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New Mexico invests \$1.9 million to expand youth outdoor access *Outdoor Equity Fund connects over 22,000 youth to outdoor programs*

SANTA FE— A \$1.9 million investment through the state’s Outdoor Equity Fund will connect over 22,000 youth across 14 counties to 62 programs that promote wellness and expand outdoor access.

Applications for overall FY26 funding surged 141% over the previous year, with 228 organizations requesting \$7.8 million in funding against \$4 million available.

“This state investment in our youth is amplified by nearly \$2 million in matching funds from recipients,” said **EDD Cabinet Secretary Rob Black**. “These programs help prepare the next generation with the skills and experiences needed to expand New Mexico’s growing outdoor recreation industry.”

Half of the awarded programs serve youth in rural and Tribal communities. Thirty-four programs include workforce development components, and 23 programs offer paid opportunities for participants.

“These investments open doors for young people across New Mexico, connecting them to the outdoors, their communities, and future opportunities,” said **Outdoor Recreation Division Director Karina Armijo**.

“Outdoor Equity Fund support will allow us to provide important outdoor-based digital-detox experiences, helping our community’s children establish different relationships with technology and the outdoors,” said Sandy Campbell, True Kids 1 Executive Director.

Since Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham established the Outdoor Recreation Division and Outdoor Equity Fund in 2019, ORD has awarded more than \$10.5 million in grants, connecting 128,000 youth to outdoor education experiences. New Mexico’s Outdoor Equity Fund was the first state grant program in the nation designed to expand equitable access to outdoor opportunities for youth, particularly from low-income and underserved communities.

The next round of Outdoor Equity Fund applications will open July 1, 2026, with a second round opening in February 2027. View the full list of awardees and project descriptions at www.nmoutside.com/news.

The Outdoor Equity Fund is administered by the Outdoor Recreation division of the New Mexico Economic Development Department.

FY26 Round 2 Outdoor Equity Fund Grant recipients include:

Bernalillo County

- Albuquerque Public Schools, \$40,000
- Albuquerque Sign Language Academy, \$40,000
- Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program, \$40,000
- Catholic Charities, \$30,000
- Community for Learning, \$30,000
- Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions, \$20,000
- Free Bikes 4 Kidz New Mexico, \$30,000
- La Plazita Institute, \$17,733
- Latino Outdoors, \$29,250
- Llamas del Sol, \$20,000
- MANA de Albuquerque Hermanitas, \$40,000
- Mandy’s Farm, \$30,000
- Mark Armijo Academy Charter School, \$40,000
- Native American Community Academy, \$40,000
- New Mexico Dream Team, \$30,000
- New Mexico Youth Conservation Foundation, \$40,000
- NMCAN, \$40,000

- Rio Grande Community Farm, \$39,600
- Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, \$35,119
- South Valley Prep, \$15,000
- Together for Brothers, \$40,000
- TOTAL NM, \$40,000
- Vaulters Del Sol, \$20,000
- Yerba Mansa Project, \$10,740

Cibola County

- Conservation Legacy, \$40,000

Colfax County

- Moreno Valley Angels INC, \$39,956

Doña Ana County

- Anthony Youth Farm, \$10,000
- Asombro Institute for Science Education, \$23,000
- HELPNM, \$30,000
- Public Lands Interpretive Association, \$40,000

Grant County

- Aldo Leopold Charter School, \$30,000
- Community Partnership for Children, \$30,000
- Environmental Education of New Mexico, \$21,812
- Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, \$9,204

McKinley County

- Dził Dítł'ooí School of Empowerment Action and Perseverance, \$40,000
- National Indian Youth Leadership Development Project, \$40,000
- Summer Youth Corporation (Dl'ó'ó' Yázhí Day Camp), \$7,803

Rio Arriba County

- National Ghost Ranch Foundation, \$23,040
- Northern Youth Project, \$40,000
- Pajarito Environmental Education Center, \$30,000

Sandoval County

- Keres Children's Learning Center, \$30,000

San Juan County

- 100% San Juan Initiative, \$40,000
- Dream Diné Charter School, \$40,000
- Global Opportunities Unlimited, \$39,770
- Northern New Mexico Indigenous Farmers, \$40,000

San Miguel County

- Upper Pecos Watershed Association, \$15,000

Santa Fe County

- Glorieta Adventure Camps, \$30,000
- Loventure, \$40,000
- Pueblo de San Ildefonso, \$40,000
- Railyard Park Conservancy, \$9,845
- Reunity Resources, \$30,000
- The Mayfly Project, Santa Fe, New Mexico, \$5,440

Sierra County

- Natural Curiosity, \$20,000

Taos County

- Continental Divide Trail Coalition, \$35,796
- Localogy, \$25,000
- Outdoor Gateways, \$29,989
- Rivers & Birds, Inc., \$30,000
- Roots and Wings Community School, \$20,000
- STEMarts Lab, \$36,400
- True Kids 1, \$39,374
- Wumaniti Earth Native Sanctuary, \$40,000

Torrance County

- Moriarty Elementary, \$10,000



Aldo Leopold Charter School engages high school students in immersive, multi-day backpacking experiences to build life skills, leadership, and stewardship.



100% San Juan Initiative provides students with outdoor learning in agriculture, and environmental stewardship to build job skills, resilience and connection to land and community.



Wumaniti Earth Native Sanctuary engages Indigenous and rural youth in traditional horseback riding, archery, mustang rescue and shelter building.

EDD's mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive. EDD's programs contribute directly to this mission by funding workforce training and infrastructure that supports business growth, helping every community create a thriving economy.

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