



HOW INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS APPLY FOR HEALTHY SOIL PROGRAM GRANTS TO IMPROVE YOUR SOIL

DEAN BRUCE AND KATIE GOETZ, CO-LEADS OF NMDA'S HEALTHY SOIL PROGRAM

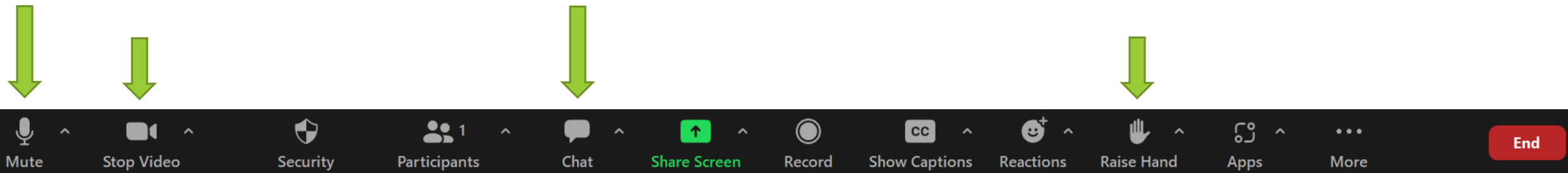
Welcome and Housekeeping

You're welcome to introduce yourself in the Chat, noting whether you manage cropland, rangeland, or another type of land in New Mexico

During the presentation, please stay on **Mute** and type your question in the **Chat**

After the presentation, you can use the **Raise Hand** feature, then unmute to ask your question out loud

We are recording. We will share these slides, plus a subtitled video, soon



The image shows a Zoom meeting control bar with several icons and labels. From left to right, the icons are: a microphone (Mute), a video camera (Stop Video), a shield (Security), two people (Participants), a speech bubble (Chat), a green square with an upward arrow (Share Screen), a circle with a dot (Record), a CC icon (Show Captions), a smiley face with a plus sign (Reactions), a hand (Raise Hand), a screen with a plus sign (Apps), and three dots (More). A red button labeled 'End' is on the far right. Four green arrows point downwards to the Mute, Stop Video, Chat, and Raise Hand icons.

Tonight's Agenda:

All about NMDA's Healthy Soil Program grants

- ✓ **Who** can apply?
- ✓ **What** projects are eligible?
- ✓ **When** can projects happen?
- ✓ **Where** can projects happen?
- ✓ **How** do I apply?
- ✓ **Why** are grant certain grant applications successful and others aren't?

WHO in New Mexico can apply for NMDA's Healthy Soil Program grants?

1. Eligible Entities


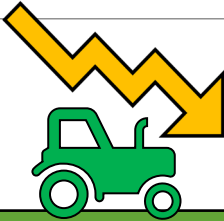
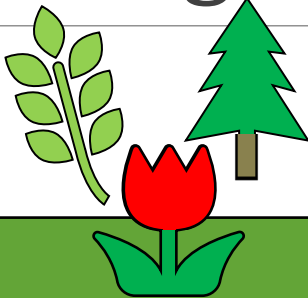

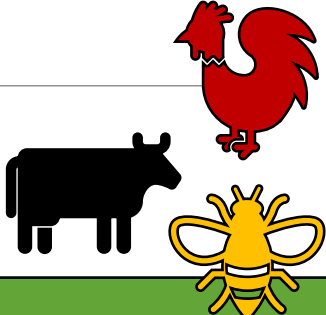
- Pueblos, tribes, and nations
- Acequias
- Land grants
- Soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs)
- NMSU—Cooperative Extension Service
- Other “**local governmental entit[ies]** with proven land management capacity to support healthy soil”

Similar webinar for
Eligible Entities on Thursday, Jan. 18
from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Mountain Time

2. Individual Applicants

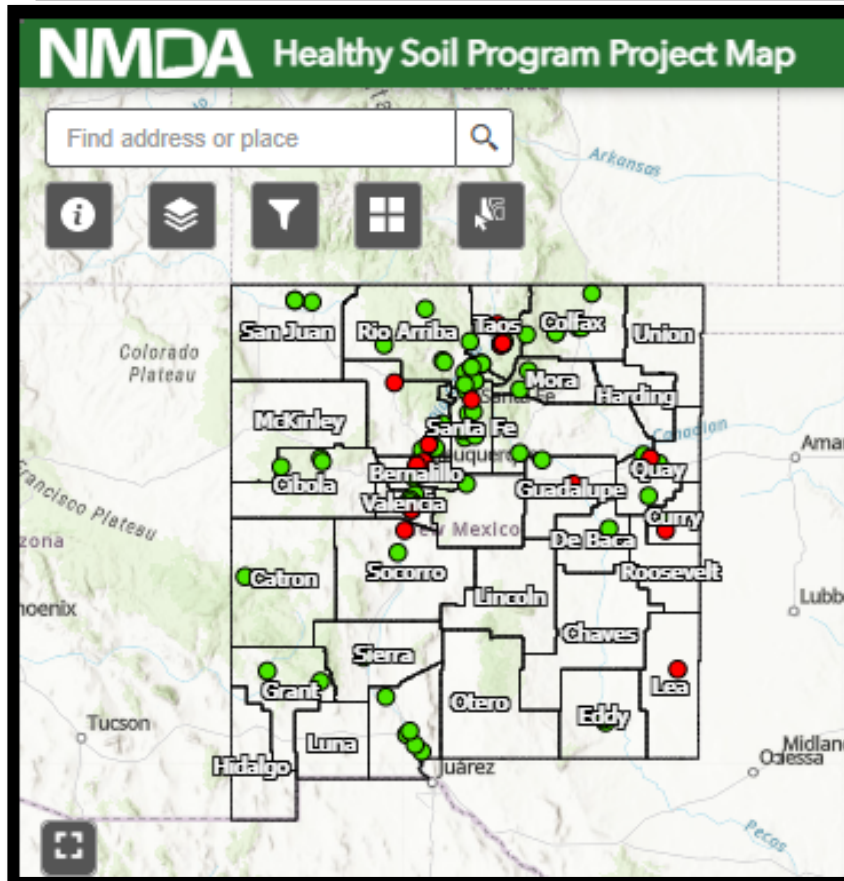
- Non-governmental parties (**individuals, businesses, and nonprofits**) directly engaged in farming, ranching, or another form of land management
- Application period: **From February 23 to April 26 at 12 p.m. (noon) Mountain Time**
- Can apply for **up to \$22,000 per project**

WHAT projects are eligible for NMDA's Healthy Soil Program grants?

The 5 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...
EXAMPLES of project activities that revolve around each principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving plant residue • Planting cover crops • Using organic mulch • Grazing rangeland at a level to maintain cover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting tillage and synthetic inputs • Rotating livestock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using diverse crop rotations • Planting diverse cover crops • Integrating livestock into cropland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing fallowing • Planting cover crops • Maintaining and promoting plant diversity on rangeland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing livestock on cropland • Proper grazing use on rangeland • Planting pollinator habitat

WHAT projects are eligible?

(cont'd.)



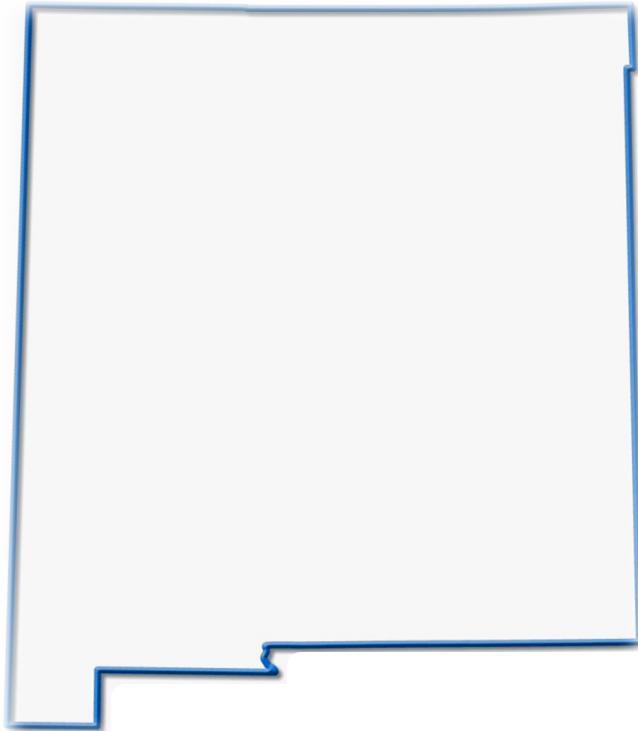
- This map shows projects funded in Fiscal Years (FYs) 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023
- Click on a **green dot** to learn more about a previous Individual Applicant project
- Find this map on the Healthy Soil Program website:
<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program.html>

WHEN do projects funded by NMDA's Healthy Soil Program happen?

For Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) projects, project activities can happen only between **August 2024** and **May 2025** (10 months)



WHERE can Healthy Soil Program-funded projects happen?



Cropland, rangeland, forest land, orchards

Market gardens, community gardens, and subsistence gardens

Projects can happen **only where there's an existing relationship** between the Individual Applicant and the project site

You must have landowner permission to implement a Healthy Soil Program project on land you don't own

No minimum acreage requirement

- Acres and square feet are both acceptable measurements

Image credit: KindPNG

HOW do I apply for a grant from NMMDA's Healthy Soil Program?

New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Search our site: ENHANCED BY Google

NMDA ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FORMS & APPLICATIONS LICENSING & REGISTRATION INSPECTIONS STATUTES & RULES DIV

FY25 Requirements for Individual Applicants

Individual Applicants are individuals, businesses, and nonprofits directly engaged in farming, ranching, and/or other forms of land management in New Mexico. To apply for a Healthy Soil Program grant, an Individual Applicant must follow the steps below by the deadlines noted. All **completed** applications must be submitted online by **April 26, 2024 at 12 p.m. (noon)**.

For application tips and Healthy Soil Program updates – as well as soil health news and events – subscribe to our weekly newsletter via the form at the bottom of the [Healthy Soil Program](#) web page.

January 16, 2024 pre-application webinar: [Register here](#) to join us from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Mountain.

Step 1. Identify the partners you must work with in order to apply for a grant from NMDA's Healthy Soil Program.

1. Identify the nearest office of [USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#). See **Step 2** to learn more.
2. Identify the [soil and water conservation district \(SWCD\)](#) in which you reside or the [pueblo, tribe, or nation](#) of which you are a member. The earlier you involve your SWCD or tribal nation, the better your chances of putting forward a strong, well-informed grant application. See **Step 5** to learn more.

Step 2. Complete conservation planning with NRCS. Deadline to complete this step: March 22, 2024 at 5 p.m.

Conservation planning is the process of inventorying a piece of land to assess its current state and full potential. Conservation planning guides the land manager in designing all aspects of their Healthy Soil Program project to improve soil health. Learn more by reviewing the [slides from our October 18, 2023 webinar all about NRCS conservation planning](#) and how that process fits into NMDA's Healthy Soil Program.

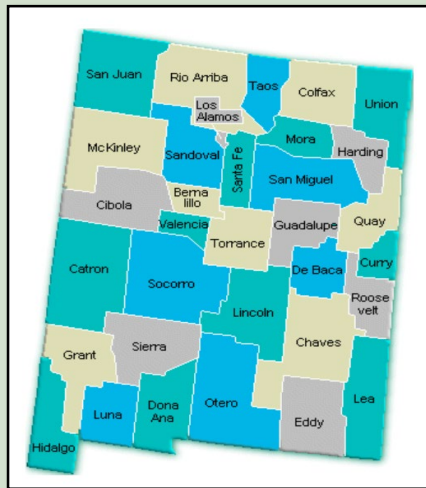
EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED TO APPLY FOR A GRANT CAN BE FOUND ON THE HEALTHY SOIL PROGRAM WEB PAGE SPECIFIC TO INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS.



Step 1. Identify the partners you must work with in order to apply.

FOR CONSERVATION PLANNING

Individual Applicants must work with **USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** to complete conservation planning.

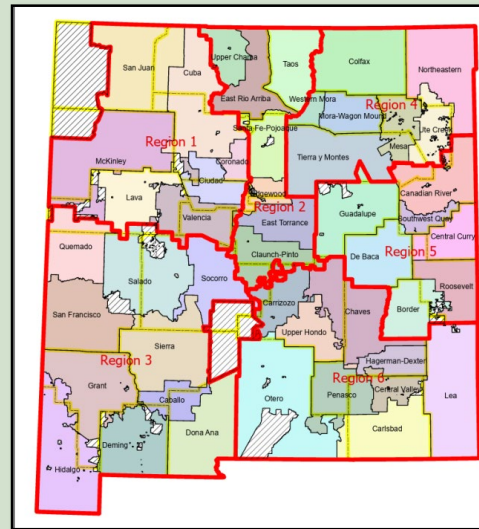


Map courtesy of USDA

FOR PROJECT SPONSORSHIP

Individual Applicants must seek project sponsorship from **either:**

- your **soil and water conservation district (SWCD); or**
- your **pueblo, tribe, or nation**



or



Map courtesy of NMDOH

Step 2. Complete conservation planning with NRCS **by March 22, 2024 at 5 p.m.**



- Make an appointment to have an NRCS conservation planner come to the land you manage

Before your appointment, use Web Soil Survey to create either a soil map (cropland) or Ecological Site Description map (rangeland)

- The resulting map will tell you the inherent capabilities of the soil on the land you manage
- Watch a step-by-step tutorial video on our website showing how to use Web Soil Survey

Step 2. Complete conservation planning with NRCS **by March 22, 2024 at 5 p.m.**

- Your NRCS conservation planner will identify **the soil health-related resource concerns on the land you manage**, as well as recommendations to address them
- **Examples of soil health-related resource concerns:**
 - erosion
 - compaction
 - depleted organic matter
 - concentration of salts (or other chemicals)
 - loss or degradation of soil-organism habitat
 - aggregate instability (i.e., poor soil structure)



Image credit: USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Step 2. Complete conservation planning with NRCS **by March 22, 2024 at 5 p.m.**

To apply for a Healthy Soil Program grant, an Individual Applicant must submit **one** of these NRCS-completed conservation planning documents:



or

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25)
NMDA's Healthy Soil Program
Conservation Planning Template required for Individual Applicants with cropland
USDA-NRCS in-field assessment and recommendations

NOTE: Conservation planning with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a pre-application requirement for Individual Applicants seeking Healthy Soil Program grants. If you are applying for a grant with a project that will occur on cropland, you must submit this template (or an existing conservation plan from NRCS) as part of your application. This template *must* be completed in cooperation with NRCS, including the planner's signature) as part of your Healthy Soil Program application.

NOTE: NMDA's Healthy Soil Program requires grant applicants to upload an Ecological Site Description map (using <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>) as part of their online application. Because such a map indicates different ecological sites within the project site and is essential to the conservation planning process, NMDA recommends that all applicants create and study this map *prior* to their conservation-planning appointment with NRCS.

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25)
NMDA's Healthy Soil Program
Conservation Planning Template required for Individual Applicants with rangeland
USDA-NRCS in-field assessment and recommendations

NOTE: Conservation planning with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a pre-application requirement for Individual Applicants seeking Healthy Soil Program grants. If you are applying for a grant with a project that will occur on rangeland, you must submit this template (or an existing conservation plan from NRCS) as part of your application. This template was *not* designed for the Individual Applicant to complete themselves. This template *must* be completed in cooperation with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on or before March 22, 2024. Failure to submit an NRCS conservation plan or this template (completed in cooperation with NRCS, including the planner's signature) as part of your Healthy Soil Program application will render your application incomplete.

NOTE: NMDA's Healthy Soil Program requires grant applicants applying for rangeland projects to upload an Ecological Site Description map (using <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>) as part of their online application. Because such a map indicates different ecological sites within the project site and is essential to the conservation planning process, NMDA recommends that all applicants create and study this map *prior* to their conservation-planning appointment with NRCS.

Farmer/Land Manager: _____
Location: (Physical Address, Section/Range/Township, Latitude/Longitude) _____

FOR THE: _____

Page 1 of 4

NOTE: If you apply for funding to do **bale grazing**, you must submit our bale grazing template completed with NRCS in addition to your conservation planning documents.

Step 2. Complete conservation planning with NRCS **by March 22, 2024 at 5 p.m.**

Tips for successful conservation planning with NRCS:

- ✓ Use Web Soil Survey to create your **soil map** or **Ecological Site Description map** **prior to meeting** with your NRCS conservation planner
- ✓ Have **clear soil health-related goals** in mind to share with your NRCS conservation planner
- ✓ Have **current and past management details of the land** to share with your NRCS conservation planner
 - ✓ Crop rotations, irrigation history, grazing management, etc.
- ✓ **Ask questions of your NRCS conservation planner!**
 - ✓ Seed mixes, seeding/application rates, alternative crop rotations, grazing system alternatives, etc.

Step 3. Use your NRCS conservation planning documents to develop your project idea.

NMDA's Resource Concern Guide Sheets show the relationship between soil health-related resource concerns and soil health principles, as well as **examples** of agricultural/conservation practices that can address those resource concerns

The resource concern guide sheets can help you decide which practices to implement in order to improve your soil health

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25)
NMDA's Healthy Soil Program
Resource Concern Guide Sheet for CROPLAND

This guide sheet is designed to help you select agricultural/conservation practices existing soil health-related natural resource concerns on cropland. It is intended as a starting point rather than as an exhaustive list of all resource concerns and agricultural practices that address existing resource concerns. These agricultural practices align with those promoted by the New Mexico office of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The three-digit codes associated with NRCS New Mexico Practice Standards are listed and hyperlinked below to provide you additional information.

The soil health principles as defined in the 2019 Healthy Soil Act are listed below and correspond with the numbers in the right-hand column of the chart that follows.

- 1) keeping soil covered
- 2) minimizing soil 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

Resource Concern	Agricultural Practice on Cropland
Erosion (wind and water)	Cover crops to protect soil surface (340)
Presence of eroding soil (soil movement both on to and off of the field) due to wind, rain, or irrigation water application	No-till (329) or reduced-till (345) farming techniques Field borders (unharvested crop residue and/or high-residue plantings along field edges; shrub establishment) (386) Mulching (484)
Low soil organic matter	Cover crops (340)
Lack of organic materials at various stages of decomposition within the soil	Organic-based soil amendments (compost, manure, biochar, etc.) (590), (484) Diverse crop rotation (cash crop) (328) No-till (329) or reduced-till (345) farming techniques Proper grazing of cover crops/cash crops (528)
Water infiltration and percolation	Cover crop mixes with various rooting depths (340)
Poor water movement into and within the soil (ponding of water after rain events or irrigation)	Organic-based soil amendments (compost, manure, biochar) (590), (484) Short-duration, high-intensity grazing (528)

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25)
NMDA's Healthy Soil Program
Resource Concern Guide Sheet for RANGELAND

This guide sheet is designed to help you select agricultural/conservation practices to address your existing soil health-related natural resource concerns on rangeland. It is intended as a starting point rather than as an exhaustive list of all resource concerns and agricultural practices that can address existing resource concerns. These agricultural practices align with those promoted by the New Mexico office of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The three-digit codes associated with NRCS New Mexico Practice Standards are listed and hyperlinked below to provide you additional information.

The soil health principles as defined in the 2019 Healthy Soil Act are listed below. They correspond with the numbers in the right-hand column of the chart that follows.

- 1) keeping soil covered
- 2) minimizing soil 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

Resource Concern	Agricultural Practice on Rangeland	Soil Health Principle
Decreased plant productivity and health	Prescribed grazing (528)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Lack of overall forage production and health of existing plant species	Native grass and/or pollinator habitat establishment (500), (327) Temporary fencing * (382) Organic-based soil amendments (compost, manure, biochar, etc.) (484), (590)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 -- 3
Insufficient plant species and composition	Prescribed grazing (528)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Plant community composition of warm-season grasses, cool-season grasses, forbs, and shrubs not consistent with management goals	Native grass and/or pollinator habitat establishment (500), (327) Cover crops to improve soil fertility/plant diversity (340) Temporary fencing * (382) Organic-based soil amendments (compost, manure, biochar, etc.) (484), (590)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 -- 3
Lack of soil biodiversity	Prescribed grazing (528)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
A lack of diversity among the plants, animals, and soil organisms interacting with the soil	Native grass and/or pollinator habitat establishment (500), (327) Cover crops to improve biodiversity (340) Temporary fencing * (382)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 3, 4, 5 --

Step 3. Use your conservation planning documents to **develop your project idea.**

While reviewing your NRCS-completed conservation planning documentation, ask yourself:

- *Which **soil health-related resource concerns** will my project focus on?*
- *Which **soil health principles** will best address those resource concerns?*
- *Which **agricultural/conservation practices** will best put those soil health principles into action?*



Step 3. Use your conservation planning documents to **develop your project idea.**

After reviewing your NRCS-completed conservation planning documentation, consult the resources on NMDA's website and ask yourself:






- *Which of my intended agricultural/conservation practices can be **implemented during the grant term**?*
- *What **goods/services** will I need to implement those agricultural/conservation practices?*
- *From **which companies** will I source those goods and services?*
- *What are the **actual costs** of those goods and services?*

Find the FAQ
and other resources
on our website

Step 4. Work on the online grant application – including the all-important timeline and budget.

A		B		C		D														E		F		G		H		I		J		K		L		M		N		O		P		Q		R		S		T		U		V		W		X		Y	
1		TIMELINE of PROJECT ACTIVITIES in chronological order				FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY 25) INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT BUDGET: GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED FOR YOUR HEALTHY SOIL PROGRAM PROJECT																																																							
2						NMDA will not reimburse actual expenses in excess of line-item totals. Thus, you should account for any applicable taxes, shipping charges, etc. in each line-item's <i>cost per unit</i> .																																																							
3		TIMELINE		PROJECT ACTIVITIES		A. Non-Durable Goods (tangible, <i>short</i> -lived items like cover crop seed, compost, etc.)						B. Durable Goods (tangible, <i>long</i> -lived items like PVC pipe, T-posts, wire, etc.)						C. Services (specialized work performed by a business)																																											
4		Click on a box below, then click the dropdown menu ▼ to the right of each box to note the quarter in which each project activity will occur:		Do use verbs and important details to describe what you plan to do. Example: <i>Drill-seed a 5-way cover crop mix in Field A</i>		* See FAQs regarding exclusion of certain non-durable goods, such as topsoil, <i>cash</i> crop seed, etc.						* See FAQs regarding exclusion of certain durable goods, such as building materials and power tools; and any durable good costing \$5,000+.						* See FAQs regarding exclusion of certain services, such as labor performed by the Individual Applicant, their workers, or their household members.																																											
5		1st Quarter (Aug-Oct 2024)		Do not list <i>only</i> what you plan to buy. (That information will already appear in one of the columns to the right.) Example: <i>5-way cover crop mix</i>		Name of Non-Durable Good		# of Units		Unit of Measure (<i>lbs., tons, etc.</i>)		Cost per Unit		Non-Durable Goods Line-item Totals		Name of Durable Good		# of Units		Unit of Measure (<i>linear feet, posts, etc.</i>)		Cost per Unit		Durable Goods Line-item Totals		Brief Description of Service		Name of Business that will Perform this Service		# of Units		Unit of Measure (<i>hrs., days, etc.</i>)		Cost per Unit		Services Line-item Totals																									
6		2nd Quarter (Nov 2024-Feb 2025)																																																											
7		3rd/Final Quarter (March-May 2025)																																																											
1		1st Q (Aug-Oct 2024)		REQUIRED: Get soil sample(s) from project site(s) lab-tested before starting the project						x		=		\$0.00												Lab-based soil testing (as required for all grantees)		(in this box, enter the name of the soil lab you chose; in the box to the right, enter the number of pre-project soil samples you'll submit to that lab)		soil test		x		=		\$0.00																									
2										x		=		\$0.00																																															
3										x		=		\$0.00																																															

Step 4. Work on the online grant application – including the all-important timeline and **budget**.

Eligible for consideration	Ineligible for consideration
<p>Nondurable Goods Tangible, short-lived items like cover crop seed, compost, etc.</p> 	<p>Nondurable Goods Tangible, short-lived items like topsoil, cash crop seed, livestock</p> 
<p>Durable Goods Tangible, long-lived items costing \$4,999.99 or less</p> 	<p>Durable Goods Tangible, long-lived items costing \$5,000.00 or more</p> 
<p>Services Specialized work that is directly related to soil health (like <i>testing</i> soil, <i>renting</i> no-till equipment, etc.)</p> 	<p>Services Specialized work not related to soil</p>

See the FAQ on our website for more examples

Image credits: kissclipart.com, bucknellian.net, pngkey.com, clipartkey.com, freepik.com, stockio.com, creazilla.com, dlpng.com

Step 5. Secure project sponsorship from your SWCD or your tribal nation.

Once your application materials are near-final, you'll have what you need to show your SWCD or tribal nation that your project is worthy of their sponsorship

Use our Letter of Support template to affirm your Project Sponsor's support

The deadline to complete this step will vary depending on your Project Sponsor

- **Contact your Project Sponsor well before the April 26 grant-application deadline to understand their particular timeframes**

NMDA's Healthy Soil Program | Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25)
Letter of Support from your Project Sponsor*
REQUIRED FOR INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS

ABOUT THE LETTER OF SUPPORT

An Individual Applicant's project must be supported by a Project Sponsor (*a New Mexico soil and water conservation district (SWCD); or the New Mexico pueblo, tribe, or nation of which you are a member).

The Individual Applicant must complete Page 2 of this document, then present it to their Project Sponsor. The Project Sponsor then must complete Pages 3 and 4, sign this document in all the places noted, and return the entire document to the Individual Applicant for the Individual Applicant to submit as part of their online grant application. **Without the completed, dated, and signed version of this form, an Individual Applicant's application is incomplete.**

NMDA encourages Project Sponsors to review your conservation planning documentation from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the combined timeline/budget template for your project. Thus, **before** presenting this form to your intended Project Sponsor, you must complete conservation planning with NRCS and develop, if not finalize, your project's timeline/budget. **Contact your intended Project Sponsor to learn of their important dates you may need to consider in order to submit your completed Healthy Soil Program grant application online by the 12 p.m. (noon) deadline on April 26, 2024.** NMDA will not accept late and/or incomplete applications.

IF THE INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT'S PROJECT IS SELECTED FOR A GRANT

This Letter of Support affirms that the Project Sponsor (SWCD; or pueblo, tribe, or nation) and its governing body support the proposed project; and, if a grant is awarded, is willing to serve as the project's fiscal agent and manager during the grant term (FY25). Further, **this Letter of Support affirms that the Project Sponsor is aware of the requirements it must fulfill:**

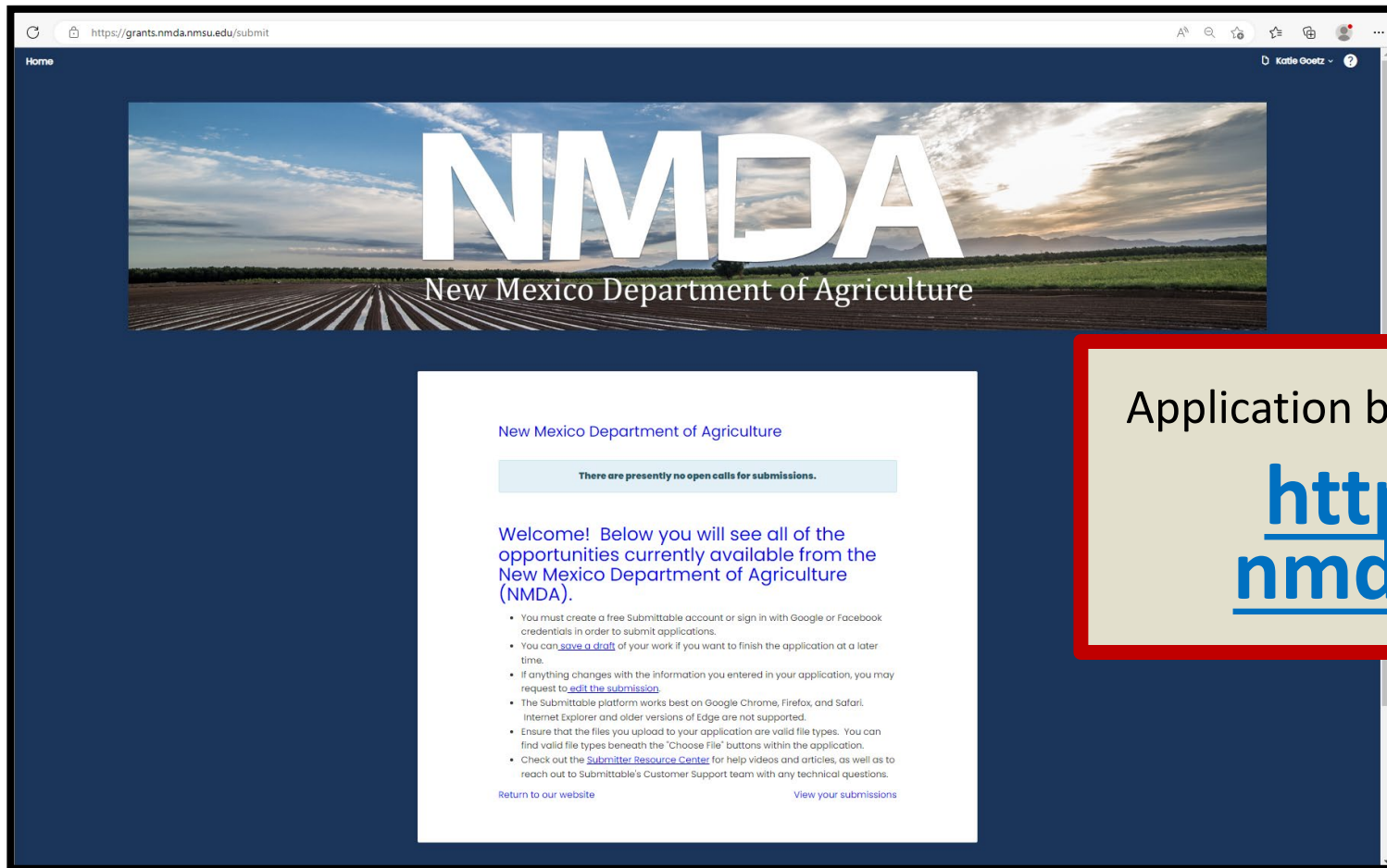
- Attend a **mandatory grant training online on July 10, 2024**, prior to execution of the grant
- Serve as liaison between NMDA and the Individual Applicant
- In a timely way and in compliance with program deadlines, collect from the Individual Applicant, **verify**, and submit to NMDA any necessary grant documentation (contractual agreements, invoices, receipts, quarterly/final reports, etc.)
- In a timely way, disburse grant funds due to the Individual Applicant
- **Visit the project site at the beginning of the project** in order to assist the Individual Applicant with their required pre-project soil-sample collection (for laboratory-based testing) and in-field soil assessment
- **Issue the Individual Applicant a File Form 1099-MISC** for each calendar year (2024 and/or 2025) in which the Individual Applicant has received \$600 or more in Healthy Soil Program grant funding

Step 6. Finalize and submit your online grant application **by April 26, 2024 at 12 p.m. (noon).**

Use the checklist on our website to ensure your online grant application is complete and ready for submission:

- Project site images
- Soil map (cropland) and/or Ecological Site Description map (rangeland) created using Web Soil Survey
- NRCS conservation plan –OR– conservation planning template (cropland or rangeland) completed by NRCS
- Bale grazing template completed by NRCS (*required if bale grazing is a component of your project*)
- Timeline and budget template
- Letter of Support template signed by your Project Sponsor
- Supporting items (*optional*)

Step 6. Finalize and submit your online grant application **by April 26, 2024 at 12 p.m. (noon).**



Application becomes available **Feb. 23** at

<https://grants.nmda.nmsu.edu>

WHY are certain Healthy Soil Program grant applications successful, and others aren't?

Successful applications...	Unsuccessful applications...
✓ Are complete and submitted on time	X Are incomplete and/or not submitted by the deadline
✓ Are focused on improving soil health	X Are focused on landscaping, feeding livestock, etc.
✓ Point back to conservation planning	X Ignore what the conservation planning documents say
✓ Are clear and specific about project activities and the timeline for their implementation	X Are vague about project activities and the timeline for their implementation
✓ Have budgets that are clear and specific about the names, costs, and amounts of goods and services requested for the project	X Have budgets requesting items whose names, costs, and amounts aren't well researched
✓ Feature the required signatures from your NRCS conservation planner –and– your Project Sponsor	X Are absent the required signatures
✓ Are unique , tailored to the specific needs of the project site	X Are copied from someone else, an online resource, etc.

Questions?

NMDA's Healthy Soil Program **homepage:**

<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program.html>

Subscribe to our weekly e-newsletter

for application tips and deadline reminders,
as well as soil health news and events

Web page specific to **Individual Applicants:**

<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>

hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu

575-646-2642



Stay tuned to sign up
for our **March 5 application-demonstration webinar**
(the online application launches Feb. 23)