

NEW MEXICO OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION



OUTDOOR RECREATION TRAILS+ GRANT FY26 PROGRAM GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

MISSION: To increase equitable access to the outdoors for all New Mexicans, ensuring healthy outcomes, environmental stewardship, and economic prosperity.

The **Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant** was launched in 2020 to expand outdoor access, improve health outcomes for residents and visitors, support economic growth and job creation in local communities, and preserve New Mexico's natural and cultural resources. This grant program supports the design, engineering, construction, and maintenance of outdoor recreation infrastructure projects across the state.

Since its launch, the New Mexico Economic Development Department's Outdoor Recreation Division has awarded funding to 221 Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant projects totaling over \$28.7 million, benefitting 30 New Mexico counties and 11 Tribal communities.

This guide will walk you through everything you need to apply for FY26 funding—including eligibility, funding priorities, examples of successful projects, and contact information for our team. We're here to help.

Project Highlights:

- Several grant recipients have invested in strategic partnerships to connect local youth with paid trail restoration work.
- A Tribal partner is building a multifaceted destination recreation center that includes guided cultural tours for visitors.
- One city is constructing an adjustable irrigation dam that creates a surfable wave
- Over 600 miles of wildfire-damaged trails have been revitalized through the work of numerous grant recipients.



WHAT'S NEW FOR FY26?



\$7.2 million available for Trails+ Grant in FY26



Applications accepted in two rounds:

July 1 – September 30, 2025

November 1 – January 31, 2026



All communication, including Progress Reports and Final Reports must be submitted through the Submittable grant portal



NEW MEXICO
OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

Photo by: Village of Cimarron

GRANT OVERVIEW

Tier 1 Local Projects

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants: Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations; Municipalities; Counties; Nonprofits; Public preschools/schools/districts; Public colleges/universities; Soil and water conservation districts; Acequia and land grant associations.

Economic Impact: Project must show demonstrable benefit to the local community, either by attracting and/or retaining residents or attracting visitors.

Recreation Access: The project must be open for public use.

Note: Projects on Tribal, Pueblo, or Native lands do not have to be open to the public but must be open to Tribal members.

FY26 GRANT CYCLE

Round 1: Opens July 1, 2025

Round 2: Opens November 1, 2025

DEADLINES

Round 1: September 30, 2025 at 5:00 PM MT

Round 2: January 31, 2026 at 5:00 PM MT

AWARD RANGE

\$25,000 to \$99,999

MATCH REQUIREMENT

1:1 match for urban applicants;

2:1 match (e.g. a \$30,000 grant requires \$15,000 in matching funds) for applicants in rural and/or Tribal/Pueblo/Native communities. In-kind and/or cash accepted.

GRANT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Project must begin within three months of award notification.
- Project must be completed within 24 months of the signed contract date.
- Grant money will be awarded up front in full after the grant agreement is signed.
- Applicant must submit (1) progress report halfway through the grant period and (1) final report after project completion.
- Applicant must submit a project expenditure report with mid-term and final report.
- Any subcontract over \$20,000 needs a written quote submitted with the application.
- Applicant must submit photos and be willing to participate in marketing and promotional efforts.
- Each awardee is required to tag @NMOOutdoorRec in at least one social media post or mention "New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division's Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant" with a link to the NMOoutside.com within 24 months of the signed contract date.

GRANT OVERVIEW

Tier 2 Regional Projects

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants: Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations; Municipalities; Counties; Public preschools/schools/districts; Public colleges/universities; Soil and water conservation districts; Acequia and land grant associations. *Nonprofits *with capacity* are now eligible.

Economic Impact: Projects must demonstrate economic value for the region as a whole, either by attracting and/or retaining residents or attracting visitors. Collaborative multi-partner projects will score highest.

Recreation Access: The project must be open for public use. Note: Projects on Tribal, Pueblo, or Native lands do not have to be open to the public but must be open to Tribal members.

FY26 GRANT CYCLE

Round 1: Opens July 1, 2025
Round 2: Opens November 1, 2025

DEADLINES

Round 1: September 30, 2025 at 5:00 PM MT
Round 2: January 31, 2026 at 5:00 PM MT

AWARD RANGE

\$100,000 to \$499,999

MATCH REQUIREMENT

1:1 match for urban applicants; 2:1 match (e.g. a \$100,000 grant requires \$50,000 in matching funds) for applicants in rural and/or Tribal communities. In-kind and/or cash accepted.

GRANT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Project must begin within three months of notification of the award.
- Application will include a virtual or in-person presentation to review committee before being awarded.
- Project should have multiple engaged partners with defined roles.
- Grant money will be awarded up front in full after the grant agreement is signed.
- Project must be completed within 24 months of contract signing.
- Applicant must submit (1) progress report halfway through the grant period and (1) final report after the completion of the project.
- Applicant must submit a project expenditure report with mid-term and final report.
- Any subcontract over \$20,000 requires a written quote submitted with the application.
- Successful project completion requires an in-person site visit.
- Applicant must submit photos and be willing to participate in marketing and promotional efforts.
- Each awardee is required to tag @NMOOutdoorRec in at least one social media post or mention "New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division's Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant" with a link to the NMOoutside.com within 24 months of the signed contract date.

GRANT OVERVIEW

Tier 3 Regional Projects

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants: Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations; Municipalities; Counties; Public preschools/schools/districts; Public colleges/universities; Soil and water conservation districts; Acequia and land grant associations. Nonprofits are not eligible.

Economic Impact: Project must show demonstrable benefit to the whole region, either by attracting and/or retaining residents or attracting visitors. Projects must demonstrate economic value for the region as a whole. Collaborative multi-partner projects will score highest.

Recreation Access: The project must be open for public use. Note: Projects on Tribal, Pueblo, or Native lands do not have to be open to the public but must be open to Tribal members.

FY26 GRANT CYCLE

Round 1: Opens July 1, 2025
Round 2: Opens November 1, 2025

DEADLINES

Round 1: September 30, 2025 at 5:00 PM MT
Round 2: January 31, 2026 at 5:00 PM MT

AWARD RANGE

\$500,000 to \$1,000,000

MATCH REQUIREMENT

1:1 match for urban applicants; 2:1 match (e.g. a \$500,000 grant requires \$250,000 in matching funds) for applicants in rural and/or Tribal communities. In-kind and/or cash accepted.

GRANT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Project must begin within three months of notification of the award.
- Application will include a virtual or in-person presentation to review committee before being awarded.
- Project should have multiple engaged partners with defined roles.
- Grant money will be awarded up front in full after the grant agreement is signed.
- Project must be completed within 24 months of contract signing.
- Applicant must submit (1) progress report halfway through the grant period and (1) final report after the completion of the project.
- Applicant must submit a project expenditure report with mid-term and final report.
- Any subcontract over \$20,000 requires a written quote uploaded within application.
- Successful project completion requires an in-person site visit.
- Applicant must submit photos and be willing to participate in marketing and promotional efforts.
- Each awardee is required to tag @NMOOutdoorRec in at least one social media post or mention "New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division's Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant" with a link to the NMOoutside.com within 24 months of the signed contract date.

ELIGIBLE & INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

What type of infrastructure projects can you apply for?

ELIGIBLE

- Structures and other infrastructure that enhance public nature-based outdoor recreation
- Design, survey, and engineering plans
- Equipment (specific to project construction and maintenance) - up to 30% of grant request
- Trail, wayfinding, or other signage
- Maintenance and improvement to existing outdoor infrastructure
- Administrative costs - up to 10%
- Billed labor

Examples

- Trail design or construction, signage, river access, whitewater amenities, outdoor classroom infrastructure, trailhead improvements, picnic shelters, wildlife viewing areas.

INELIGIBLE

- Land acquisition
- Outdoor swimming pools or water parks
- Recreational facilities such as golf courses, playground structures, and traditional sports facilities (i.e. soccer fields)
- Landscaping and beautification ONLY projects
- Infrastructure owned by a for-profit entity

Examples

- Indoor recreation amenities; structures owned by a private business or entity that are not open for public use; developing or enhancing baseball fields.



OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

This grant invests in projects that enhance outdoor recreation. How we define outdoor recreation: Any activity that takes place outside, in a natural environment.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:



Adaptive outdoor recreation of all types.



Trail activities: hiking, backpacking, trail running, horseback riding, hunting etc.



Camping: Tent, RV, yurts, etc.



Off-road motorized activities: UTV, ATV, off-road motorcycles, etc.



Nature enjoyment: wildlife viewing, wildlife photography, birdwatching, nature walks, plant identification, etc.



Snow activities: snowboarding, all skiing types, snowshoeing, etc.



Bicycling: road, mountain, gravel, bikepacking, etc.



Water activities: canoeing, kayaking, rafting, stand-up paddle boarding, fishing, etc.

For more examples of eligible projects, read about past grant recipients [here](#).



FAQs

Are privately owned businesses or state/federal agencies eligible to apply?

No. Neither privately owned businesses nor state/federal agencies are eligible. We encourage partnerships with state/federal agencies and private businesses on these projects, but the application must come from one of the following entities: Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations; Municipalities; Counties; Nonprofits; Public preschools/schools/districts; Public Colleges/Universities; Soil and water conservation districts; Acequia and land grant associations. Note that nonprofits with capacity are now eligible for Tier 2 Regional awards.

Can my organization submit more than one application per grant cycle/fiscal year?

No. Only one submission per entity per NM state fiscal year (July 1-June 30) is allowed. We ask that you do not submit multiple applications from different partners for the same project (in an attempt to increase the odds of it being funded). Please submit one application for the project and include letters of support from your partners.

Do in-kind donations and services qualify as matching funds?

Yes. The match component can be any combination of cash or in-kind (i.e. volunteer hours, prior work, purchase of the land, permitting costs, professional staff services, annual maintenance, donated equipment, services, and/or materials). Other state and federal funds can also be used as a match.

How are awardees selected?

1. An external review committee will individually score applications.
2. The review committee finalizes recommendations through an internal review from the Cabinet Secretary of the NM Economic Development Department.
3. All applicants will receive a notification if they are awarded or declined funding within two months of application deadline.

What is required of a strong application?

Projects will be scored based on five main categories:

1. Recreational value;
2. Contribution to equitable outdoor access;
3. Environmental and cultural impacts;
4. Economic value;
5. Projects with robust, demonstrable community support (in the form of letters of support, resolutions, MOUs, etc.);
6. Projects with multiple partners with well-defined roles.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 Regional applicants will be required to make a formal presentation to the scoring committee during the application process.

What is considered rural?

"Rural" is defined as any part of the state other than Los Alamos County, Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Farmington, Las Cruces, Roswell, Santa Fe, and a 10-mile radius around those cities.

When will grant announcements be made?

Awards will be announced after each review cycle.

FAQs

Is the match requirement the same for urban and rural applicants?

No. There is a 1:1 match required from all urban applicants. For rural or Indigenous applicants (See previous page for "rural" definition), the match is 2:1. For example, if an urban applicant requests \$50k in grant funds they would need at least \$50k in matching funds; if a rural or tribal applicant requests \$50k in grant funds they would need at least \$25k in matching funds.

When will I be awarded the grant?

Grantees will be awarded 100% of the grant award up front in full after the grant agreement signing, creation of a purchase order, and invoice submitted. Timeframe can vary depending on how quickly required documents are returned.

Can I phase my project?

Yes. The Outdoor Recreation Division encourages phasing. Applicants may apply for Trails+ Grant funds for one phase of a project, then reapply for a second phase once progress and capacity has been demonstrated for phase one. Complimentary applications from multiple stakeholder groups can apply for phased projects.

When can I expect to hear back about my application?

You will receive an email from the ORD team within two months of application close dates, informing you whether your project was awarded funding. Both those awarded and declined funding will be notified.

What are the requirements if I receive a grant?

Projects must be completed within 24 months of the signed contract date. The applicant, adhering to a template created by ORD, must submit one progress report halfway through the grant period and a final report after the completion of the project including financial reporting. The applicant must submit photos and be willing to participate in marketing and promotional efforts, including inclusion of ORD logo in project materials. Applicants will be expected to host an in-person site visit before project completion.

How do I know if I am eligible to apply for a Tier 2 or Tier 3 grant?

Organizations should have an operating budget five times that of the grant request and have dedicated staff to oversee the project. Project must show demonstrable benefit to the whole region, either by attracting and/or retaining residents or attracting visitors.



APPLICATION TIPS

- For more information and to access the application, visit the [New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division website.](#)
- Be concise with responses; **there is a word limit for each question.** You will be prevented from submitting if any answer exceeds this limit.
- Double-check the **award amount, budget, and match** to ensure they are accurate.
- Pay **close attention to additional instructions in the application** notes. Some requirements, if not completed correctly, will disqualify you from receiving funding or significantly delay the funding process.
- Confirm the account the application is submitted from is the primary contact. ORD will send all grant updates to the account that submitted the application (for the entire duration of the 24-month grant contract and the application process) **including reporting forms.**
- Save your work in the online application frequently. Connection errors can lead to a loss of data that is not recoverable. **Do not rely on autosave.**
- Take **advantage of the "Collaboration" option** in the online application. This allows organizations to select multiple users to work on a submission. This will appear after you log in to your account, in the top right-hand corner of the application page.
- To avoid technical difficulties, **submit early.** If you do run into technical issues with login, your application, or submission, contact Submittable at the bottom of this [page.](#)
- Stay up to date on grant updates, webinars, and deadlines by [signing up for our newsletter.](#)



APPLY HERE

GRANT OPENS JULY 1, 2025

[NMOUTSIDE.COM](https://nmoutside.com)



CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS



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