



# EDD

ECONOMIC  
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DEPARTMENT

## OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

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## Outdoor Recreation Division Publishes Cradle-to-Career Strategy for New Mexico Outdoor Industry

*Document outlines funding resources and strategies to develop access to the outdoors and outdoor recreation careers within the state.*

**SANTA FE, N.M.** – The New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD), in partnership with the National Park Service’s (NPS) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA), has published a report to further efforts to grow the outdoor economy, EDD’s Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) announced today.

“Cradle to Career New Mexico” is New Mexico’s first statewide outdoor industry education and career pathway strategy. This report identifies existing federal, state, tribal and local opportunities that provide outdoor access, programming, and internships within the state’s outdoor industry. It also recommends actions for federal, state, tribal, local, and private partners to further this access and to equitably increase family-sustaining jobs within this sector for New Mexicans.



### CRADLE TO CAREER NEW MEXICO

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2021  
REPORT

According to the September 2019 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis state-level data, the outdoor recreation economy in New Mexico makes up 2.5% of total state GDP -- or \$2.3 billion. It is a powerhouse with the ability to dramatically diversify the state's economy.

“The New Mexico outdoor recreation economy employed over 35,000 people in 2019. This new strategy aims to ensure our state’s young people are the ones benefiting from and creating those jobs now and in the future,” EDD Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said.

A strategic statewide industry and education plan builds a pathway from pre-K through higher education for students interested in working in and for the outdoors. This path will emphasize early outdoor access through programs like the Outdoor Equity Fund, climate education, internships with outdoor professionals and universities, and real-world paid experience that opens doors to solid New Mexico careers in tribal and rural areas.

“New Mexico is a top destination for outdoor recreation and industry. In addition to our

beautiful scenery and sights, we can work across sectors to grow our economy while creating family-sustaining jobs,” Higher Education Secretary Stephanie Rodriguez said. “Alongside the state’s cabinet agencies and industry partners, New Mexico’s colleges and universities are working to align education and training programs with rewarding career opportunities right here at home.”

The report was made possible by the support of the 19-agency steering committee (see page 3 for details), including Higher Education Department leadership. ORD is extremely grateful to the key partners and members of the advisement committee that committed their time, energy, and enormous brainpower to this initiative. The vision was to ensure that young New Mexicans benefit from initiatives led by the state and other organizations to diversify the state’s economy through outdoor recreation. This is one small slice of the ongoing and imperative work to transform the New Mexico economy into a sustainable, diverse, green powerhouse that offers jobs and wealth to all the state’s residents. The people who joined in this work – over many Zoom meetings, one-on-one follow-ups, and report review – all believe passionately in this effort.

“When it comes to jobs, New Mexico’s outdoor economy is growing at the second fastest rate in the U.S. This report lays out concrete strategies to make sure New Mexicans benefit from that growth – strategies such as the new outdoor recreation paid high school internship program led by Future Focused Education,” ORD Director Axie Navas said.

ORD recently announced the graduation of the first cohort of outdoor industry paid high school interns. [Read the full press release](#) about how this pilot program connected students with careers in the outdoors.

The Cradle to Career report also includes extensive partnerships with outdoor industry employers in the state to focus on proven workforce needs through targeted education programs and resources.

[Read the New Mexico Cradle to Career report.](#)

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*The New Mexico Economic Development Department's mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive.*

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