

Outdoor Equity Funds in the US

Three states (New Mexico, California, and Colorado) have Outdoor Equity Funds as of 2021. These funds support organizations and programs that work with youth from BIPOC, LGBTQ+, disabled, and low-income rural communities to increase access to the outdoors in under-resourced communities.

New Mexico Outdoor Equity Fund

As part of the 2019 bill that created the New Mexico Office of Outdoor Recreation, the nation's first outdoor equity fund was created to support outdoor recreation and learning specifically for individuals from historically underrepresented backgrounds across the state of New Mexico.

Who can apply?

Organizations that work with low-income youth can apply to the fund to receive micro-grants to purchase outdoor equipment, cover recreation fees, or pay the cost of driving to the state's national parks and monuments.

DETAILS

Year Created: 2019

Grant Range: FY21: \$3k-15k

Total Funding: \$1 million

Funding Mechanism: General Fund, special appropriations, philanthropic and business contributions

California Outdoor Equity Grants Program

The Director of Parks and Recreation created California's Outdoor Equity Grants program in 2019 with the intention of increasing the ability of residents in low-income urban and rural communities to outdoor environmental education experiences on public lands. Grants will be awarded to programs that align with state curriculum standards, support stewardship, foster healthy lifestyles, or contain a service-learning component. This legislation prioritizes projects that demonstrate partnerships between public, private, and nonprofit entities.

Who can apply?

Funding will be available to public organizations, including local governments and local educational agencies, joint powers authorities, open-space authorities, regional open-space districts, other relevant public agencies, or nonprofit organizations.

DETAILS

Year Created: 2019

Grant Range: \$20,000 - \$700,000

Total Funding: \$57 million

Funding Mechanism: General Fund and private donations

Colorado Outdoor Equity Fund

The state of Colorado is internationally renowned for its natural landscapes, and year-round outdoor activities. However, systemic inequities have made access to the outdoors and outdoor programming inaccessible to many. The purpose of this grant program is to increase access to Colorado's state parks, public lands, and other outdoor areas for underserved youth and their families. This bill establishes an Outdoor Equity Board within the division of Parks and Wildlife that is responsible for managing the Outdoor Equity Grant Program.

Who can apply?

Governmental entities, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, or federally recognized tribes located within Colorado that will directly utilize the funds to engage youth and their families in the outdoors through education, conservation, or recreation may apply for the grant program.

DETAILS

Year Created: 2021

Grant Range: Pending final program design

Total Funding: Pending appropriation for funding

Funding Mechanism: General fund, through redistribution of lottery funds