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# **COLORADO**

## **Office of Economic Development & International Trade**

### Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office Program Manual for the EDA State Outdoor Recreation Grants

June 1, 2022 - December 31, 2025

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<b>PROGRAM MANAGER</b>
Matt Nuñez OREC Program Manager Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade c. (720) 812-2181   <a href="mailto:matthew.nunez@state.co.us">matthew.nunez@state.co.us</a> 1600 Broadway St., #2500 Denver, CO 80202

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

### BACKGROUND

In March 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into law, which provides \$1.9 trillion in economic stimulus funding towards relief efforts in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. \$750 million of this funding was directed to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) for distribution through the Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation program. Of this funding, the State of Colorado received \$9,683,928.00 in non-competitive funding which will be evenly distributed between the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) and the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (OREC), both divisions of the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade (OEDIT).

The \$9,683,928.00 listed above will be allocated in the following manner:

- **\$4,016,363.72** – OREC Industry Competitive Grants
- **\$2,400,000** – CTO International Tourism Promotion
- **\$1,850,000** – CTO Tourism Recovery Marketing Grants
- **\$1,417,564.28** – Administration, Operation & Personnel Expenses

The OREC Industry Office will be opening a competitive application process for industry partners in June 2022 and will accept applications on a rolling basis until all funds are expended on or before December 31, 2025.

### ELIGIBLE USES ALLOWED BY FEDERAL GUIDELINES

*Note: the following is borrowed directly from the Specific Award Conditions provided by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The program priorities may not directly align with the scope below. Generally, competitive sub-awards are intended to support the outdoor recreation industry, rather than the tourism industry at large. Any questions may be directed to the Program Manager.*

#### **Authorized Scope of Work for the State Tourism Grant**

Under EDA's American Rescue Plan Act State Tourism Grant funding invitation, a state or an Eligible Recipient designated in writing by the state may apply for one or more of the Scope of Work elements listed below that have been pre-approved by EDA.

All projects supported under the State Tourism Grant Program must support the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors and be consistent with Centers for

Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for safe travel. Projects that do not support these sectors or are intended to support diversification away from the sectors are not permitted.

Eligible uses of State Tourism Grants include:

- Workforce training that supports the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries, to improve the skills and job opportunities for workers, including Registered Apprenticeship Programs and other work and learn models. Grant recipients and their partners are encouraged to make connections with the American Job Centers that connect individuals to workforce training.
- Short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to respond to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the regional travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry.
- Technical assistance projects to assist regional economies to recover from damage to the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries, including technical assistance to businesses, entrepreneurs, and small and rural communities to respond to changes to those industries brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.
- Upgrades/retrofits to existing travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation infrastructure, such as convention centers, to increase travel/tourism activity or to make such infrastructure more functional under pandemic social distancing conditions (e.g., consistent with CDC guidelines).
  - These activities can include general accessibility upgrades (e.g., disability access).
- Infrastructure projects that lead to long-term increases in tourist activity in a region, including to communities adjacent to National Park Service units, State Parks, National Marine Sanctuaries, or other natural destinations, and nature-based infrastructure projects and projects enhancing public access to outdoor recreational opportunities.<sup>1</sup>
- Other uses to support the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries, as approved by EDA.

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<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed a resource guide that may be helpful for rural communities seeking to develop recreation economies. See: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/highlight/usda-recreation-economy-resource-guide>

- Please note: If the State Tourism Grant Program applicant elects to propose other activities, the applicant must provide a detailed project and budget narrative specifying the types of activities proposed.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

How / Where to Apply?	<a href="https://oedit.colorado.gov/colorado-state-outdoor-recreation-grant">https://oedit.colorado.gov/colorado-state-outdoor-recreation-grant</a>		
Application Period	June 1, 2022 - December 31, 2025		
Award Maximum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure projects: \$100,000 - \$1 million</li> <li>• All other projects: \$10,000 - \$100,000</li> </ul>		
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities or other political subdivisions of a State, including special purpose units of State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• State or state agencies</li> <li>• Institutions of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education</li> <li>• Public or private non-profit organizations or associations, including community or faith-based non-profit organizations, acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State</li> <li>• Economic Development District Organizations</li> <li>• Indian Tribes or a consortium of Indian Tribes</li> </ul>		
Eligible Areas	State of Colorado		
Eligible Expenses	Capital improvements	Employment & job retention	Strategic planning
	Land acquisition	Infrastructure upgrades	Technical assistance
	Building renovation	Professional development & training	Marketing & promotion
Financial Documentation Required	Project budget		
Other required documents	<p>At least one letter of support, project timeline, SAM/UEI #, Sec. of State Certificate of Good Standing, Form W-9</p> <p>For nonprofit applicants: articles of incorporation &amp; bylaws</p>		

<sup>2</sup> If the fiscal agent of awarded funds is not employed by the applicant organization, a signed agreement will be required prior to any award disbursement.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

### How / Where Do I Apply?

Visit <https://oedit.colorado.gov/colorado-state-outdoor-recreation-grant> and select “Apply to this Grant.”

### Required Documentation

All applicants must submit the following information during the application process:

- Project budget & timeline
- One or more letters of support
  - Letters of support may come from an elected official, town/county manager, or other community or business leader not affiliated with the primary applicant
- SAM.gov proof of registration with UEI # or application for new registration
  - *The EDA will not fund any organizations that do not have an active SAM.gov registration.*

Nonprofit organizations must submit the following information during the application process:

- Articles of incorporation
- Bylaws
- Colorado Secretary of State [Certificate of Good Standing](#)
- Documentation (letter) that the non-profit is acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of the state
  - This may come in the form of a letter of support from a political body stating that the proposed project aligns with the interests of the community. If already submitted through the letters of support, no additional documentation is required.

The following documents must be submitted prior to any awards being made:

- Proof of active SAM.gov registration, if not previously submitted
- For construction subawards:
  - Environmental narrative
  - Applicant certification clause
  - Any available electronic copies of documents to satisfy the state environmental review requirements and any available phase I or phase II environmental site assessment reports.
  - Other certifications and agreements, as required, including, but not limited to Davis-Bacon Act agreement

### Application and Award Period

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, with the review committee meeting quarterly, as needed. All award funds must be spent by May 31, 2026. In order to allow time for projects, no applications will be accepted after December 31, 2025. The review committee may choose to award all funding prior to this deadline.

### **Program Management**

The EDA State Outdoor Recreation Grant program is managed by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), a public agency organized pursuant to Colorado laws and regulations promulgated by OEDIT for this purpose. The Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (OREC), a division of OEDIT, will operate the program as administrator to provide award notification, and servicing for grants applications and grants offered through the program.

### **Application and Funding Determination Process**

The dates listed below are all tentative, as funding may be fully allocated prior to December 31, 2025.

#### **Quarterly review deadlines, as needed:**

- June 30, 2022
- September, 30, 2022
- December 31, 2022
- March 31, 2023
- June 30, 2023
- September, 30, 2023
- December 31, 2023
- March 31, 2024
- June 30, 2024
- September 30, 2024
- December 31, 2024
- March 31, 2025
- June 30, 2025
- September 30, 2025
- December 31, 2025

#### **Review committee meetings, as needed:**

- April
- July
- October
- January

Awards are announced roughly 45-60 days after deadlines. Infrastructure awards may not be announced until 90-120 after deadlines.

### Maximum Grant Award Amounts

The expected award ranges are as follows:

Infrastructure projects: \$100,000 - \$1 million

All other projects: \$10,000 - \$100,000

### Matching Requirement

There is no match requirement to be considered for funding; however, demonstrated matches may be considered more favorably in the evaluation process.

### Eligibility for Participation

Eligible projects include:

- ~~State, county, city, or community/regional tourism marketing and promotion campaigns, including through nonprofit Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO). Messaging must be consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 guidelines.~~
  - ~~Note: Due to statutory restrictions, advertising on behalf of private companies is not permitted.~~<sup>3</sup>
- Workforce training that supports the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries to improve the skills and job opportunities for workers, including Registered Apprenticeship Programs and other work-and-learn models. Grant recipients and their partners are encouraged to make connections with the American Job Centers that connect individuals to workforce training.
- Short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to respond to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the regional travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry.
- Technical assistance projects to assist regional economies with recovery from impacts to the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries, including technical assistance to businesses, entrepreneurs, and small and rural communities to respond to changes to those industries brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.
- Upgrades/retrofits to existing travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation infrastructure, such as convention centers, to increase travel/tourism activity or to make such infrastructure more functional under pandemic social distancing conditions (e.g., consistent with CDC guidelines).

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<sup>3</sup> This language is included as standard under EDA terms and conditions but is not applicable to this pool of funding, which is limited only to outdoor recreation projects.



- These activities can include general accessibility upgrades (e.g., disability access).
- Infrastructure projects that lead to long-term increases in tourist activity in a region, including in communities adjacent to National Park Service units, State Parks, National Marine Sanctuaries, or other natural destinations, and nature-based infrastructure projects and projects enhancing public access to outdoor recreational opportunities.
  - **Note:** Subawards for construction projects including upgrades/retrofits will require submission of additional information and advance approval by EDA. All subawards for infrastructure projects are subject to federal environmental and real property requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). States will be required to submit additional documentation on NEPA compliance (e.g., application of a categorical exclusion or draft environmental assessment or environmental impact statement) and must ensure subrecipients comply with Davis-Bacon wage requirements, environmental rules and regulations, and the property and construction-related requirements of 2 C.F.R. part 200 and 13 C.F.R. part 314.
- Other uses to support the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries, as approved by the State of Colorado and EDA.

All projects must support the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors and be consistent with CDC guidelines for safe travel. Projects that do not support these sectors or are intended to support diversification away from the sectors are not permitted.

### Outdoor Recreation Component

Due to the indistinct nature of outdoor recreation, this section is intended to clarify eligible projects and organizations with the mission of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office<sup>4</sup> in mind.

Eligible projects must include some element of human-land interaction for recreational benefits OR economic development or marketing activities intended to support the outdoor recreation industry.

Industry-adjacent projects, such as playgrounds or sports fields, may be considered on a case-by-case basis but will not be given priority for funding unless significantly impactful to disadvantaged communities.

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<sup>4</sup> To champion industry, communities, and people to come to life through Colorado's great outdoors. The office does this by focusing on four impact areas: economic development, conservation & stewardship, education & workforce training, and public health, wellness & safety.

Historically, OREC has served organizations and projects that are directly related to outdoor recreation occurring in the front country (easily accessible outdoor areas that are mostly visited by day users) or backcountry (primitive or wilderness areas that are reached primarily by a recreation activity other than a car). Other projects, such as those listed below, may be considered on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the review committee.

Some examples of projects which are eligible for funding:

- Trail improvements and ancillary infrastructure upgrades<sup>5</sup>, such as trailhead signage, paving, etc.
- Marketing and promotion for outdoor recreation events, such as bike races or river festivals
- Regional outdoor recreation economic impact studies
- Strategic planning or technical assistance for outdoor recreation driven economic development
- Workforce development and training for staff directly working in or benefitting the outdoor recreation industry

Some examples of projects which may be considered on a case-by-case basis include:

- Playground improvements
- Outdoor sporting facilities improvements (soccer fields, etc.)

Examples of projects which will not be considered under any circumstances:

- Indoor recreation facilities or fitness center improvements
- Conservation activities which do not incorporate elements of human-based recreation
- Brick-and-mortar lodging facilities (hotels, motels, etc.)
- Marketing and promotion for music festivals, art fairs, and farmers markets, unrelated to outdoor recreation

## **OEDIT Applicants Priority**

After reviewing the eligibility criteria of each applicant, and if the total amount of money asked by participants exceeds the resources available in the grant program, priority will be given to applicants based on how many of the criteria for which they qualify within the program. In the event of multiple applications appearing equal in the assessment of these criteria, preference will be given to eligible applicants that are located in rural areas, are women, veteran and/or minority-owned, and meet additional criteria.

## **Review Committee**

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<sup>5</sup> Please refer to “Prohibited Activities and Uses” for some exceptions to this, mainly any projects which would occur on federal lands.

An independent review committee will be responsible for the evaluation of applications and will subsequently make recommendations of approval to OEDIT's Compliance Manager and the EDA Program Manager. The review committee will be composed of OEDIT staff, other State employees, and external volunteers with subject matter expertise.

Applicants may not contact review committee members at any point to discuss their application. Any applicant found to have done so will have their application automatically disqualified from consideration. Any questions about a pending application should be directed to the Program Manager.

### Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Outdoor recreation industry economic impact or recovery
- Project-specific evaluation:
  - Construction projects: level of need, community impact, and project preparedness
  - All other projects: level of need, community impact, and innovation
- Strength of partnerships
- Budget, timeline, and capacity to implement

## AWARD CONDITIONS

### Conditions of Funding

You need to:

- agree to the [Dept. of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions](#)
- agree to comply with 2 CFR Part 200 Federal Regulations, if awarded.
- not begin project activities until a grant agreement has been executed and signed
- complete your project within the approved grant timeline and grant agreement end date
- keep the project budget updated throughout the lifetime of the grant
- submit interim reports as outlined in the grant agreement
- submit a final report and final budget, including documents for expenses incurred, as outlined in the grant agreement

### Acknowledgement

Marketing materials that are funded in part by OREC funds need to include the official OREC logo. Prior to use, all materials must be approved by the Program Manager.

### Changes to grant agreement

OREC and the EDA need to approve any refinements, clarifications, modifications, or changes to awarded proposals or your organization may forfeit grant funds. Significant changes to a fully executed grant agreement which fundamentally alter the nature of the grant and/or project will not be allowed and may lead to forfeiture of funds. Awarded applicants should complete and submit the Proposal Change Form. Proposal Change Forms submitted 60 days or less from the end of the project timeline will not be accepted.

### Project timeline and report

You need to complete your project within the grant cycle period. You must submit your final report as outlined in the grant agreement. In the final report, submit a budget, invoices, expense receipts, and proof of payment and describe what you accomplished with the grant.

Expenses incurred before the grant agreement start date are not allowable expenses.

### Unused funds

You need to return any unused grant funds to OREC. Any grant funds not used as approved shall be returned to OREC pursuant to the grant agreement. Projects must be completed within the approved grant timeline.

## Reporting Requirements

Recipients of funding will be required to submit periodic reports to the Project Manager on a regular basis until all project components are completed. The terms of reporting will be agreed upon in the Scope of Work following award approval and frequency will not exceed four reports per year.

Reports should include the following information:

- Milestones and tasks completed over the previous reporting period
- Milestones and tasks expected to be completed in the next reporting period
- Delays or challenges to tasks in the previous reporting period
- Additional support needed from Program Manager or EDA Project Manager
- Any revisions to grant agreement
- Marketing materials for, or press generated by the project over the previous reporting period

### Site Visits

Grant recipients will be expected to host site visits from the Program Manager and additional OREC staff on an annual basis through the life of the project to discuss progress and outcomes. These visits will be scheduled at least 30 days in advance by the Program Manager in coordination with the recipient organization.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STATUS

### Operation Status

Any applicant found to be not in Good Standing with the Colorado Secretary of State's office; debarred from federal procurement activities; or delinquent on any State taxes or fees may be considered automatically ineligible. Please use the following links if you are unsure of your operational status:

Colorado Secretary of State: <https://www.coloradosos.gov/biz/BusinessEntityCriteriaExt.do>

SAM.gov: <https://sam.gov/content/home>

### Prohibited Activities and Uses

#### Private businesses

Due to federal regulations, private businesses are ineligible to receive direct funding through this grant. Eligible recipients may contract the services of private businesses in order to complete their proposed scope of work, however.

#### Federal lands and federal government agencies

Because this funding is intended for the use of States and sub-awardees, federal agencies are ineligible to apply. Additionally, projects occurring on federal lands may not qualify unless special arrangements are made, such as a lease agreement between the federal agency in question and an eligible entity.

#### New construction projects

The EDA discourages the use of grant funding for new construction projects - defined as earthmoving, construction, or demolition activities - due to the lengthy environmental review process required.