

EDD

ECONOMIC
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DEPARTMENT

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New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Economy Continues to Grow Faster than National Average

Bureau of Economic Analysis data shows increases in employment, compensation, and GDP for the state's outdoor recreation economy

SANTA FE, N.M. - The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released its annual report on the economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry at the national and state levels. According to the data, the outdoor recreation industry in New Mexico continues to see growth as a powerhouse in the state economy.

When she created the Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) in 2019, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham identified the outdoor recreation industry as a key target sector to diversify the state's economy. Since then, the office has invested almost \$12 million to bolster access to the outdoors for all New Mexicans. Such efforts have resulted in the introduction of 40,000 of the state's youth to the outdoors, the conservation of several state outdoor recreation assets, the creation of new jobs, and supported outdoor infrastructure improvements for hundreds of Tribes, nonprofits, and local governments.

New Mexico's outdoor recreation economy is outpacing the national average in three principal measurements: GDP, employment, and compensation.

Based on the data, the economic output for the outdoor recreation economy in New Mexico was a powerful \$2.3 billion or 2.1% of the state GDP in 2021, an increase of \$400 million over 2020. This is a 2.5% higher growth rate than the industry saw at the national level.

Additionally, the outdoor recreation sector employed 28,475 New Mexicans in 2021 - a substantial increase in industry employment of 18.2 percent since 2020 and over 5% above the U.S. average. In 2021, this rise of jobs in the industry ranked New Mexico 5th among all states in outdoor recreation employment growth. Compensation also grew by 17.3% statewide, compared with a 16.2% growth rate nationally.

"When Gov. Lujan Grisham identified outdoor recreation as a way to bring more opportunities and jobs to the state and diversify the economy, this was the vision," Economic Development Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said. "This data demonstrates how New Mexico continues to be a national leader in the outdoor industry. ORD initiatives will further sustain and advance the growth we continue to see in this strategic sector of our state's economy."

"Through the New Mexico Cradle-to-Career Outdoor Industry Strategy, which was

supported by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, we hope to see a sustainable increase in outdoor recreation job growth,” ORD Deputy Director Alyssa Renwick said. “Our office, along with partners throughout the state, plans to build a pathway from pre-K through higher education for students interested in working in, and for, the outdoors. The strategy emphasizes early outdoor access through programs like the Outdoor Equity Fund, climate education, real-world paid experience, and higher education opportunities that will open doors to solid well-paying careers in the New Mexico outdoor recreation industry.”

As for specific activities that contributed to the outdoor economic sector, 8 out of 9 showed increases in contributions to the state GDP. RVing, all-terrain vehicle/motorcycling, bicycling, snow activities, equestrian, hunting/shooting/trapping, climbing/hiking/tent camping, and recreational flying all demonstrated a growth in contributing to New Mexico’s GDP. The increases in recreational participation will lead to ongoing prosperity for all of the measurements discussed in the BEA report.

Outdoor recreation as a whole nationally has proven to be a super sector of the economy. For the U.S., the outdoor economy accounted for \$454 billion (1.9%) of the GDP. New Mexico’s investments in the industry are proving to be highly successful for the state’s economy.

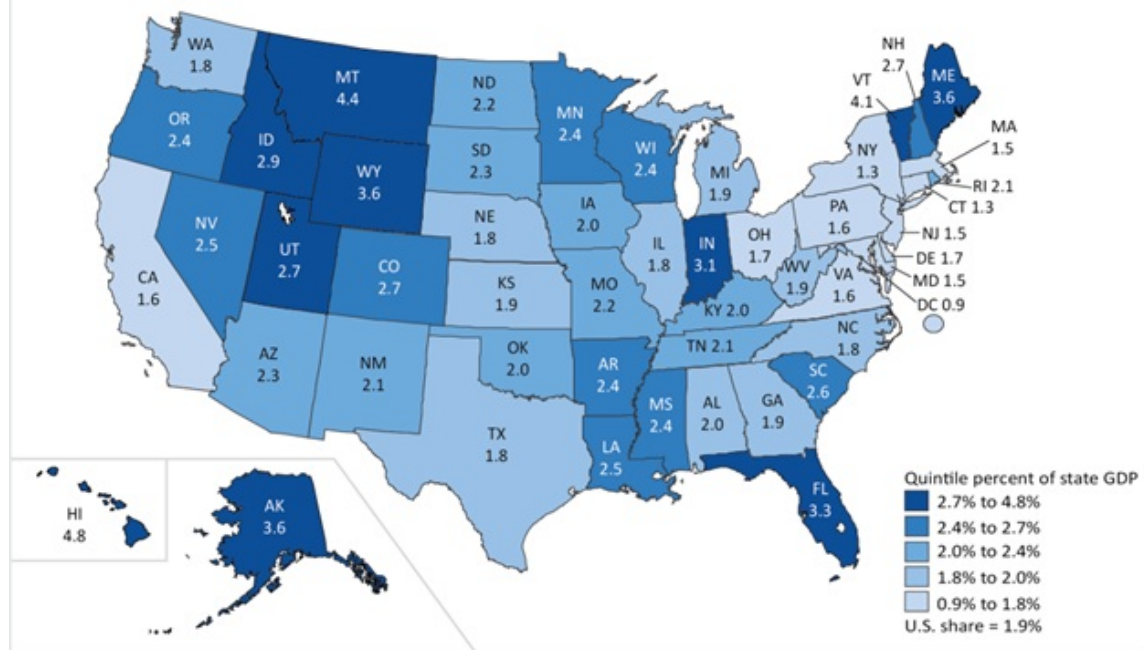
Find the full BEA data reports here:

- NM Report: <https://apps.bea.gov/data/special-topics/orsa/summary-sheets/ORSA%20-%20New%20Mexico.pdf>
- **BEA Outdoor Recreation:** <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation#collapse2-01>
- **BEA News Release:** <https://www.bea.gov/news/2022/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2021>

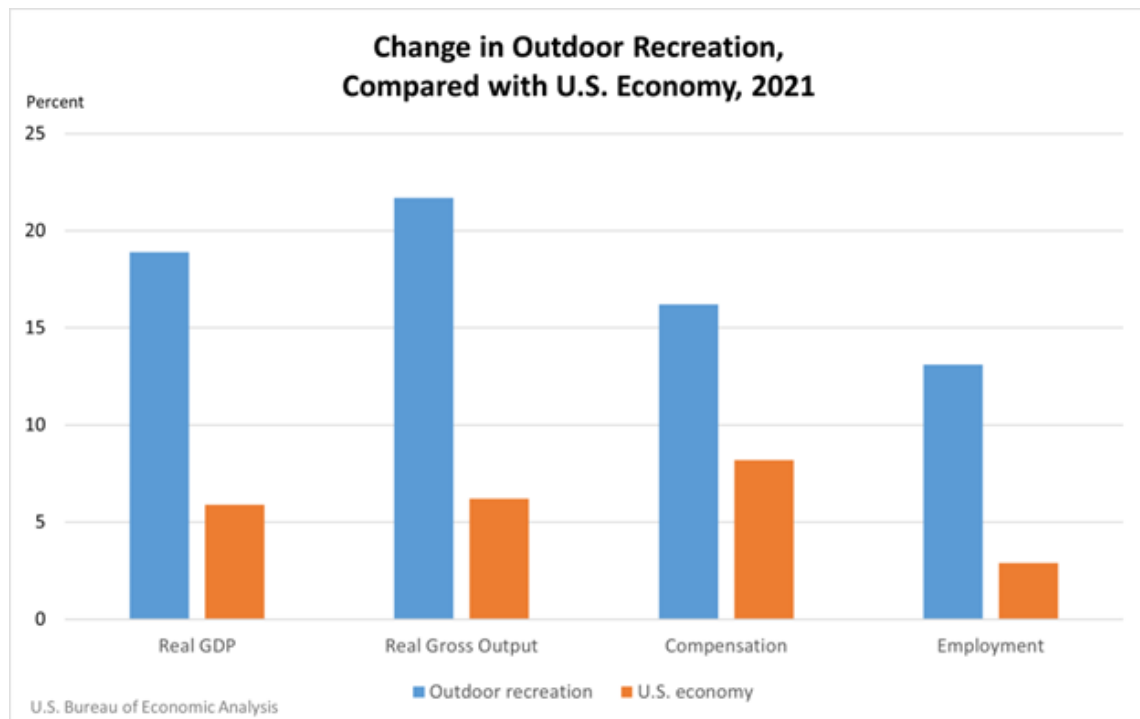


U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

State Outdoor Recreation Value Added as a Percent of State GDP, 2021



U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



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The Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) works to ensure that all New Mexicans gain from the public health, environmental, and economic benefits of sustainable outdoor recreation. ORD works to achieve positive, measurable impacts within economic development, conservation, education, and public health through collaboration with New Mexican businesses, nonprofits, and partner state and federal agencies. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed New Mexico's ORD into law in April 2019. Since then, ORD has invested over \$11.74 million in outdoor access through its marquee grants, including the Outdoor Recreation Trails+ and Outdoor Equity Fund programs. These initiatives have supported more than 175 Tribes, local governments, and nonprofits to improve outdoor infrastructure and introduce almost 40,000 young New Mexicans to the outside world. The New Mexico outdoor industry is a powerhouse of meaningful job and wealth creation, employing over 25,000 people and contributing \$1.9 billion to state GDP.

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