



# NEW MEXICO

## OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
June 2, 2026

### **State announces \$4.5 million for outdoor youth programs** Round 1 applications open July 1 for State's Outdoor Equity Fund

SANTA FE — New Mexico is investing \$4.5 million in youth outdoor programs after demand for the State's Outdoor Equity Fund exceeded available funding by more than 90% last year, \$3.7 million above the available amount.

The FY27 investment marks one of the largest annual allocations to date in the highly competitive program, which helps connect youth across New Mexico to outdoor experiences, including hiking, biking, camping, environmental education, cultural programs, conservation projects and workforce development opportunities.

"This growing demand shows how much outdoor access matters to communities across New Mexico," said **EDNM Secretary Rob Black**. "The Outdoor Equity Fund helps support young people, create career pathways and strengthen local communities."

The fund is administered by the State's Outdoor Recreation Division, under the Economic Development Department of New Mexico.

Applications for Round 1 open **July 1** and close **July 30 at 5 p.m.** A second application round will run from **February 1-26, 2027**.

Applicants can choose from two mandatory information and Q&A sessions:

- **June 24, 5:30 p.m. MT:** [bit.ly/oef-tier1info](https://bit.ly/oef-tier1info)
- **June 25, 12 p.m. MT:** [bit.ly/oef-tier1info2](https://bit.ly/oef-tier1info2)

The fund is designed to help remove barriers that prevent young people from spending time outdoors at a time when childhood health concerns continue to rise statewide. According to the New Mexico Department of Health's March 2026 report, [The Weight of Our Children: New Mexico Childhood Obesity 2025 Update](#), 42.9% of third graders in New Mexico were reported as overweight or obese in 2025, with the highest rates occurring in American Indian and Hispanic youth.

"Too many New Mexico youth still don't have easy access to outdoor experiences close to home," said **Outdoor Recreation Division Director Karina Armijo**. "The Outdoor Equity Fund helps connect kids to outdoor experiences that encourage active lifestyles, confidence and connection to community."

The New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division and its Outdoor Equity Fund were established in 2019 by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. Since its launch, the fund has awarded \$10.5 million, connecting more than 128,000 youth across 28 counties and Tribal communities to outdoor experiences throughout New Mexico.

Visit [nmoutside.com/outdoor-equity-fund](https://nmoutside.com/outdoor-equity-fund) to review the grant guide, register for a webinar and apply.



Cochiti Pueblo youth explore and connect with ancestral landscapes at Bandelier National Monument through the Keres Children's Learning Center's Outdoor Equity Fund-supported program.

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