

# NMDA's Agricultural Workforce Development Program

Program update for Water and Natural Resources Interim Committee

August 18, 2025

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Agricultural Programs and Resources Division

# AWD Program Basics

## Agricultural Workforce Development Act (2019)

- Must be agricultural business to apply
- NMDA pays up to 50% of actual cost of internship, including wages, worker's compensation, and directly related incidental costs
- Interns must be paid *at least* minimum wage
- Up to 3 interns/calendar year
- Interns must be 18 years or older and cannot be immediate family members or previous employees

## NMDA Policies

- Applications considered on rolling first come, first served basis
- Limit of \$15k per intern

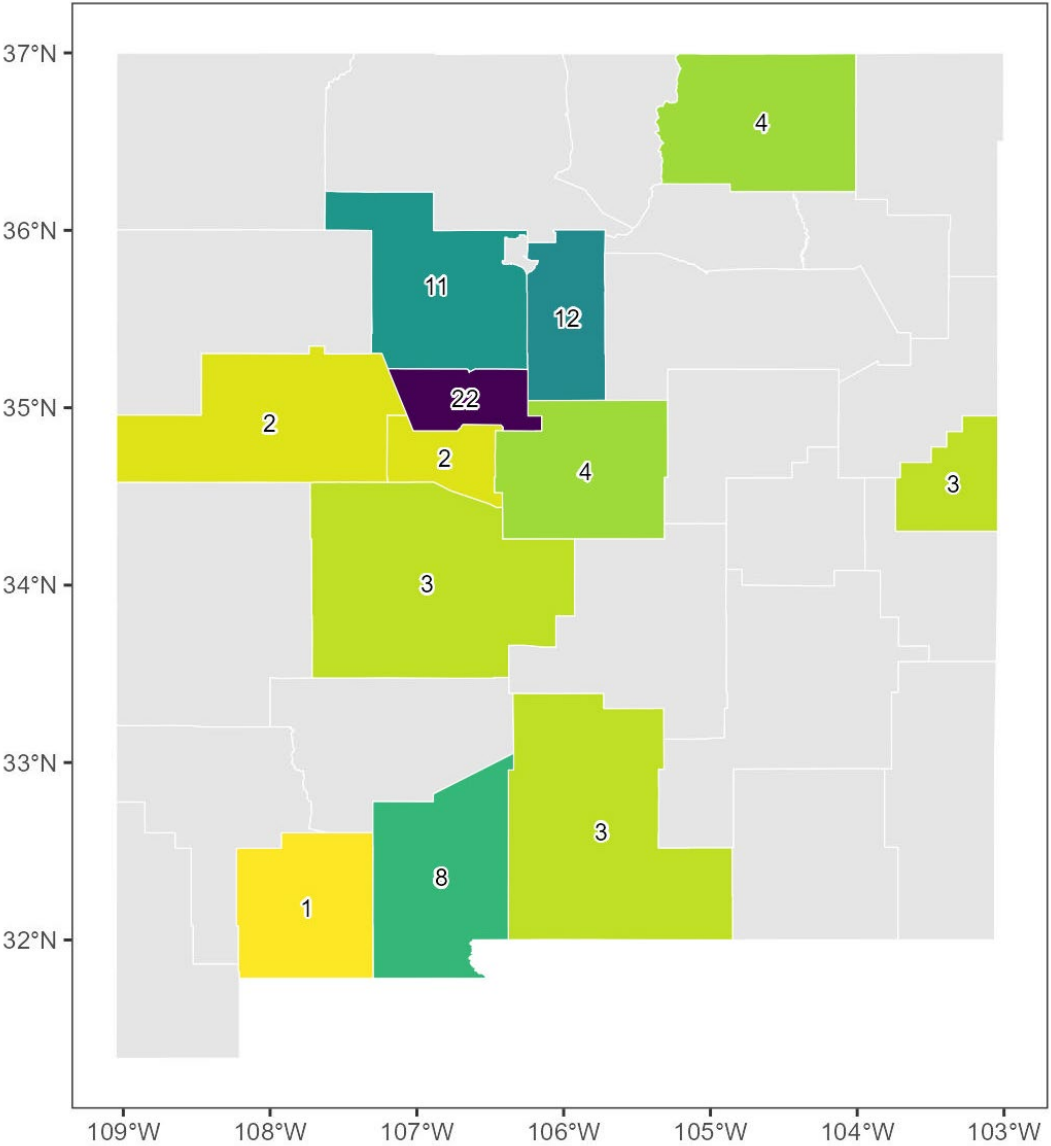
# Program Growth

- Recurring Funding: \$125,000 (5% taken for admin.)
- In FY25, annual funding was fully allocated by July 30, 2024
- Interns are evaluated at end of internship and sometimes have been hired on afterwards as employees
- Common challenges: Finding, retaining and replacing interns

	Funding Awarded	Total Interns	Participating Businesses
FY22	\$87,689.59	23	14
FY23	\$201,148.67	25	13
FY24	\$119,048.00	15	10
FY25	\$119,038.00	12	8

← FY23: Received additional Food Initiative funding

# Internships by County FYs 23-25



County	Interns
Bernalillo	22
Cibola	2
Colfax	4
Curry	3
Doña Ana	8
Luna	1
Otero	3
Sandoval	11
Santa Fe	12
Socorro	3
Torrance	4
Valencia	2



# Internship Examples

County	Agricultural Business
Bernalillo	Farm growing over 120 varieties of heirloom vegetables and fruits. Farm also has 100 laying hens for eggs, and keeps sheep, goats, geese, and rabbits.
Cibola	Ranch manages productive cattle herd while offering prime elk hunting opportunities.
Curry	Ranch including cow/calf operation, yearlings on grass, and irrigated corn farming.
Doña Ana	Pecan farm. Internship included shelling and sales.
Otero	Custom meat processing.
Santa Fe	Farm, household and commercial composting facility.
Valencia	Greenhouse/plant nursery.

# FY26 Application Cycle

- Now collecting applications through March 31, 2026 or until funding is fully allocated
- So far, NMDA has awarded 19 internships with over \$174k
- Please visit AWD program website for application and more information:

<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/agricultural-workforce-development.html#gsc.tab=0>

# Interagency Partnership

- NMDA is collaborating with EDD & DWS to develop targeted strategies to address workforce challenges in the agriculture sector
- Agencies hosted a hybrid discussion in Las Cruces on August 6 and are still collecting industry input

Complete a survey on agricultural hiring and retention challenges:

<https://forms.office.com/g/yWUpqUv1wg>



**SECTOR STRATEGY CONVENING**

**AGRICULTURE**

**REGISTER NOW!**  
Scan the QR code or visit <https://shorturl.at/EyK05>

**BE PART OF THE DISCUSSION**  
Join us for a collaborative conversation with industry leaders, employers, and workforce partners to discuss the real challenges impacting your business and help shape strategies to meet the current and future needs of the agriculture sector.

We value your input! By sharing your insights, you'll help identify common in-demand, unfilled positions; pinpoint barriers to hiring; help guide the development of strategies that strengthen the talent pipeline, support economic growth, and ensure New Mexico's workforce is equipped to meet the demands of the agriculture sector.

**YOUR INPUT MATTERS**  
Let us know your hiring and retention challenges by scanning the QR code and completing a quick survey

<https://forms.office.com/g/yWUpqUv1wg>

**WEDNESDAY  
AUGUST 6, 2025  
1PM - 4PM**

Doña Ana Community College  
Workforce Center, Rooms 123-121  
2345 Nevada Ave  
Las Cruces, NM 88001

**NMDA** **EDD** **America's Job Center**

For program funding visit <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/funding>  
This WIOA Title I-financially assisted program/activity is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

# Contact Information

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