

Economic Impact Report – Talking Points

Not only do park and recreation professionals provide essential services to their communities, but parks are powerful engines of economic activity.

A new report issued by the National Recreation and Park Association — in partnership with the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University — demonstrates the vast economic impact of local parks nationwide.

Operations and capital spending for local parks generates **more than \$166 billion dollars in economic activity** and **supports more than 1.1 million jobs**.

This is a conservative estimate that does not capture parks' other economic benefits:

- Higher real estate values
- Health and wellness benefits
- Conservation/Resiliency benefits
- Tourism
- Economic development

The report also includes a state-level analysis that highlights the economic impact of local parks in **all 50 states** and the **District of Columbia**.

The top 10 states with the highest economic impact include:

- California — \$16 billion
- Florida — \$10.1 billion
- Illinois — \$10 billion
- New York — \$9.2 billion
- Texas — \$8.7 billion
- Colorado — \$4.4 billion
- Ohio — \$4.3 billion
- Washington — \$3.8 billion
- North Carolina — \$3.2 billion
- Virginia — \$2.7 billion

NRPA urges policymakers and elected officials **at all levels of government** to prioritize park and recreation funding, as local parks are a critical part of what makes a city, town or county a vibrant and prosperous community.

Other important points to consider:

Public support for parks and recreation is strong.

A recent survey found **five in six U.S. adults agreed that visiting their local parks, trails and open spaces is essential for their mental and physical well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

More than half (59 percent) of survey respondents said it is very or extremely essential to exercise in parks and green spaces to relieve stress and remain healthy during this crisis, while maintaining physical distancing.

NRPA supports **permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** to ensure \$900 million annually, 40 percent of which would go to state and local assistance.

The **LWCF State Assistance Program** has strict requirements that ensure projects funded through the program are used for outdoor recreation in perpetuity. This funding would assist local park and recreation professionals as they develop plans that will contribute to their local economies.