



EDD

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

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EDA Grant Assistance Awarded to New Mexico's Outdoor Recreation Division

\$1.9 million Targets Outdoor Economy Recovery Efforts

SANTA FE, N.M. - The U.S. Economic Development Administration has awarded \$1.9 million to the State of New Mexico for targeted investments in the state's outdoor recreation economy, according to Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes.

The outdoor recreation funds are part of \$7.9 million total awarded to New Mexico to accelerate travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation. The grants to 34 states were announced last week by Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo. New Mexico is among the first round of states to receive the federal funding.

"New Mexico's 20-year Strategic Plan, *Empower & Collaborate: New Mexico's Economic Path Forward*, specifically points to outdoor recreation as a target industry that will create jobs and economic opportunities for entrepreneurs, especially in rural and tribal communities," Economic Development Department, Cabinet Secretary Keyes said. "Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has led the way in creating a state government Outdoor Recreation Division, and this grant will help it move on many of its initiatives now, so these communities won't have to wait to invest in new economic opportunities."

The Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) of the Economic Development Department (EDD) will oversee 25 percent of this funding - \$1.985 million - targeting it to specific outdoor recreation economy recovery efforts. The remainder will be administered by the New Mexico Tourism Department.

The outdoor recreation economy, which was growing at the second fastest rate in the U.S. in 2019, was hit hard by the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. In 2020, the outdoor economy in every U.S. state and the District of Columbia experienced a drop in its outdoor economy.

“The outdoor recreation industry is vital to New Mexico’s efforts to diversify its economy,” ORD Director Axie Navas said. “This \$1.9 million in funding from the EDA will enable us to provide crucial marketing, branding, and other business support to the companies and communities that suffered the most during the pandemic. The goal goes beyond recovery. With this investment, we hope to supercharge the outdoor economy for years to come.”

The ORD grant application to EDA proposed to divide the funding into two major categories: community and business support. Both impact areas are designed to build off one another, raising the profile of New Mexico’s outdoor recreation economy, then complementing that higher profile with technical assistance for businesses to gain the professional skills needed to capitalize on that growth.

With the investment, ORD plans to launch outdoor recreation business workshops, a robust accelerator program, an outdoor industry business summit, and higher education partnerships that teach students the skills they need to work in the outdoor industry. ORD also plans to administer about \$900,000 of the funding as competitive marketing collateral grants to communities and eligible nonprofits.

This winter, ORD will release more details about the funding on its website, nmoutside.com, including information for communities and businesses to participate. The funds are part of EDA’s \$750 million American Rescue Plan [Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation program](#), which provides \$510 million in state tourism grants and \$240 million in competitive tourism grants that will be awarded to advance the economic recovery and resiliency of communities where the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries were hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic. A [full list](#) of grant recipients is available on the [EDA website](#).

“The coronavirus pandemic devastated the travel and tourism industry – the linchpin of local economies across the country,” Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo said in a statement. “EDA is proud to give state and territory leaders the resources to build back better through locally led strategies that uniquely address the challenges and opportunities of their local travel tourism and outdoor recreation industry.”

The award is the third over the past year awarded to EDD from the federal EDA to provide direct relief and economic assistance toward recovery. Other funds have gone to craft a 20-year strategic economic plan for the state and to provide on-the-ground technical and economic assistance to rural and underserved communities.

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In just over 2 years, the Outdoor Recreation Division has initiated several programs to support outdoor recreation in New Mexico. Through its new and groundbreaking programs, the division has already begun to tackle issues such as access equity and infrastructure deficits, as well as providing assistance to help business in New Mexico to recover and to thrive.

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.

New Mexico Economic Development Department
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