Attachment-A-Projects-Application-Local-Public-Bodies.docx)**

# **[Attachment A-1: Budget Tables for Local Public Bodies](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2025/01/Attachment-A-1-Budget-Tables-Local-Public-Bodies.xlsx)**

# **[Attachment B: Application Form for Vendors on Price Agreement](https://www-q.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2025/02/Attachment-B-Projects-Application-Vendors-of-Price-Agreements.docx)**

# **[Attachment B-1: Budget Tables for Vendors on Price Agreement](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2025/01/Attachment-B-1-Budget-Tables-Vendors-of-Price-Agreements.xlsx)**

# **[Attachment C: Memorandum of Agreement Template for Local Public Bodies](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2025/01/Attachment-C-MOA-Template-for-Local-Public-Bodies.pdf)**

# **[Attachment D: Contract Template for Vendors on Price Agreement](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2025/01/Attachment-D-Contract-Template-for-Price-Agreement-Vendors.pdf)**