

NEW MEXICO OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION



# OUTDOOR EQUITY FUND

FY27 PROGRAM GUIDE

July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027



# INTRODUCTION

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

The Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) was established in 2019 by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham through landmark legislation that also created the Outdoor Equity Fund (OEF), the first state-funded outdoor equity grant program in the nation. Housed within Economic Development New Mexico, the Division works to expand outdoor access, strengthen communities, and grow New Mexico's outdoor economy.

The Outdoor Equity Fund was created to ensure all New Mexico youth, regardless of income, background, or geography, have access to meaningful outdoor experiences. Through grants supporting outdoor recreation, environmental education, cultural connection, stewardship, and workforce development, OEF helps remove barriers that have historically limited access to the outdoors.

Since its launch, OEF has awarded \$10.5 million to 211 organizations, connecting more than 128,000 youth across 28 counties and Tribal communities with opportunities to explore and experience New Mexico's outdoors — many for the very first time.

This guide covers everything you need to apply for FY27 funding, including eligibility requirements, priorities, and application guidance.

Past programs have:

- Introduced youth to adaptive sports, bikepacking, rock climbing, camping, fishing, rafting, hunting, cycling, rockhounding, archery, hiking, regenerative agriculture, nature journaling, beekeeping, and more.
- Restored ecosystems through hands-on conservation and stewardship work.
- Connected youth to culturally and historically significant sites, Native languages and traditions, and food sovereignty
- Offered paid internships and training in outdoor careers like guiding, rafting, and conservation.



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# WHAT'S NEW FOR FY27?

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**Over \$4 million available for Outdoor Equity Fund grants**

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**Applications accepted in two rounds:**

- Round 1: July 1 – July 31, 2026
  - Round 2: February 1 – February 26, 2027
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**New funding tier for high-impact programs**

- Tier 1: \$5,000 – \$40,000
  - Tier 2: \$40,001 – \$100,000 (By invitation only, following submission of a required letter of interest.)
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**Tier 2 letters of interest accepted:**

- Round 1: June 1 – June 12, 2026
  - Round 2: January 1 – 12, 2027
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**Info and Q&A Sessions**

Registration is required. All applicants must attend one session before applying. See page 4 for dates and registration links.

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**Tier 1 funding requests cannot exceed 50% of an organization's annual operating budget.**



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# GRANT TIMELINE

## ROUND 1

May 27, 2026, 12:00 PM MT	Tier 2 Info and Q&A Session: <a href="https://bit.ly/oef-tier2info">bit.ly/oef-tier2info</a>
June 1-12, 2026	Request for tier two letters of interest open
June 24, 5:30 PM MT	Tier 1 Info and Q&A Session: <a href="https://bit.ly/oef-tier1info">bit.ly/oef-tier1info</a>
June 25, 12:00 PM MT	Tier 1 Info and Q&A Session: <a href="https://bit.ly/oef-tier1info2">bit.ly/oef-tier1info2</a>
July 1, 2026	Applications <b>open</b> for both tiers
July 30, 5:00 PM MT	Applications <b>close</b> for both tiers

## ROUND 2

December 9, 2026, 12:00 PM MT	Tier 2 Info and Q&A Session: <a href="https://bit.ly/4wtFDPe">bit.ly/4wtFDPe</a>
January 1-12, 2027	Request for tier two letters of interest open
January 20, 5:30 PM MT	Tier 1 Info and Q&A Session: <a href="https://bit.ly/4wlb20y">bit.ly/4wlb20y</a>
January 21 at 12:00 PM MT	Tier 1 Info and Q&A Session: <a href="https://bit.ly/4eGSsiN">bit.ly/4eGSsiN</a>
February 1, 2027	Applications <b>open</b> for both tiers
February 26, 5:00 PM MT	Applications <b>close</b> for both tiers

- Tier 2 invitation to apply status will be sent prior to application opening date
- All applicants will be notified of grant approval or denial within two months of the application deadline
- Grant funds will be disbursed in full upon execution of the grant agreement and submission of all required documents and invoice
- **Incomplete or incorrect W-9 forms will delay payment**

# GRANT OVERVIEW

Programs must serve at least 40% low-income youth and support nature-based outdoor recreation activities for youth up to 18 years old.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations
- Municipalities and Counties
- Nonprofit organizations
- Public preschools, K-12 schools
- Public school districts
- Public colleges and universities

## FUNDING TIERS

**Tier 1:** \$5,000-\$40,000

**Tier 2:** 40,001-\$100,000\*

*\*Application for Tier 2 is by invitation only, following submission of a letter of interest*

## TIER 1 MATCH REQUIREMENTS

**Urban Applicants:** 1:2 match  
(50% e.g., \$30,000 request = \$15,000 match)

**No match required for:** Rural applicants, Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations, nonprofits and schools located on Tribe, Pueblo, or Nation serving Indigenous youth

## TIER 2 MATCH REQUIREMENTS

**Urban Applicants:** 1:2 match  
(50% e.g., \$30,000 request = \$15,000 match)

**Rural & Tribal Applicants:** 1:4  
(25% e.g., \$100,000 request = \$25,000 match)

See page 9 for definitions & page 10 for breakdown of qualified matches.



# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

## ALL AWARDED PROGRAMS MUST

- Serve youth 18 and under
- Demonstrate minimum 40% low-income participants
- Include educational component that addresses climate and environment
- Submit one progress report and one final report
- Include a formal quote/estimate for any contractor or service provider costing over \$5,000

## TIER 1 PROGRAMS

- Must be completed within 18 months of the fully executed grant agreement date
- Funding requests cannot exceed 50% of the organization's annual operating budget

## TIER 2 PROGRAMS

- Organizations must have an annual operating budget of at least \$500,000
- Must be completed within 24 months of the fully executed grant agreement date
- Should offer high-impact outdoor programming with clear measures of outcomes and impact
- Programs that incorporate workforce development elements are encouraged



# WHAT CAN BE FUNDED

## ELIGIBLE

- Services (recreational and educational)
- Equipment and supplies
- Transportation
- Administrative - up to 10%
- Billed labor (staff, contractors, paid youth interns)
- Miscellaneous (insurance, snacks, gear rentals, bus fare, access passes, entrance fees, permits, certifications)

### Examples

- Transportation, fishing gear, fishing permits, and snacks for participants in a flyfishing program
- Bike park lift passes, gear rentals, and fees for youth to become certified mountain bike instructors
- Equipment for a gear library that supports regular outdoor youth programming

## INELIGIBLE

- Programs without significant outdoor exposure
- Traditional “stick and ball” organized sports (baseball, soccer, basketball)
- Infrastructure development (see [Trails+ Grant](#))
- Out-of-state travel
- Vehicle and trailer purchases
- One-time events
- Photo/video documentation unless included in 10% admin fees

### Examples

- Summer camps providing only organized sports opportunities
- Equipment-only projects (i.e. applications with no programming element)
- Purchase of a trailer to haul equipment for a mountain biking program



# ELIGIBLE OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Examples of activities include, but are not limited to:



Adaptive outdoor recreation of all types



Hiking, backpacking, trail running,



Hunting, fishing, archery



Camping: tent, RV, yurts, etc.



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



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



Snow activities: snowboarding, skiing, snowshoeing



Bicycling: road, mountain, gravel, bikepacking



Nature enjoyment: birdwatching, nature walks, plant identification, nature journaling



Other: Skateboarding, ballooning, rock climbing, disc golf, equestrian recreation, guiding, outdoor team-building activities, conservation

For examples of eligible programs:

Visit [nmoutside.com/fy26oef-r1](https://nmoutside.com/fy26oef-r1)

Watch our grantee videos: [bit.ly/ordgranteevideos](https://bit.ly/ordgranteevideos)



# APPLICATION EVALUATION

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## Applications are scored based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated impact to low income, under-represented, or marginalized youth through a clear and well-developed program description
- Detailed budget and match that directly supports the program description
- Intentionally designed climate and/or environmental education components
- Promoting equitable access to outdoor recreation for New Mexico youth
- Tier 2 applications will be scored with additional weight on program including a youth workforce development component and program data collection/measurement and evaluation
- Community support (letters of support and partnerships)

## How are awardees selected?

A review committee will individually score applications and make final funding recommendations.

## Definitions:

**Fiscal Sponsor:** A tax-exempt organization that serves as the legal and financial administrator for a project or group that does not have its own eligible nonprofit or governmental status.

**Nonprofit:** An organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization.

**Outdoor Recreation:** Activities that take place outdoors in natural or nature-based settings and have a meaningful connection to the natural world, exclusive of organized team or stick and ball sports.

**Rural Applicant:** Located in any area of New Mexico 10-miles or more outside of Albuquerque, Farmington, Las Cruces, Los Alamos, Rio Rancho, Roswell, Santa Fe.

**Tribal Applicant:** Tribes, Pueblos, Nations, Tribal schools, and Native-led nonprofit organizations that specifically serve Indigenous youth.

**Urban Applicant:** Located within a 10-mile radius around Albuquerque, Farmington, Las Cruces, Los Alamos, Rio Rancho, Roswell, Santa Fe.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## After receiving an OEF grant, when can I apply for another?

- **Tier 1 recipients:** The next fiscal year, approximately 12 months after initial application. State fiscal year is July 1-June 30. You must have submitted a progress and or/final report and have spent over 50% of your current grant funding.
- **Tier 2 recipients:** 18 months after initial application, regardless of what tier you wish to apply for. You must have submitted a progress and/or final report and have spent at least 50% of your current grant funding.

## Can a fiscal sponsor also apply for their own OEF project?

No, only one application can be submitted per organization. See the timeline in the question above for when you can apply for another OEF grant.

## Can I apply for both the Outdoor Equity Fund and Trails+ Grant?

Yes, we encourage applicants to consider both infrastructure projects and youth programming as long as they can demonstrate capacity.

## When will I hear back?

Within two months of the application deadline.

## What's the most common cause of delayed funding disbursements?

Incorrect W-9 forms and ACH forms. **W-9's and ACH forms MUST be signed IN INK and DATED. ACH forms must show both the account number and routing number.**

## When are funds distributed?

Funds are awarded in full upfront after contract execution, invoice submission, and required documentation. ***Incomplete or incorrect W-9 forms will delay payment.***

## What makes a Tier 2 program competitive?

High-impact outdoor programming with clear measures of outcomes and impact, strong partnerships, and offering a youth workforce development component.

## What qualifies for matching funds?

The match component can be any combination of cash or in-kind contributions including: volunteer hours billed at the current federal rate, staff training and certifications, donated equipment, services, and materials. Other state and federal funds may also be used as a match, as long as they are confirmed/obligated at the time of application and directly support the proposed programming.

## Are for-profit, privately owned businesses eligible to apply?

No.

## If I am awarded, am I guaranteed the full requested amount?

No, this is a highly competitive grant. Consider applying for **only what you need and are equipped to use** for your program. Partial awards may be offered based on scoring and ORD staff discretion.

## Who should I contact if I'm having trouble with Submittable or have general questions?

For any questions about using Submittable, contact their help desk at

**[www.submittable.com/help/submitter](http://www.submittable.com/help/submitter)**. For other questions, contact the Grants Coordinator, Evan Pilling or sign up for a one-on-one (see page 13 for links and contact info).

# APPLICATION TIPS

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For more information and to access the application, visit [www.nmoutside.com](http://www.nmoutside.com)

- Be thorough but concise
- Double-check that the requested amount, budget, and match are accurate
- Incomplete or incorrect W-9 forms will delay payment
- Only request the amount needed to successfully complete your program
- Submit your application from the primary contact account. ORD will send all updates and communication through Submittable to the primary contact
- Save your work frequently to avoid losing progress
- Use the “collaboration” feature in the application to allow multiple users to work on your submission (appears in top right-hand corner of the page after you log in)
- Submit early to avoid technical difficulties. **Applications will NOT be accepted after the 5:00 PM MT deadlines**
- Schedule a one-on-one meeting with the Grants Coordinator: [bit.ly/oef1on1](http://bit.ly/oef1on1)



# EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS

Meet a few past Outdoor Equity Fund awardees

## Tribal Adaptive Organization

**Award:** \$40,000

**Location:** San Juan County

**Description:** Provides Native youth with physical disabilities access to adaptive gear and weekly adaptive outdoor programming, mentorship, and environmental education, culminating in a regional summit to advance inclusive recreation, and policy alignment.



## Nature Friends

**Award:** \$7,342

**Location:** Doña Ana County

**Description:** A rockhounding adventure program that combines in-the-field geology lessons with craftsmanship and entrepreneurship. Kids learn to tumble, wire-wrap, and create sellable wares that they then sell at the local farmers and crafts markets.

## Friends of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument

**Award:** \$39,589

**Location:** Taos County

**Description:** School-based weekly outdoor education, stewardship, and hands-on experiences in fly fishing and whitewater rafting, connecting students to careers in rafting and guiding with structured mentorship, technical training, and paid internships.



**APPLY AT:**  
**NMOUTSIDE.SUBMITTABLE.COM**

APPLICATIONS OPEN JULY 1 - 30, 2026  
AND FEBRUARY 1-26, 2027

**NMOUTSIDE.COM**

**CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS**



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EVAN PILLING  
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[evan.pilling@edd.nm.gov](mailto:evan.pilling@edd.nm.gov)

Schedule a one-on-one meeting:  
<http://bit.ly/oef1on1>

Sign up for our newsletter at [www.nmoutside.com/contact](http://www.nmoutside.com/contact)

*The Outdoor Equity Fund is supported by the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, as well as state, federal, and private funds. If you're interested in making a contribution to the future of New Mexico, please contact us!*

