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Support HB25-1215 Redistribution of Lottery Fund

NEXT 100 COLORADO

Increased Funding for the Colorado Outdoor Equity Grant Program & Building Excellent Schools Today

Representatives Taggart & Joseph, Senators Bridges & Kirkmeyer

In 2021, the Colorado Next 100 Coalition helped spearhead a group of over 60 state and national organizations to pass HB21-1318, the Colorado Outdoor Equity Grant Program (OEGP) with leadership from Representatives Herod and Ortiz, and Senators Garcia and Jaquez Lewis.

Funded by spillover dollars from the Colorado Lottery, the OEGP is an incredible community effort to financially support providers of outdoor recreation and education organizations that serve youth and their families from communities that have been historically underserved and underrepresented. The program helps to provide youth and families access to the recreational, educational, cultural, workforce, and conservation opportunities of Colorado outdoors.

Since its creation, the program, administered by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has provided a total of $8.5 million to support meaningful outdoor experiences for Colorado youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, immigrant and refugee youth, low-income youth, rural youth, youth with disabilities and their families through environmental education, experiential learning, stewardship programming, and more.

Through December of 2024, this investment has supported over 63,000 Colorado youth and families in experiencing the positive impact of the great outdoors, including:

- **28,756 BIPOC youth**
- **4,205 youth with disabilities**
- **1,725 LGBTQ+ youth**

Importance of Outdoor Equity

The 2023 Economic Contributions of Outdoor Recreation in Colorado Report shows just how crucial outdoor recreation is to Colorado's economy. As of 2023, Colorado's outdoor recreationists spent over $52 billion on trips and equipment, contributing to a total economic output of $65.8 billion and $36.5 billion to the state's gross domestic product. This economic activity supports over 404,000 jobs in the state, which represents 12% of the entire labor force in Colorado and produces $22.2 billion in salaries and wages, making Colorado's outdoor recreation sector larger than construction, finance, insurance, education, healthcare, and social assistance.

Outdoor recreation is especially important to Coloradans, with 96% of residents recreating outdoors and 72% of residents recreating at least once or more per week, according to the 2024 - 2028 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

However, significant structural and intrapersonal barriers still exist for groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in outdoor recreation and conservation such as cost, transportation, proximity to outdoor places, accessibility, time, lack of cultural or language relevance, and feelings of exclusion and historical and/or institutional discrimination.

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The OEGP introduces new participants, fresh ideas, and innovative methods for engaging with the outdoors. This increased participation also generates increased support for environmental policies and boosts the Colorado economy through additional funding to the outdoor recreation market.

More Investment is Needed for Outdoor Equity

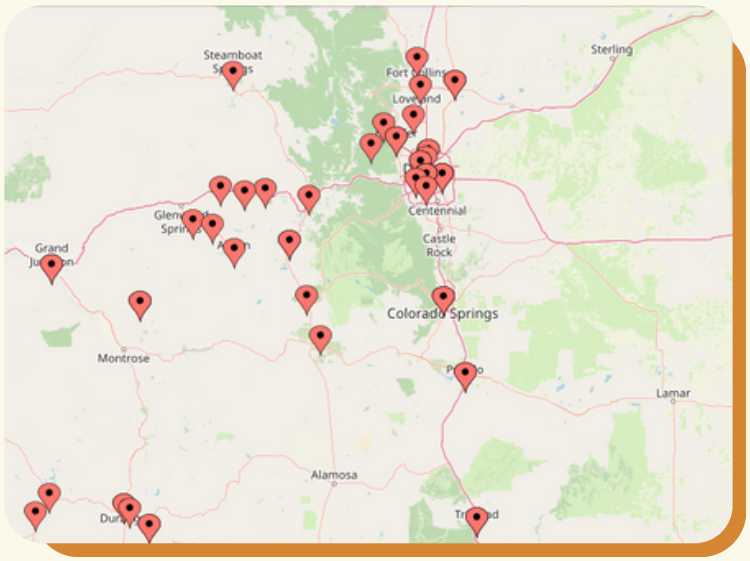
The Outdoor Equity Grant Program is capped at $3 million per year. However, the need for this investment has far exceeded the amount, with requests for funding totaling over $40 million in the first three grant periods alone.

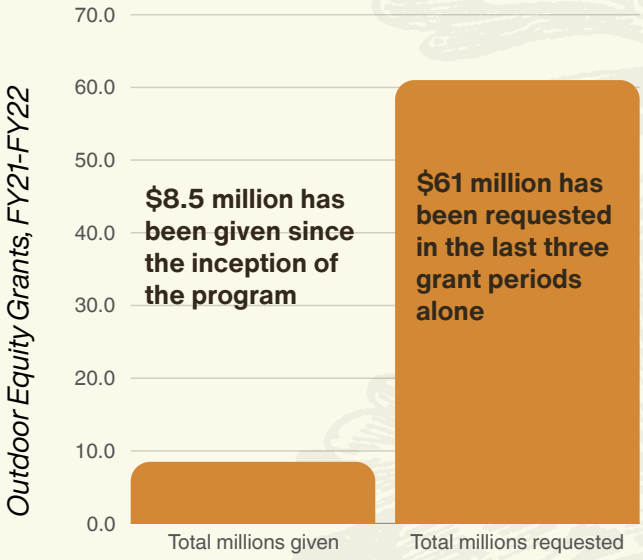
The OEGP has proven its ability to connect underrepresented youth with the natural world. Now it is time to leverage the success of this popular program and ensure it is accessible to more underserved youth across our great state.

Spillover dollars must be prioritized for outdoor equity and school infrastructure. By pulling up the funding for OEGP and BEST and creating an OEGP “spillover” bucket we can ensure these critical programs are funded.

- **$3M for OEGP**
- **$4M for BEST**
- **50% BEST**
- **30% OEGP**
- **10% Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund in CPW**
- **10% Wildlife Cash Fund in CPW**

Increasing funding for the OEGP is essential to continuing to expand access to the outdoors, support the growing and diversifying outdoor recreation community, and sustain the economic benefits it brings to Colorado.





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Organizations in Support of Increasing Funding to Colorado's Outdoor Equity Grant Program through Lottery Spillover Dollars

Black Democratic Legislative Caucus of Colorado
Trust for Public Land
The Wilderness Society
Green Latinos
Healthy Air and Water Colorado
Western Resource Advocates
The Next 100 Colorado
Access Unbound
Adaptive Adventures
Amache Alliance
Audubon Rockies
BIPOC Mountain Collective
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition
Colorado Discover Ability - Adaptive Outdoor Recreation
Colorado Rural Schools Alliance
Colorado Youth Corps Association
Conservation Colorado
Camping to Connect
Disability Law Colorado
Friends of Youth and Nature
Hunters of Color
National Parks Conservation Association
Outdoor Lab Foundation
Rising Routes Alliance
Riverside Educational Centers
Sierra Club Colorado
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports
Vibe Tribe Adventures
ViVe Wellness
Voices of the Land- Rebuilding Earth Culture
Women's Wilderness

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