

Case Study: Office of Outdoor Recreation with an Equity Fund

New Mexico



Overview

New Mexico established an Office of Outdoor Recreation with an added Outdoor Equity Grant Program. The Office is based in the state Economic Development Department where it will focus on increasing jobs and access to the outdoor recreation economy. The innovative equity component will support outdoor engagement opportunities for low-income youth.

Bill: SB 462 (2019)

Target Audience

Outdoor recreation users broadly with a focus on low-income youth.

Coalition

The effort was supported by a coalition of more than 50 organizations and companies. This included small, state-based education and recreation nonprofits as well as larger national organizations like Trout Unlimited, The Wilderness Society, and the Outdoor Industry Association. A full list of supporters is available here: <https://www.nuestra-tierra.org/oef-supporters>

Funding

The legislation authorized \$200,000 for the Office, \$100,00 to equity fund, and the equity fund has received at least \$95,000 in private funding. Organizations or local governments that work with low-income youth are eligible to receive small grants to purchase equipment, staff time, park fees, transportation, and more to overcome the barriers to youth outdoor engagement.

Impact

The impact of the Office and associated fund is yet to be quantified. However, Offices of Outdoor Recreation in other states have led to increased outdoor access programs, new outdoor workforce training opportunities in higher education, and a more prominent focus on land conservation.