

Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27)
NMDA's Healthy Soil Program INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT grants
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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THE BASICS

1. What is an Individual Applicant?

A: An Individual Applicant is a nongovernmental party (an individual, a business, or a nonprofit) that is directly engaged in farming, ranching, or another form of land management in New Mexico.

2. What kinds of projects can an Individual Applicant implement using Healthy Soil Program grant funding?

A: NMDA will consider on-the-ground projects in New Mexico that implement one or more of the five soil health principles:

1. Keeping soil covered
2. Minimizing disturbance on cropland and minimizing external inputs
3. Maximizing biodiversity
4. Maintaining a living root
5. Integrating animals into land management, including grazing animals, birds, beneficial insects or keystone species, such as earthworms

3. Does an Individual Applicant need to *own* the land they manage to apply for a grant?

A: No. However, an Individual Applicant who doesn't own the land at the project site must affirm in their online application that they have landowner permission to implement a Healthy Soil Program project on that land.

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4. I don't live in New Mexico, but I own land there. Am I eligible to apply for NMDA's Healthy Soil Program grants?

A: No. If you don't live in New Mexico but the land you own here is *actively* managed by another person, *that* person is the one who should apply for the grant as he/she will be the project's implementer. This approach avoids the scenario of having one person apply for a project that must be implemented by another person – making it unclear whether the person implementing the project is fully informed of/has fully bought into the project and thus will implement the project activities per the project timeline, purchase only the goods/services that are in the approved project budget, etc.

5. Is there a minimum acreage requirement to apply for a Healthy Soil Program grant?

A: No. If less than an acre, a project site can be measured and submitted in terms of square feet.

6. What is the maximum length of time a project can be funded under the Healthy Soil Program?

A: NMDA will award funds to projects whose activities happen no earlier than **July 15, 2026**, and no later than **September 30, 2027**. NMDA will not fund activities occurring outside of that period.

7. Is there a cap on funding per grant?

A: Yes. An Individual Applicant can apply for up to \$24,999.99. That figure must include the Project Sponsor's 15% administrative fee and mileage, both of which NMDA pays directly to the Project Sponsor.

8. Am I required to provide a matching and/or in-kind contribution for my project?

A: No. NMDA does not require Individual Applicants to provide matching and/or in-kind contributions.

9. Is there a maximum number of grant awards I can win from NMDA's Healthy Soil Program?

A: Yes. Individual Applicants who have received three (3) grants from NMDA's Healthy Soil Program are no longer eligible to apply for funding.

10. I notice that at least two documents required to apply for a Healthy Soil Program grant require signatures: my conservation planning documentation completed and signed by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); and my Letter of Support template completed and signed by my Project Sponsor (soil and water conservation district; or pueblo, tribe, or nation). Will my application be accepted without these signatures?

A: No. Individual Applicants are expected to review all components of their grant application for completion, including documents requiring signatures, before submission.

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APPLYING FOR A GRANT

11. Where do I apply for a Healthy Soil Program grant?

A: Starting on January 16, 2026, and ending at 12 p.m. (noon) Mountain Time on March 20, 2026, Healthy Soil Program grant applications will be accepted online at <https://grants.nmda.nmsu.edu/>. You must create a free account to begin working on your application. Additional context and links to documents required for application are at <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>.

12. Can I apply by hand-delivering, mailing, or emailing my application materials instead of using the web-based application?

A: No. All grant applications, including supplemental documentation, must be submitted online at <https://grants.nmda.nmsu.edu/>.

13. I'm working with a third party to help me with my Healthy Soil Program grant application. Which one should reach out to NMDA with questions: the third party that's helping me, or me as the Individual Applicant?

A: Individual Applicants are welcome to work with third parties to develop their Healthy Soil Program grant application. However, **NMDA strongly encourages Individual Applicants to retain ownership of the application process** rather than hand it off to a third party. That's because if the Individual Applicant's project is selected for funding, NMDA will hold the Individual Applicant, *not* the third party, to the terms of the project as presented in the application. Thus, NMDA advises Individual Applicants who have questions to ask their questions of NMDA directly, rather than submit their questions to NMDA through a third party.

14. Will NMDA review my application materials prior to submission?

A: No. To ensure your grant application is complete, Individual Applicants are encouraged to read the online application questions – and their own responses to those questions – thoroughly and to refer to the document checklist on <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>. Further, Individual Applicants are welcome to ask NMDA specific questions about their application materials to ensure that they are properly completed.

15. Will NMDA accept late or incomplete applications?

A: No.

16. Will NMDA accept additional or revised information about my application after the submission deadline?

A: No.

17. What if I have problems submitting my application?

A: First, review your application to ensure that you have answered all prompts/questions that are marked (required). If that step doesn't help you identify and resolve the problem, email NMDA's Healthy Soil Program team a description of the problem as soon as possible via

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hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu. NMDA will **not** assist those who notify NMDA of such problems *after* the application deadline.

REQUIRED BY FEBRUARY 20, 2026, AT 5 P.M. MOUNTAIN TIME:
COMPLETE CONSERVATION PLANNING WITH USDA-NRCS

18. What is conservation planning?

A: Conservation planning is the process of identifying conservation objectives for a piece of land, as well as assessing the natural resources issues on that land related to soil and other components (water, animals, plants, air, energy, and human interaction).

19. Why is conservation planning with USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) required for an Individual Applicant to apply for a Healthy Soil Program grant?

A: Conservation planning is the first step to improving soil health. When done in cooperation with USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service, conservation planning can help a land manager accurately identify soil health-related resource concerns, as well as the soil health principle(s) and agricultural/conservation practice(s) that can address those resource concerns. **Without conservation planning, there is no basis for determining whether the intended soil health principles and agricultural/conservation practices are appropriate for a particular piece of land.**

20. I'm an Individual Applicant who doesn't have an existing conservation plan from NRCS. Can I fulfill this application requirement in a different way?

A: Yes. An Individual Applicant who doesn't have a conservation plan from NRCS instead can submit a completed, signed, and dated conservation planning template from NMDA. There are two (2) templates available: one for projects happening on cropland, and one for projects happening on rangeland. Both are available on NMDA's Healthy Soil Program web page for Individual Applicants: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>. The conservation planning templates help land managers identify soil health-related resource concerns, as well as soil health principles and agricultural/conservation practices to address those concerns.

If submitting a conservation planning template, **the Individual Applicant must work with NRCS staff (or an NRCS-certified conservation planner)** to complete the template. Locate the nearest NRCS Local Service Center using this map:
<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>.

21. I have old conservation planning documents that NRCS previously helped me complete. Will that fulfill the conservation planning requirement I have as an Individual Applicant?

A: No. Conservation plans that were developed more than 12 months prior to the conservation planning deadline this application cycle (February 20, 2026, at 5 p.m. Mountain Time) cannot be utilized for the Healthy Soil Program. **All conservation planning documents – whether NRCS-developed conservation plans, or NRCS-completed versions of NMDA's Conservation Planning Templates – must be updated to account for resource concern**

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changes and/or conservation practice implementation. Soil health-related resource concerns are dynamic and thus should be re-evaluated on a regular basis. **All NMDA conservation planning templates submitted for FY27 Healthy Soil Program funding must be the current (FY27) versions provided on the Healthy Soil Program website.**

22. Why is there a deadline for completing NRCS-certified conservation planning that's *separate* from the overall application deadline?

A: Whether securing a conservation plan from NRCS or completing a conservation planning template with NRCS, **NRCS-certified conservation planning must be completed by February 20, 2026, at 5 p.m. Mountain Time.** This deadline is one (1) month prior to the overall application deadline. That's to ensure that the Individual Applicant has sufficient time to review their conservation planning documents to decide which component(s) they will focus on for the project they submit for Healthy Soil Program funding consideration.

23. How should I prepare for my appointment with the NRCS conservation planner?

A: Before your appointment to complete conservation planning with a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation planner, each Individual Applicant should **visit Web Soil Survey to produce a map of their project site(s):** either a soil map for cropland or an Ecological Site Description (ESD) for rangeland. Regardless of which document you produce using Web Soil Survey, part of what you will learn is the soil type(s) present on the land you manage. Such information is critical for you and your NRCS conservation planner to know, as different soil types have different properties, as well as different inherent strengths and challenges.

REQUIRED: PROJECT SPONSORSHIP

FROM AN SWCD -OR- YOUR TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

24. Why is project sponsorship required for Individual Applicants?

A: Project sponsorship allows Individual Applicants to access Healthy Soil Program grant funding. Project Sponsors provide administrative support to Individual Applicants to ensure that required documents are submitted in a timely way and in compliance with program deadlines: soil test and soil assessment data; invoices for reimbursement; and quarterly progress reports. The Project Sponsor essentially serves as the liaison between the Individual Applicant and NMDA.

25. How do I find a Project Sponsor?

A: Only two types of entities can serve as an Individual Applicant's Project Sponsor:

1. a soil and water conservation district (SWCD) in New Mexico; **or**
2. the New Mexico pueblo, tribe, or nation of which the Individual Applicant is a member.

A directory of the state's SWCDs is maintained by the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts; access that information using the PDF document embedded on

<https://www.nmacd.org/directories>. Location and contact information for the state's pueblos, tribes, and nations is maintained by the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department website; access

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that information by visiting <https://www.iad.state.nm.us/>, then clicking the “Pueblos, Tribes & Nations” tab to find the “Tribal Directory”.

26. I work for a soil and water conservation district (SWCD) or pueblo, tribe, or nation that has agreed to be an Individual Applicant's Project Sponsor. If the project is selected for funding, what will be required of us?

A: At a minimum, an SWCD or pueblo, tribe, or nation that has agreed to serve as an Individual Applicant's Project Sponsor will:

- Attend a mandatory grant training online on June 24, 2026, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Mountain Time, prior to execution of the grant.
- Serve as liaison between NMDA and the Individual Applicant for the duration of the grant.
- Visit the project site at the beginning of the project to help the Individual Applicant with their required pre-project soil-sample collection (for laboratory analysis) and in-field soil assessment.
- In a timely way and in compliance with program deadlines, collect from the Individual Applicant, **verify, process**, and submit to NMDA any necessary grant documentation (contractual agreements; soil test and assessment data; invoices; receipts; quarterly/final reports; etc.)
- In a timely way, disburse grant funds due to the Individual Applicant
- Issue the Individual Applicant a Form 1099-MISC from the IRS if the Individual Applicant receives \$600 or more in Healthy Soil Program grant funding during the calendar year(s), 2026 and/or 2027

For these efforts, **NMDA will pay the Project Sponsor an administrative fee equal to 15%** of the amount awarded to the project being implemented by the Individual Applicant. NMDA will also pay the Project Sponsor mileage at the standard IRS rate for the one (1) required visit to the project site.

For an SWCD or pueblo, tribe, or nation to affirm its willingness to serve as Project Sponsor, the Individual Applicant must first complete the Letter of Support template available on the Healthy Soil Program web page specific to Individual Applicants:

<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>. **Before they agree to sponsor the project, SWCDs and tribal governments often ask for details about the project – especially your conservation planning documentation, timeline of project activities, and project budget.** Thus, NMDA strongly recommends that Individual Applicants have these materials in final (or near-final) form prior to seeking project sponsorship.

27. I work for an SWCD or pueblo, tribe, or nation that has agreed to be an Individual Applicant's Project Sponsor. Do we need to issue them a Form 1099-MISC from the IRS?

A: An Individual Applicant who receives \$600 or more in grant money during the tax year should be issued a Form 1099 for Miscellaneous Income by the Project Sponsor. *(Because the 15% administrative fee and mileage for one (1) project-site visit is paid to the Project Sponsor, those parts of the total award amount never reach the Individual Applicant and thus should not*

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be reflected on the 1099 that the SWCD or pueblo, tribe, or nation issues them.) For more information about what state and federal tax scenarios could arise from the issuance of a Form 1099, NMDA strongly recommends consulting a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and visiting this IRS site: <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-1099-misc>.

REQUIRED AS YOUR FIRST PROJECT ACTIVITY: PRE-PROJECT SOIL ASSESSMENT AND SOIL TESTING

28. What is the distinction NMDA makes between soil *assessment* and soil *testing*?

A: Soil assessment happens in the field and can be done by the farmer, rancher, or land manager at no cost. Soil assessment analyzes the behavior and **physical** properties of your soil. Soil testing, on the other hand, happens in a laboratory setting, which soil labs perform for a fee. NMDA requires that soil testing includes a **chemical** analysis. Beyond this instruction, NMDA's Healthy Soil Program does not require or endorse a specific soil-testing procedure.

29. Is pre-project soil testing a reimbursable project activity?

A: Yes. Because pre-project soil testing is a requirement for Healthy Soil Program grantees, it is reimbursable. Thus, Individual Applicants must include the cost of pre-project soil testing for chemical analysis where noted in their timeline and budget template. If an Individual Applicant desires additional soil testing beyond basic chemical analysis, the applicant must explain why their online grant application.

30. Is post-project soil testing a reimbursable project activity?

A: Yes. While post-project soil testing is not *required*, it is a reimbursable project activity, provided that:

1. The Individual Applicant plans to conduct *post*-project testing 12 months after pre-project testing or later, yet still within the grant term (July 15, 2026, to September 30, 2027);
2. The Individual Applicant plans to conduct the same number of *post*-project soil tests in the same locations as they plan to conduct *pre*-project; and
3. The Individual Applicant adds a line-item to their timeline and budget template that's reflective of the two points above.

31. How should I determine the number of soil samples to take and submit for pre-project soil testing?

Individual Applicants should consult their conservation planner at USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to determine the appropriate number of soil samples for lab-based testing. The total number of soil samples should be based on the number of soil types identified at the project site using Web Soil Survey, as well as the different management types at the project site.

32. To which soil health lab should I send my pre-project soil samples for testing?

A: NMDA's Healthy Soil Program does not recommend or endorse a specific lab. You may find this resource from New Mexico State University—Cooperative Extension Service useful in

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identifying a certified lab to analyze your soil samples:

https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_a/A146/welcome.html. At a minimum, the lab you select must be capable of testing soil for its chemical properties such as but not limited to nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

33. When must an Individual Applicant's pre-project soil test and soil assessment data be submitted to NMDA?

A: An Individual Applicant's soil test and soil assessment data should be provided to NMDA (via the Individual Applicant's Project Sponsor) as soon as such data are available. Such data must be submitted to NMDA no later than the deadline for the first quarterly report (November 30, 2026). **Reimbursement payments may be withheld until such data are submitted to NMDA.**

PROJECT BUDGET

34. I see that NMDA's template for documenting the timeline and budget for my project is in Excel format. Will NMDA accept that information in another format?

A: No. You must work on and submit your timeline and budget template **exclusively** using the Excel version found at <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>. Using any other format or file could render your application ineligible. Further, any manipulation of the formulas that automatically calculate dollar totals could also result in application ineligibility.

35. How do I complete the combined timeline and budget template?

A: First, download the template from the Individual Applicant website (<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>). Once the template is saved to your computer, **read the instructions on Tab 1**. From there, you can begin entering information in Tab 2 of the template, saving your work as you go.

The Individual Applicant is expected to do their own research on all activities, as well as goods and services, needed to implement their project. This includes providing on the budget template:

- A clear description of the **project activity** (what work is to be done, and where)
- A clear description of the **good or service** requested to conduct that project activity
- The **unit** in which the good or service is sold, as well as the **number of units** requested
 - Use specific measurements like 10 lbs., 1 ton, 100 linear feet, 10 hours, etc. Avoid using units whose measurements vary widely, such as *packets*, *bags*, *bales*, *truckloads*, *bundles*, *packages*, etc.
- The **price per unit**, including the per-unit breakdown of tax and any other additional charges assessed by the seller, such as shipping and handling

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36. Given that NMDA's combined timeline and budget template requires me to distinguish between goods and services, as well as between nondurable goods and durable goods, how do they all differ?

A: The chart below offers a way of understanding these differences:

GOODS		SERVICES
• Tangible • Items that are yours after purchase		• Intangible • Specialized work that is performed for a fee
NONDURABLE GOODS	DURABLE GOODS	
Perishable	Nonperishable	
Not subject to NMDA's \$4,999.99 cap	Subject to NMDA's \$4,999.99 cap (see Questions 30-31)	Not subject to NMDA's \$4,999.99 cap
Examples eligible for HSP funding include cover crop seed, compost, mulch, etc.	Examples eligible for HSP funding include PVC pipe, T-posts, wire, etc.	Examples eligible for HSP funding include soil testing, no-till drill rental, and other services performed by companies external to the Individual Applicant.
For more examples of eligible purchases, please visit https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html and refer to the Project Development Guidance Document available under Step 3. Continue reading to better understand funding restrictions.		

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37. What are some typically requested goods (nondurable and durable) and services that are **ineligible** for purchase using Healthy Soil Program grant funding?

A: Although the list below is not exhaustive, it is representative of previously requested goods and services that are **ineligible** for grant funding:

INELIGIBLE NONDURABLE GOODS	INELIGIBLE DURABLE GOODS	INELIGIBLE SERVICES
Any good (nondurable or durable) or service associated with an activity happening <i>outside</i> the grant period (July 15, 2026, to September 30, 2027)		
- Topsoil - Cash crop seed or tree stock (hemp, chile, peach, etc.) - Cover crop seed is eligible for grant funding, provided that the resulting cover crop is not baled or otherwise harvested for off-site use. - Livestock (cows, goats, sheep, chickens, bees, etc.) - Livestock feed - Bale grazing is eligible; see Question 32 for more information. - Project inputs (seed, compost, worm castings, etc.) produced by the Individual Applicant themselves	- A durable good costing \$5,000+ - A collection of durable goods whose combined cost is \$5,000+ *if* those durable goods must be combined to serve as a functional unit (such as T-posts + wire + clips = one fence) - Tillage equipment - Equipment for land leveling - Greenhouses, high tunnels, and planter boxes - Materials and labor for erosion-control structures - Since such structures can worsen problems if they're not properly designed and installed, NMDA recommends seeking guidance from USDA-NRCS on such structures, as well as related funding sources to construct them (EQIP, etc.). - Equipment for applying herbicide, insecticide, fungicide, rodenticide, etc.: totes, sprayers, booms, etc. - Power tools - Building materials (lumber, tin, electrical supplies, etc.) used to construct livestock-housing facilities and storage sheds - Fencing materials to facilitate grazing management projects may be eligible if they fall within the durable-goods limit described below. - Structures to shelter animals (barns, bee hives, bird/bat boxes, etc.) - Chicken tractors may be eligible if they fall within the durable-goods funding limit described above.	- Salary/wages for work performed by the Individual Applicant, their employees, or their household members - Specialized work performed by a company external to the Individual Applicant, their employees, and their household members may be eligible. - Consulting fees for services that aren't directly related to soil health - Consulting fees amounting to more than 10% of total project expenses - Labor for land leveling - Fuel, irrigation water, and utilities (electricity, natural gas, etc.) - Mileage and per diem - Mileage is payable to the Project Sponsor for one (1) required visit to the project site. - Provided that the Individual Applicant builds it into their timeline and budget template, mileage is payable to the Individual Applicant grantee for one (1) visit to the Project Sponsor (during a meeting of Project Sponsor leadership) to present on their grant progress. - Labor to care for animals (shepherding, maintaining beehives, etc.) - Testing and servicing water wells - Stipends to cover educational costs

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38. What are the restrictions on the purchase of **durable** goods?

A: A durable good costing \$5,000.00 or more is ineligible for grant funding. A durable good costing \$4,999.99 or less may be eligible if it is directly related to soil health improvement.

- Durable goods that are purchased to function as part of a larger unit – such as lengths of PVC pipe for a waterline, or posts and wire for a fence – are considered *collectively*. **For example:** If the combined cost of the posts and wire required for a fence is more than \$4,999.99, then the posts and wire are ineligible for grant funding.

39. I understand that Healthy Soil Program funds cannot be used to feed livestock, but they can be put toward bale-grazing projects. How do I put forward a successful bale-grazing project?

A: Individual Applicants whose conservation plan indicates a soil health-related resource concern that can be addressed by bale grazing should continue working with a USDA-NRCS certified conservation planner to develop a bale-grazing plan. Specifically, such Individual Applicants must use the bale grazing template available on the Healthy Soil Program web page specific to Individual Applicants: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>. The template is based on “USDA-NRCS Conservation Enhancement Activity New Mexico Supplement, E528P Implementing bale or swath grazing to increase organic matter and reduce nutrients in surface water”.

40. How does NMDA distinguish between *contractors* and *consultants*?

A: A consultant provides *advice* to the individual applicant on how it should implement its project. A contractor provides *hands-on service(s)*: testing the soil, seeding the cover crop, etc.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION, REVIEW, AND SELECTION

41. Will NMDA review my application materials and offer feedback if I submit those materials before the application deadline?

A: No. To maintain fairness in what is a competitive process, NMDA does **not** review Healthy Soil Program grant application materials prior to the application deadline. Instead, Individual Applicants are invited to review the resources available on the [Individual Applicant webpage](#), including an application document checklist, detailed step-by-step application process, and this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. If you have *specific* questions about your project, you're encouraged to submit those via hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu.

42. After I submit my application, will NMDA contact me if they have questions about it?

A: No. Before submitting their application, Individual Applicants are expected to review the resources available on the Healthy Soil Program web page specific to Individual Applicants: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>. Further, all Individual Applicants can contact NMDA before submitting their application if they need additional information.

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43. Will NMDA review and provide feedback on late, incomplete, or paper applications?

A: No. NMDA will not accept, review, or provide feedback on applications that are incomplete, or that are submitted outside of our grant-application portal.

44. How are applications evaluated and selected?

A: After reviewing applications to ensure that they are eligible (i.e., complete and within the scope of the Healthy Soil Program), NMDA convenes a Technical Review Committee to evaluate applications. This committee consists of representatives from the state's Eligible Entity communities; scientists with expertise in soil health; staff from USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); farmers and ranchers; and, per the Healthy Soil Act, members of the New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Based on their evaluation, the committee recommends projects and funding levels. The committee's recommendations then are presented to the New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture for final decision-making.

45. If my project is selected for partial funding, how will the decision be made about which items are scaled down or altogether removed?

A: The first items removed from the project budget are those that are ineligible for grant funding. In instances where only partial funding is awarded, NMDA will make decisions based on the Individual Applicant's response to the related question in the application (regarding the possibility of partial funding and how that would necessitate a scaling-back of project activities and associated goods and/or services). Because of the volume of projects and the need to begin project work without delay, **this process is not open to negotiation** with the Individual Applicant or their Project Sponsor.

46. Will I be notified of the outcome of my application?

A: Yes. On or about June 12, 2026, Individual Applicants will be notified of the outcome, regardless of whether their projects were selected for funding or not. NMDA will send this notification via the email address provided in the application.

IF YOUR PROJECT IS AWARDED A HEALTHY SOIL PROGRAM GRANT

47. What is required of the Individual Applicant grantee and their Project Sponsor prior to receiving Healthy Soil Program grant funding?

A: Each Individual Applicant whose application is selected for funding, along with their Project Sponsor, must attend a **mandatory grant training online on June 24, 2026, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Mountain Time**. The training will review in detail the soil testing and assessment, invoicing, and reporting requirements that come with receiving grant funds, as well as any contractual agreements between NMDA and grantees. **Failure to attend the grantee training risks cancellation of the grant award.**

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48. If my project is selected for a Healthy Soil Program grant, when will funding be released for its implementation?

A: All grant funds are paid on a reimbursement basis. This means that the Individual Applicant implementing the project must incur an approved project cost before seeking Healthy Soil Program funds to reimburse that cost. The Individual Applicant should submit their receipts to their Project Sponsor early and often; in turn, the Project Sponsor will submit their own invoices (and related Individual Applicant receipts) to NMDA on a quarterly basis at a minimum. Invoices and related receipts must match the approved budget for the project. Purchases of goods and services that are not part of the approved project budget will not be reimbursed. Purchases that exceed line-item dollar amounts in the approved project budget will not be reimbursed in excess of the approved amount for that line-item.

49. I work at an SWCD or tribal government that completed the Letter of Support template affirming our sponsorship of an Individual Applicant's project. If the project is selected for funding, do we need to take additional steps (i.e., vote on the project again) to reiterate our support?

A: No. The Letter of Support template acknowledges all of the activities that will be required of the Project Sponsor if the Individual Applicant project is selected for funding. Thus, **the Letter of Support template precludes the need for the Project Sponsor's governing body to meet and vote on the project a second time.** Avoiding this unnecessary step will ensure that the Individual Applicant, the Project Sponsor, and NMDA can move forward in the process quickly so that project work can begin immediately.

50. How can we – the Individual Applicant grantee and the Project Sponsor – ensure quick, complete payment for approved project expenses?

A: Both the Individual Applicant and the Project Sponsor have important roles to play in ensuring quick, complete payment for approved project expenses:

- **INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT**

- Follow the approved timeline + budget for your project.
- Know that NMDA will not reimburse cost *estimates*.
- **Avoid paying cash for approved budget items unless you can get a store-printed (rather than handwritten or even home-printed) receipt.**
- When buying an approved budget item, get a receipt showing that the balance due is \$0.00.
 - Otherwise, you'll be asked to provide proof of payment: a canceled check, or a bank or credit card statement.
- Keep your receipts.
- Keep your receipts away from sunlight, liquids, and anything else that might make them illegible.
- Submit receipts to your Project Sponsor early and often, noting the line-item number (from your approved project timeline + budget) associated with the goods and/or services purchased.

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NMDA's Healthy Soil Program **INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT** grants

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- Contact your Project Sponsor well in advance if you foresee shortages in approved budget items you have yet to purchase
- **PROJECT SPONSOR (SWCD or pueblo, tribe, or nation)**
 - Verify that the Individual Applicant is following the approved timeline + budget for their project.
 - This can be done easily by comparing the Individual Applicant's receipts to the approved timeline + budget.
 - Keep in mind that NMDA will not reimburse expenses that are not part of the approved project budget. This includes tax, shipping and handling, postage, etc. not *already* accounted for within each line-item.
 - Verify that the Individual Applicant's receipts show a balance due of \$0.00.
 - Keep the Individual Applicant's receipts away from sunlight, liquids, and anything else that might make them illegible.
 - Invoice NMDA for approved Individual Applicant expenses:
 - **early and often – at least quarterly**
 - on Project Sponsor letterhead (using the invoice template NMDA provides)
 - noting the current date
 - noting the purchase order (P.O.) number specific to that Individual Applicant's project
 - referencing specific line-items on the approved project budget; and
 - attaching related receipts that are **legible**.
 - Verify information on the invoice and associated receipts before emailing them to NMDA's Healthy Soil Program (hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu).

IMPORTANT PROGRAM DATES

Date <i>Hours shown in Mountain Time</i>	What happens	Who is involved
January 16, 2026	Application period opens for Individual Applicants	Individual Applicants
February 20 5 p.m.	Deadline to complete conservation planning with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Individual Applicants
February Date/time TBD	NMDA hosts webinar to demonstrate application process	Individual Applicants + Project Sponsors (SWCDs + tribal governments)
(Date will vary by Project Sponsor)	Deadline to secure sponsorship for your project from an SWCD or tribal government	Individual Applicants

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March 20 12 p.m. (noon)	Deadline to apply (application period closes for Individual Applicants)	Individual Applicants
Application period above Award period below		
June 12 (on or about)	NMDA notifies all Individual Applicants of application outcome	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors
June 24 3:30 to 5 p.m.	NMDA hosts mandatory grantee training online	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors
June 25	NMDA begins distributing contractual paperwork (Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs)) that must be fully executed before grant-funded activities can begin	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors + NMDA
July 15	• Earliest date when grant-funded activities – starting with pre-project soil test(s) and soil assessment(s) – can begin <i>if</i> MOA is returned to NMDA	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors
July 31	Deadline for Project Sponsor to return to NMDA the MOA signed by both the Individual Applicant and the Project Sponsor. NMDA reserves the right to cancel a grant award if this deadline is not met.	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors
October 31	End of 1 st quarter	Individual Applicants
November 30	Deadline for Project Sponsor to submit Individual Applicant's 1 st quarterly report, including pre-project soil test and assessment data, to NMDA	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors
February 28, 2027	End of 2 nd quarter	Individual Applicants
March 31	Deadline for Project Sponsor to submit Individual Applicant's 2 nd quarterly report to NMDA	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors
May 31	End of 3 rd quarter	Individual Applicants
June 30	Deadline for Project Sponsor to submit Individual Applicant's 3 rd quarterly report	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors
September 30	End of 4 th /FINAL quarter • Deadline to complete grant-funded activities • Deadline to perform post-project soil assessment(s)	Individual Applicants
October 15	• Deadline for Project Sponsor to submit Individual Applicant's 4th	Individual Applicants + their Project Sponsors

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

	quarterly/FINAL report, including post-project soil assessment data, to NMDA • Deadline for Project Sponsor to submit final invoices to NMDA for approved project expenses	
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

51. Where can I learn more about NMDA's Healthy Soil Program?

A: To learn more about the Healthy Soil Program, visit <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program.html> or contact NMDA's Healthy Soil Program team at hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu.

Further, we invite you to **subscribe for a brief weekly email** from NMDA's Healthy Soil Program featuring program announcements; grant-application tips and deadline reminders; other funding opportunities; and soil health events and news. You can subscribe by completing the fillable form at the bottom of the program's homepage (<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program.html>) or by sending an email to hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject line.