



January 25, 2021

New Mexico Counties is pleased to announce the 2021-2022 Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) Program for Rural Communities. The WRR Program assists at-risk communities throughout New Mexico in reducing their risk from wildland fire on non-federal lands.

Funding for this program is provided by the National Fire Plan through the Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management for communities in the wildland urban interface and is intended to directly benefit communities that may be impacted by wildland fire initiating from or spreading to BLM public land.

Grant funding categories include:

- Education and Outreach Activities up to \$10,000/project
- CWPP Updates up to \$15,000/project
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects up to \$50,000/project

Project proposals require a minimum 10% cost share and must be completed within the 12 month award timeline of July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022.

Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31, 2021. Please contact Aelysea Webb at (505) 395-3403 or awebb@nmcounties.org for more information.

Sincerely,

Steve Kopelman
Executive Director

The Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management and New Mexico Counties appreciate your interest in protecting our residents, communities, and state from wildland fires.

444 Galisteo Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501

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NMCOUNTIES.ORG

**New Mexico Counties
Wildfire Risk Reduction Program for Rural Communities
2021-2022 Program Information**

Background

The Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) Program for Rural Communities was established in 2005 under the National Fire Plan to assist communities throughout New Mexico in reducing their risk from wildland fire on non-federal lands. New Mexico Counties (NMC), a nonprofit community foundation, has partnered with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to administer the program and distribute awards.

This program is only applicable to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). WUI is defined as identified in an approved Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A completed and approved CWPP is a pre-requisite for funding through this program. The program targets at-risk communities by offering seed money to help defray the costs of reducing wildland fire risk on non-federal lands in WUI areas throughout New Mexico. Funding for this program is intended to directly benefit communities that may be impacted by wildland fire initiating from or spreading to BLM public land.

Program funding categories:

- Education and Outreach Activities up to \$10,000/project
- CWPP Updates up to \$15,000/project
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects up to \$50,000/project

The 2021-2022 WRR Program gives priority to applicants who request funding for education and outreach activities projects (i.e. Fire Adaptive Communities, Firewise, or Ready, Set, Go!) that encourage reducing wildfire risk on private lands and can show a direct benefit to BLM lands; for CWPP updates of plans that are more than five years old; and hazardous fuels reduction projects that focus on treatments to private lands with a direct benefit to BLM lands.

Applicants may apply for complimentary projects but no more than one per category (1-Education and Outreach Activities Project, 1-CWPP Update, 1-Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project). Each project must be submitted on a separate application. A selection committee comprised of wildland fire experts, federal, state and local government officials will review all project proposals and make funding recommendations. The NMC Board of Directors will have final approval of these recommendations.

All project proposals require a minimum 10% cost share. Cost share can be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Funded projects must be completed within 12 months of award acceptance. It is the responsibility of the awardee to assure that if their project is selected for funding through the WRR Program that it complies with applicable local, state, and federal laws. Applicants who receive more than \$500,000 annually from federal sources will be required to submit a copy of their audit to NMC. All funds must be expended within 12 months of award acceptance. Funds cannot be used to attempt to influence legislation or the outcome of any public election.

Prescribed burning of any type including, but not limited to, broadcast burns, pile burns, understory burns, etc. is explicitly excluded as an approved practice through this program.

Timeline

January–February 2021	Release of 2021–2022 WRR Program applications.
March 5, 2021	Deadline to submit application(s) to local BLM office for required signature.
March 31, 2021	Deadline to submit application(s) to NMC by 5:00 p.m.
April 2021	Selection committee reviews applications.
May 2021	NMC Board of Directors reviews and approves committee recommendations.
May–June 2021	Successful program recipients notified.
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	Project timeline (12–months).

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Be a county government or municipality, a 501(c)(3) organization in New Mexico, a statutorily recognized political subdivision such as a Soil & Water Conservation District, or a Native American tribe working on behalf of one or more communities at risk of wildfires in the State of New Mexico; and
- Contribute at least 10% cost share to the project that can include “in-kind” services. In-kind services may be comprised of labor, staff work, or any other non-federal agency participation costs; and
- Have their local BLM Fire/Fuels Management Officer review and sign off on the application for evaluation, which could lead to funding. (Additional signatures are required for hazardous fuels treatments.)

Criteria for Selection

Funding for this program is intended to directly benefit communities that may be impacted by wildland fire originating on or spreading to BLM public land. Projects must demonstrate that the area impacted by the project(s) is at risk to fire originating on or spreading to BLM public land and the area impacted by the project is in the WUI as defined by the applicable CWPP for the project.

Special consideration will be given to projects that:

- Are for an update to a CWPP that is more than five years old;
- Are for hazardous fuels reduction that demonstrate appropriate mitigation measures for cultural and endangered species impacts;
- Are directly adjacent to BLM public land;
- Include an education, prevention, and outreach activity that compliments a requested hazardous fuels reduction project;
- Provide greater than the minimum 10% cost share;
- Develop community capacity;
- Complement existing or ongoing projects;
- Utilize biomass from hazardous fuels reduction projects;
- Demonstrate a cost-effective approach to treating hazardous fuels;
- Develop sustainable education projects such as Train-the-Trainer;

- Provide a benefit to multiple communities identified by the New Mexico Communities at Risk Assessment Plan; and
- Does not needlessly duplicate similar efforts in the community.

Fundable Projects

All projects for hazardous fuel reduction and education and outreach must be identified in a CWPP. Funding for the 2021–2022 WRR Program is estimated at \$250,000. Applicants may request funding for no more than one project in each of the following categories:

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Fuels reduction projects and vegetation treatments should remove or modify fuels in the WUI to reduce potential wildfires. The goal is to modify or break up the fuels in such a way that lessens catastrophic fires and their threats to public and firefighter safety and reduces damage to property. Examples include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, and landscape modifications. Applicants are expected to thoroughly review the Endangered Species & Cultural/Historic Preservation Requirements. Prescribed burning of any type including, but not limited to, broadcast burns, pile burns, understory burns, etc. is explicitly excluded as an approved practice through this program.

Biomass utilization is encouraged as a beneficial alternative for all hazardous fuels reduction projects and will receive special consideration. Projects must be identified in a CWPP to be eligible for funding and must include a map showing exactly where the project will take place and the footprint of the project. Define the actual on-the-ground area of your project, rather than proposing work somewhere in a large area. For example, propose work on 15 acres and include a map at a scale of 1:24,000 that shows the boundaries of where the work will be done. Do not include a 1:100,000 scale map that shows a 1500-acre area and proposes to thin 15 acres somewhere within that 1500 acres.

Education & Outreach

Homeowners and communities have a responsibility to create “fire safe” conditions in and around structures to limit the transmission of fire from wildlands to property and property to wildlands. Funding for wildland fire education and outreach activities should support implementation of an applicable CWPP through the development of educational products, community outreach events, data collection, home evaluations, media and public information events, and training residents. Topics for these activities may include, but are not limited to structural ignitability, Firewise, defensible space, fire ecology, restoring fire to the environment, homeowner responsibility, etc.

CWPP Updates

A completed CWPP is required before other activities can be funded through this program. CWPP’s are community-based fire planning efforts that have been collaboratively developed and identify prioritized areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments. CWPP core groups may request funding to address broader WUI definitions or other updates to their previously approved CWPPs in order to address community specific actions, strategies, or treatments. Requests for CWPP update funds should be considered complimentary funding to Hazardous Fuels Reduction or Education and Outreach projects cannot exceed \$15,000. CWPP updates should follow New Mexico State Forestry guidelines: <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/FireMgt/Fire.html>.

Endangered Species & Cultural/Historic Preservation Requirements

Projects that include ground-disturbing activities such as thinning or other forms of fuel reduction require compliance with endangered species and cultural/historic preservation laws. Photographs of the area where fuel treatment projects are proposed are required to assist with determining clearance requirements. Applications must be submitted by March 5, 2021 to allow adequate review time by their Field Office/District Wildlife Biologist and Archeologist. Applicants are encouraged to review Biological Assessment and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation guidance documents. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate the following “best practices” in the implementation of fuel reduction projects in order to limit requirements for clearance approval:

- Do not use off road vehicles during the project.
- Do not drag slash into piles; rather hand carry or move with wheeled carts.
- Do not use mechanical thinning equipment. Hand-thin with chain-saws.
- Use general best management practices to prevent soil erosion.

NMC will review all Hazardous Fuels Reduction funding requests to determine appropriate compliance requirements. NMC may assist successful applicants through the compliance process, which in some sensitive areas may require changing the season, scope or type of work proposed, conducting cultural or species surveys, and/or consulting with state and/or federal agencies.

Letters of Commitment

Letters from committed partners must identify roles, responsibilities, and cost sharing arrangement for the specified project. Form letters will not be considered. Each letter must be submitted on the committed partners letterhead and include a current date. General letters of support should not be included. If you are doing work or outreach in or near tribes, pueblos, or Native American Nations, provide documentation that demonstrates your outreach and engagement of these communities.

*A letter from the local BLM Fire/Fuel Management Officer (FMO) or District Fuels Specialist from your area BLM office is required and contact should be made no later than **March 5, 2021**. This will give the staff enough time to do a site visit and help with any adjustments.

Mapping Requirements

Maps can be generated from topographic maps, ARC GIS, google earth or other mapping systems that are at a scale that are easy to read and fully delineate the project area. Maps should include a scale, north arrow, legend and date of preparation. Multiple maps may be submitted. A general vicinity map would help show the proximity to BLM lands and a project map would identify the project boundaries, roads, homes, fuel breaks, vegetation etc. Define the actual on-the-ground area of your project, rather than proposing work somewhere in a large area. For example, propose work on 15 acres and include a map at a scale of 1:24,000 that shows the boundaries of where the work will be done. Do not include a 1:100,000 scale map that shows a 1500-acre area and proposes to thin 15 acres somewhere within that 1500 acres.

Applicants for CWPP update funding must include maps for WUI areas within the CWPP boundaries with either a **high, medium, or low risk rating**. Deliver paper, PDF, and digital WUI boundary files to New Mexico State Forestry's Resource Protection Bureau. Digital files must be shape files. WUI boundary files must have the high, medium, or low risk rating delineated.

FAC NM Membership

Award recipients are encouraged to become members of FAC NM (facnm.org) to advance fire adapted resilience within your community.

Payment Information

Awards will be disbursed through reimbursement installments throughout the course of the 12-month program period (i.e. personnel costs). Projects that require funds for a one-time task (i.e. equipment purchase) may be approved for a one-time distribution.

Reporting

Award recipients are required to submit quarterly progress reports to NMC. A template will be provided with the program release information to awardees. Reporting should include news articles/press releases about your project, copies of any educational products developed, as well as photographs of your project's progress if applicable. Before and after photographs are required for fuel treatment projects. If selected to receive an award, organizations will be notified about progress report deadlines.

Final Report

A final project report is required upon completion of the program.

Application Submission

Applicants must submit their application to their local BLM Fire/Fuels Management Officer for required signatures by **Friday, March 5, 2021**. All BLM signatures are **required** prior to the application deadline. Applications (including applicable maps and letters of specific commitment) must be received by **5PM, Wednesday, March 31, 2021**.

Send application(s) to:

NMC – Wildfire Risk Reduction Program
Attn: Aelysea Webb
444 Galisteo Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Or by email to: awebb@nmcounties.org

Please contact Aelysea Webb at (505) 395-3403 if you have any questions.

No late or incomplete applications will be accepted or considered.

**NEW MEXICO COUNTIES
WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM for RURAL COMMUNITIES
2021-2022**

Terms & Conditions

NMC AUTHORITY

This is a sub-grant of federal financial assistance from New Mexico Counties (NMC), (hereinafter referred to as "the Grantor"). Your organization (hereinafter referred to as "the Grantee") agrees to grant funds in the amount specified on the Grant Acknowledgement Form, and to support the Wildfire Risk Reduction Program activated under this Grant Award. The Grantee agrees to abide by the Grant Award terms and conditions as set forth in this document.

The Wildfire Risk Reduction Program Administrator shall be responsible for oversight of the program, monitoring the performance of all grant recipient activities described in the application and distribution of grant funds. All correspondence should be directed to:

Aelysea Webb
444 Galisteo Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 395-3403
awebb@nmcountries.org

FUNDING AUTHORITY

Funding for the Wildfire Risk Reduction Program is provided to NMC through the following:

CFDA #15.228
National Fire Plan: Wildland Urban Interface Community Fire Assistance
Grant Number: L19AC00304
Grant Period: October 2019 – September 2024
Questioned Costs: None
Federal Agency: Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management

AMOUNT AWARDED

This Grant Agreement is for the administration and completion of the approved Wildfire Risk Reduction Program grant award for fiscal year 2021-2022. Grant Agreement funds may not be used for other purposes. If costs exceed the maximum amount of funding approved, the Grantee shall pay the costs in excess of the approved budget.

COST SHARE

The grant has a minimum requirement of a 10% in-kind or cash match. The match must be clearly noted on invoices, quarterly reports and the final report. If you need assistance in determining your cost share contributions please contact the Wildfire Risk Reduction Program Administrator.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Grantee shall perform the work described in the application package and made a part of the grant agreement articles.

AWARD ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance of this award, including the Terms & Conditions, is acknowledged by the Grantee upon signature of the governing body (e.g. County Commission, City Council, Board of Directors, or Tribal Council). Return the attached grant acknowledgement form and signatures of your governing body to NMC by June 30, 2021.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis. Reporting requirements must be met before funds will be released. Final payment will be made upon completion of project. Submit receipts to the Wildfire Risk Reduction Program Administrator following the reporting and reimbursement chart below.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Grantee shall submit quarterly status reports during the performance period. A copy of the required document is provided with this award package. There are no penalties for early completion of project.

Reporting Period	Report Due Date	Completion Percentage
July 1 – September 30, 2021	October 1, 2021	25%
October 1 – December 31, 2021	January 1, 2022	50%
January 1 – March 31, 2022	April 1, 2022	75%
April 1 – June 30, 2022	July 1, 2022	100%

Completion percentage is an estimate.

Please notify NMC immediately if you are not on schedule after the first six months.

FINAL REPORT

Upon completion of the grant, the grantee is required to submit a final report of the project. CWPP Update grant awardees must submit their completed CWPP to New Mexico State Forestry by August 2022 for appropriate signatures.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The performance period for the Grantee shall not exceed a maximum of 12 months. All costs must be incurred during the period of performance. Failure to meet project objectives within the 12 month performance period will be considered a default in agreement and repayment of grant funds will be required.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

All grantees expending \$500,000 or more in federal awards during a fiscal year are required to submit a copy of their financial audit to NMC. In order to comply with the federal requirements that regulate the funding provided for the Wildfire Risk Reduction Program, NMC is required to ensure that grant recipient audits meet the requirements of OMB Circular A-133 and that the required audits are completed within 9 months of the end of the grantees audit period. In the event of audit findings, NMC will issue a management decision within 6 months after receipt of the grantees audit report. NMC must ensure that the grantee takes timely and appropriate corrective action on all audit findings. In cases of continued inability or unwillingness of a grantee to have the required audits, NMC will take appropriate action using sanctions. Grantees agree to permit NMC and auditors access to the records and financial statements as necessary for NMC to comply with these requirements.

REVISIONS

The Grantee shall notify the Grantor within 30 days of any changes in the primary contact or financial representative for their project.

COMPLIANCE ISSUES

It is the responsibility of the Grantee to assure that their project complies with all applicable local, state and federal laws. The Grantee also agrees to comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing standard grant management practices.

TERMINATION

The Grantee may terminate the grant award agreement by giving written notice to the NMC within ten (10) business days of receipt of this agreement.

MEDIA

As a term and condition of the grant, NMC requires that the Grantee provide recognition and acknowledgement of the New Mexico Counties' award and contribution in all activities, publications, and materials associated with this funding. All media communications pertaining to your project or program should clearly indicate the support of New Mexico Counties and the National Fire Plan funding through the Bureau of Land Management by written word and inclusion of the official NMC logo (see logos below). The following is a suggested communications plan outline for your grant award:

Press Releases

- Send out a press release announcing the grant award from NMC
- Send out press releases preceding and following events and include the NMC logo on all correspondences
- Invite local media, donors and elected officials and provide photo opportunities when appropriate

In-House Publications

- Feature the grant award in newsletters, donor update letters or notifications
- Include the official NMC logo in all features

Inform your Government Representatives

- Send letters to legislators to help them understand the importance of investing public funds in the wildfire risk reduction programs and initiatives

Photos

- Photos of all projects
- For treatments – submit before and after images
- For planning and CWPPs – submit images of processes, meetings, etc.
- For education – submit images of public gatherings and outreach initiatives

Logos

- Public events and materials are expected to have an NMC logo clearly visible
- Include the NMC logo and URL link on your website
- Contact the program administrator to obtain an electronic copy of the NMC logo

