VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

July 20, 2026

TO: Higher Education Presidents, Chancellors, and Leaders
FROM: Stephanie M. Rodriguez, Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department
CC: Dr. Patricia Trujillo, Deputy Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Gerald Hoehne, Chief of Staff, New Mexico Higher Education Department
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RE: Fiscal Year 2028 Research and Public Service Project (RPSP) Request Guidance

The New Mexico Higher Education Department's (Department) guidance for the preparation of Research and Public Service Projects (RPSPs) to all higher education institutions for Fiscal Year 2028 (FY28) is outlined below. This guidance is to assist higher education institutions with the planning of submissions internally and to the Department.

Policy

Per New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) 5.3.5.12 Research, Public Service, and Other Special Projects, D. Existing Projects, (2):

> *Each project shall be subject to review by the commission [department] at least once every four years. This review shall include a hearing before the commission [department]. The hearing shall include a presentation by an institutional representative on the activities of the project, and a presentation by the commission [department] staff of the staff findings of the review of the project. On the basis of the hearing, the commission [department] shall decide whether or not to recommend an ongoing state appropriation for the project.*

These projects are specifically designed to fund initiatives at higher education institutions that have a research or public service component. The Department process supports a specific funding stream for dedicated programs that extend beyond the basic instruction of a college or university and serve advance research or the broader public.

Process

New RPSP Requests

The process outlined in this section is designed to provide support and maintain programs impacting public service and research programs that support statewide needs.

a. Research institutions may present their top three (3) priority projects.
b. Comprehensive colleges, independent community colleges, and branch campuses may present their top two (2) priority projects.
c. Tribal colleges, universities and special schools may present their top two (2) priority projects.

The higher education institution's requests must demonstrate a research or public service component that serves the broader community and/or state.

Existing and Continuing Requests

Existing and continuing RPSP requests will be reviewed pursuant to 5.3.5.12 NMAC as noted under the "Policy" section. Reviews will be conducted to ensure that RPSP funding is utilized as intended. As a reminder, prior year RPSPs specifically supporting Instruction and General (I&G) purposes that were rolled into the higher education institution's base funding shall not be submitted as a request.

Please note that detailed information is necessary within the application to support continued funding of RPSPs, including:

a. Data demonstrating progress towards addressing issues or developing research beneficial to the state when the proposal is first introduced.
b. Data demonstrating measurable outcomes.
c. Detailed information on when the program will be fully self-sustaining. If the program will not be self-sustaining, provide specific reasons why.
    i. Note: This information is not required for quasi-government state entities.
d. Institutional review and closure of existing and continuing requests. Per NMAC 5.3.5.12 Section D (2), each project shall be subject to review by the Department at least once every four years. This review shall include a hearing before the commission. The hearing shall include a presentation by an institutional representative on the activities of the project, and a presentation by the Department staff of the staff findings of the review of the project. On the basis of the hearing, the Department shall decide whether to recommend an ongoing state appropriation for the project.

Expansion Requests

Expansion RPSP requests will be reviewed pursuant to 5.3.5.12 NMAC as noted under the "Policy" section. The same detailed information requested in the "Existing and Continuing Requests" section, items (a) through (c) will be required for expansions as well.

Submission Requirements

New forms have been created for the Fiscal Year 2028 funding cycle and are published on the Department's website. These forms must be used when submitting the higher education institution's requests. ***The new form's budget tab has formulas, therefore, do not copy and paste text from previous documents to avoid breaking current formulas within the spreadsheet.***

The submission process for uploading the cover sheet, signed certification, and application forms are as follows:

1. The Department has developed a new naming scheme for all documents. Individual document submissions should be named as follows:
    a. Priority number, fiscal year, higher education institution acronym, name of project, and type of project (i.e., expansion, continuing, and new)
    b. Example: FY28_HEI_RPSP Submission Title_New
2. The cover sheet containing all the RPSP requests must be submitted as a stand-alone document. Requests must be uploaded to the Dropbox in the priority order listed on the cover sheet using the naming scheme.
3. Each request must be submitted as a separate application with the narrative, budget, and objectives filled out in their entirety. Before submitting the form, make sure all tabs are fully populated.
    a. All budget forms must be completely filled out with original amounts validated against the higher education institution's operating budget (OpBud). Expansion and continuing request amounts must also tie to the cover page and narrative. A new column E labeled FY26 RPSP Expenditures was added to the budget tab for RPSP project expenditures.
    b. Please ensure there are no rounding errors. All dollar amounts must be to the nearest hundred. *No dollars and cents will be accepted*.
    c. The objective page must be completely filled out.
4. If your request includes non-recurring funding for one-time purchases, such as vehicles and equipment, please document that need within the request; however, be prepared to submit a separate special or supplemental request for the item. Example documentation for specials and supplementals is attached for reference. Fill out these forms but note that the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration may issue revised forms.

The Department has discretion to return any incomplete RPSPs to the higher education institution for correction.

The deadline to submit completed RPSP submission forms to the Department is close of business on September 15, 2026. A Dropbox link where files can be uploaded will be sent in a separate email by the Institutional Finance Division.

Expenditures

Funding for RPSPs should not be utilized to supplement a higher education institution's budget. The funding is allocated for a specific purpose, and if that purpose is determined by the higher education institution to not need funding, the RPSP should be reviewed for closure or a reduced allocation request. If RPSP funding is not going to be used to support the approved project, please contact the Institutional Finance Division to discuss appropriate next steps.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Director Taña Martinez, Institutional Finance Division, at Tana.Martinez@hed.nm.gov, or Savana Simbola, Financial Coordinator, at Savana.Simbola@hed.nm.gov.