



January 24, 2023

The New Mexico Association of Counties is pleased to announce the 2023-2024 Wildfire Risk Reduction Program for Rural Communities that 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:

- CWPP Updates up to \$20,000/project
- Education and Outreach Activities up to \$15,000/project
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects up to \$75,000/project

Project proposals require a minimum 10% in-kind cost share and must be completed within the 12-month award timeline of July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024.

Applications are due to the local BLM field office for signature(s) by Friday, March 3, 2023, and the completed application(s) with all signatures are due to NMAC by 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 7, 2023. Please contact Aelysea Webb at (505) 395-3403 or awebb@nmcounties.org for more information.

Sincerely,

Joy Esparsen
Executive Director

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

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Santa Fe, NM 87501

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NMCOUNTIES.ORG



2023-2024 Wildfire Risk Reduction Program for Rural Communities Program Information

Background

The Wildfire Risk Reduction Program for Rural Communities (Program) 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. The New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC), a nonprofit community foundation, has partnered with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to administer the program and distribute awards.

Program Overview

This program is only applicable to the New Mexico Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) as defined in an approved Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A completed and approved CWPP is a pre-requisite for funding. Program funding is intended to directly benefit communities that may be impacted by wildland fire initiating from or spreading to BLM public land. Projects need to show a direct benefit to BLM. Applicants may apply for complimentary projects, but no more than one per category. Each project must be submitted on a separate application. Applications are reviewed by a selection committee and the NMAC Board of Directors vote on award recipients.

Funding categories:

- CWPP Updates up to \$20,000/project
- Education and Outreach Activities up to \$15,000/project
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects up to \$75,000/project

January 2023	Release of 2023-2024 Program applications
March 3, 2023	Deadline to submit application(s) to BLM office for required signature(s)
April 7, 2023	Deadline to submit application(s) to NMAC by 5:00 p.m.
April 2023	Selection committee reviews applications
May 2023	NMAC Board of Directors reviews and approves committee recommendations
May-June 2023	Successful program recipients notified
July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024	Project timeline (12-months)

Project Overview

Funding for the 2023-2024 Program is estimated at \$327,000. Applicants may request funding for no more than one project in each of the following categories:

CWPP Update

All CWPP updates must tier from an existing CWPP. CWPP updates can be county-wide or a sub-section within the county. The county-wide CWPP must be referenced in any sub-section CWPP updates. A CWPP update is a collaborative process and applicants must convene core team stakeholders to receive funding. CWPP updates must follow NM Forestry guidelines: <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/community-wildfire-protection-plans-cwpp/>.

Education & Outreach

Funding for wildland fire education and outreach activities should support implementation of an applicable CWPP through development of educational products, community outreach events, data collection, home evaluations, media and public information events, or training residents. Topics for these activities may include, but are not limited to structural ignitability, Firewise USA®, defensible space, fire ecology, restoring fire to the environment, homeowner responsibility, fire adapted communities, etc.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Fuels reduction projects and vegetation treatments should remove or modify fuels in the WUI to reduce severity or intensity of wildfires. The goal is to modify or break up fuels in such a way that reduces threats to public and firefighter safety and damage to property. Examples include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, and landscape modifications. 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.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must 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 New Mexico.

Program Requirements

Projects require a minimum 10% cost share that can be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

Projects must be completed within 12-months of the award start date of July 1, 2023, and all funds must be expended within the 12-month period. It is the responsibility of the awardee to comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws.

Applicants must submit partner commitment letters identifying roles, responsibilities, and cost sharing arrangements. Letters must be submitted on letterhead with a current date. Form letters will not be considered. Applicants doing work or outreach in or near tribes, pueblos or Native American Nations, must submit documentation that demonstrates outreach and engagement of these communities with the application.

BLM signatures are required prior to the application deadline. Applications must be submitted to the BLM district office closest to the project location by March 3, 2023, for review, approval and required signatures from the BLM fire/fuels management officer.

Maps and digital shape files must be submitted for CWPP updates, fuel reduction projects and ground-disturbing education & outreach projects.

Applicants who receive more than \$500,000 annually from federal sources are required to submit a copy of their audit to NMAC. Funds cannot be used to attempt to influence legislation or the outcome of any public election.

Awardees are required to submit quarterly progress reports and a final project report.

Selection Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate that the project area is at risk to fire originating on or spreading to BLM public land and that the area impacted by the project is in the WUI.

Special consideration for applicants:

- Updating a CWPP more than five years old
- Working in areas directly adjacent to BLM public land
- Providing a greater than the minimum 10% cost share
- Developing community capacity
- Working on complementary existing or ongoing projects
- Utilizing biomass from hazardous fuels reduction projects
- Demonstrating a cost-effective approach to treating hazardous fuels
- Developing sustainable education projects such as Train-the-Trainer
- Supporting objectives or goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/restoration/cohesivestrategy.shtml>)
- Advancing fire adapted community resilience
- Providing a benefit to multiple communities identified by the NM Communities At Risk Assessment Plan or community of interest to BLM

Endangered Species & Cultural/Historic Preservation

Projects that include ground-disturbing activities such as thinning or other forms of fuel reduction must comply with endangered species and cultural/historic preservation laws. Applications proposing to work in some sensitive areas may require changing the season, scope or type of proposed work, conducting cultural or species surveys, and/or consulting with state and/or federal agencies. Photographs are required to assist with determining clearance requirements.

Applicants are encouraged to incorporate the following “best practices” in the implementation of fuel reduction projects 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 chainsaws.
- Use general best management practices to prevent soil erosion.

Payment

Funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis and final payment is made upon project completion. Projects that require funds for a one-time task (billboards, equipment purchase, etc.) may be approved for a one-time distribution.

FAC NM Membership

Award recipients are encouraged to become members of FACNM (facnm.org) to advance fire adapted resilience within your community. Membership is free and non-obligatory.

Application Submission

Submit application(s) with the application checklist by 5PM Friday, April 7, 2023, to:
NMAC – Wildfire Risk Reduction Program
Attn: Aelysea Webb, Program Administrator
444 Galisteo Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Or by email to: awebb@nmcounties.org

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



2023-2024 Wildfire Risk Reduction Program for Rural Communities Terms & Conditions

NMAC Authority

This is a sub-grant of federal financial assistance from the New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC), (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 for Rural Communities (Program) activated under this grant award. The Grantee agrees to abide by the award terms and conditions as set forth in this document. NMAC shall be responsible for oversight of the program, monitoring the performance of grant recipient activities described in the application and distribution of grant funds.

Program Administrator

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

Funding Authority

Program funding is provided to NMAC through the following:

CFDA #15.228
National Fire Plan: Wildland Urban Interface Community Fire Assistance
Grant Number: L19AC00304
Grant Period: October 2019 – September 2024
Federal Agency: Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Amount Awarded

The award is for the administration and project completion for fiscal year 2023-2024. Award funds may not be used for other purposes. The Grantee shall pay any costs exceeding the award amount.

Award Acceptance

Grantees must complete and return the Grant Acknowledgement Form with a signed governing body resolution (County Commission, City Council, Board of Directors, or Tribal Council) by June 30, 2023, to confirm acceptance of the award and that you and your organization has read, understands, and will comply with the 2023-2024 Wildfire Risk Reduction Program from Rural Communities Terms & Conditions.

Project Description

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



Cost Share

Projects require a minimum 10% cost share. Cost share can be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. The cost share must be clearly noted on invoices and the final report. Contact the program administrator if you need assistance in determining cost share contributions.

Performance Period

Projects must be completed within the 12-month award start and end date (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024) and all funds must be expended within the 12-month period. 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 this agreement and repayment of grant funds will be required.

Reporting Requirements

The Grantee shall submit quarterly reports during the performance period and a final report at project completion. The following materials should be included with corresponding reports: meeting announcements, agendas, minutes, articles, brochures, invoices, photos (before/after, meetings/events, etc.), maps and/or shape files. There are no penalties for early project completion.

Reporting Period	Report Due Date	Completion Percentage Estimate
July 1 – September 30, 2023	October 1, 2023	25%
October 1 – December 31, 2023	January 1, 2024	50%
January 1 – March 31, 2024	April 1, 2024	75%
April 1 – June 30, 2024	July 1, 2024	100%

Notify program administrator immediately if you are not on schedule after the first six months.

Grantees working on CWPP updates must submit their completed CWPP to New Mexico State Forestry by August 2024 for required signatures.

Disbursement of Funds

Grantees shall submit invoices to NMAC for payment. Funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis. Reporting requirements must be met before funds will be released. Final payment will be made upon project completion and a final report.

Revisions

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

Compliance

It is the Grantees responsibility that their project complies with all applicable local, state and federal laws. The Grantee must also 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 NMAC within ten (10) business days of receipt of this agreement.



Audit Requirements

Grantees who receive more than \$500,000 annually from federal sources are required to submit a copy of their audit to NMAC.

Media

Grantees shall provide recognition and acknowledgement of the award in all activities, publications and materials associated with this funding. Media communications about the Program should clearly identify 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 NMAC logo (below). Contact the program administrator to obtain an electronic copy of the NMAC logo.

Communication suggestions:

- Send out a press release announcing the award.
- Send out press releases preceding and following events.
- Invite local media, donors and elected officials to events.
- Feature the award in newsletters, donor update letters and other publications.
- Send letters to legislators to help them understand the importance of investing funds in wildfire risk reduction programs and initiatives.
- Display the NMAC logo at any public events and on printed materials.
- Link the NMAC logo or website to your website.

