

2020 EPA Environmental Education Grant Program:

EE Local Grants Requests for Applications (RFAs)

2020 Webinar

The EE Local Grants webinar will begin at 1:00 pm eastern time.

This webinar provides a general overview of the 2020 EE Local Grants RFAs and the Environmental Education Grant application process. Please consult the RFAs for complete details.



2020 EPA Environmental Education Grant Program:

EE Local Grants Requests for Applications

2020 Webinar

Presenter: Michael Band
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environmental Education



Note

Disclaimer: This webinar provides a general overview of the EE Local Grants RFAs and the Environmental Education Grant application process. Please consult the RFAs (also known as the Solicitation Notices) for complete details.

The EE Local Grants RFAs have been issued by EPA's 10 Regional Offices. Anticipated funding will come from Fiscal Year 2020 funds.

The deadline for proposals to the EE Local Grants RFAs is **January 6, 2020**.

Webinar Logistics

- For a webinar:
 - If you are listening through your computer, make sure your speakers are on and the **volume is turned up**.
 - If you have trouble with the audio on your computer, **click “meeting” and “audio setup wizard”** in the upper left corner of your screen. You may also need to leave the meeting and try entering the room again and/or closing some of your tabs if you have a lot open.
 - If you continue to experience technical issues, you can call the phone line:
 - 150 lines available
- Please note a recording and transcript of this webinar will be posted on <https://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants> after this presentation

How to Submit Questions

- Please submit your questions **during the webinar** presentation via the **Q & A box**. No questions will be taken through the chat box or phone line.
- A limited number of **questions of universal interest** will be addressed during the designated Q&A sessions.
- Please send questions unique to your situation or that we did not have time to answer during this webinar to EEGrants@epa.gov
- The EE Grants program has a **Frequently Asked Questions page online**. Some questions posed in each webinar may be subsequently posted to the FAQs page with appropriate responses - <https://www.epa.gov/education/frequent-questions-about-environmental-education-grants-program>.

Today's Agenda

1. The Basics of the EE Grant Program and the EE Local Grants RFAs
2. Who and What We Can and Cannot Fund
3. Budget and Cost Items
4. Contents of Applications and Review/Selection for Awards
5. Helpful Resources and Tips for Success
6. Where to Find More Information and How to Ask Questions After the Webinar
7. Q&A



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The Environmental Education (EE) Grant Program

Support projects to design, demonstrate, or disseminate practices, methodologies, or techniques related to EE and training



The Purpose

- Increase public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues.
- Promote environmental and conservation stewardship.
- Provide the public with the skills needed to weigh various sides of an environmental or conservation issue and take responsible actions.



RFA Basics

- 10 RFAs released
- Anticipate 3 or 4 awards from each of EPA's 10 regions. 30 - 35 awards in total
- Grant Awards: no less than \$50,000 and no more than \$100,000
- Local focus
- Proposals must include both educational and environmental priorities
- Required: matching funds and a sub-grant program
- **Due January 6, 2020, by 11:59pm ET**



A Closer Look at 2018 & 2019

Region	Total # of Applications in FY2018	Grants Awarded FY2018	Grants Awarded 2019
Region 1	61	3	3
Region 2	65	4	3
Region 3	51	3	4
Region 4	65	3	3
Region 5	67	4	4
Region 6	56	4	3
Region 7	23	4	3
Region 8	35	4	4
Region 9	64	4	4
Region 10	46	4	5

A Local Focus

Help develop informed, knowledgeable and responsible citizens in the community(ies) in which the project is located.



Target Audiences

- Rural, suburban, and urban locations
 - Including low income, minority, tribal and rural communities.
 - Including communities more likely to be adversely affected by environmental risks.
- Any age group
 - Students at all levels, members of a community, educators, and community leaders.
- Formal and non-formal educational settings.



Definitions

Environmental Education

- Teaches how to weigh various sides of an issue through **critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills** on environmental and conservation topics... with an ultimate goal of environmental and conservation stewardship.
- **Environmental or conservation information** is a component, but only addresses awareness and knowledge, usually about a particular environmental or conservation issue.
- **Outreach** can also be part of EE as it involves **information dissemination** and requests or **suggestions for action** on a particular issue (often without the critical thinking, problem solving and decision making steps in between).

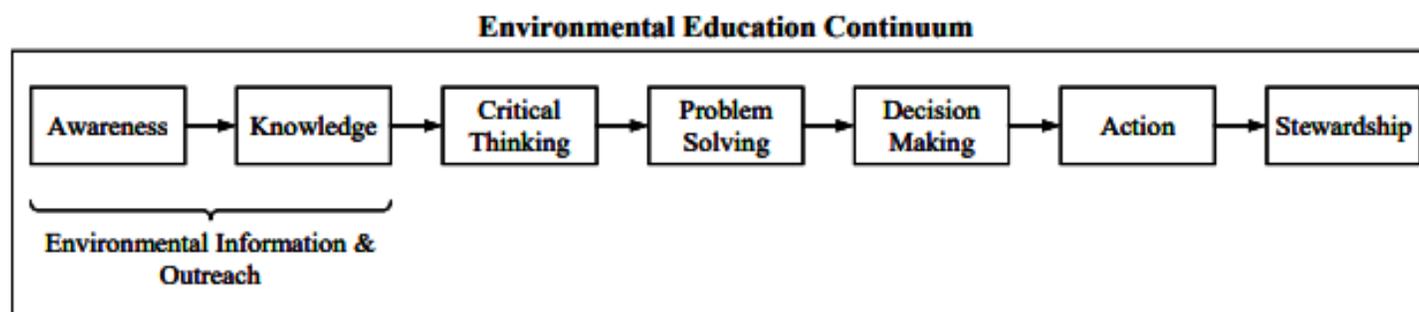
Conservation

- Preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife in order to achieve maximum environmental and human health benefits.

FAQ

Can my project focus on environmental or conservation information and outreach?

No. Environmental education may include environmental or conservation information and outreach, but these activities alone, or as the main focus of the project, do not qualify as environmental education, and therefore do not qualify for this EPA grant. The applicant must demonstrate how their project will reflect the components of environmental education as defined in the solicitation notice.



The Priorities

Educational & Environmental



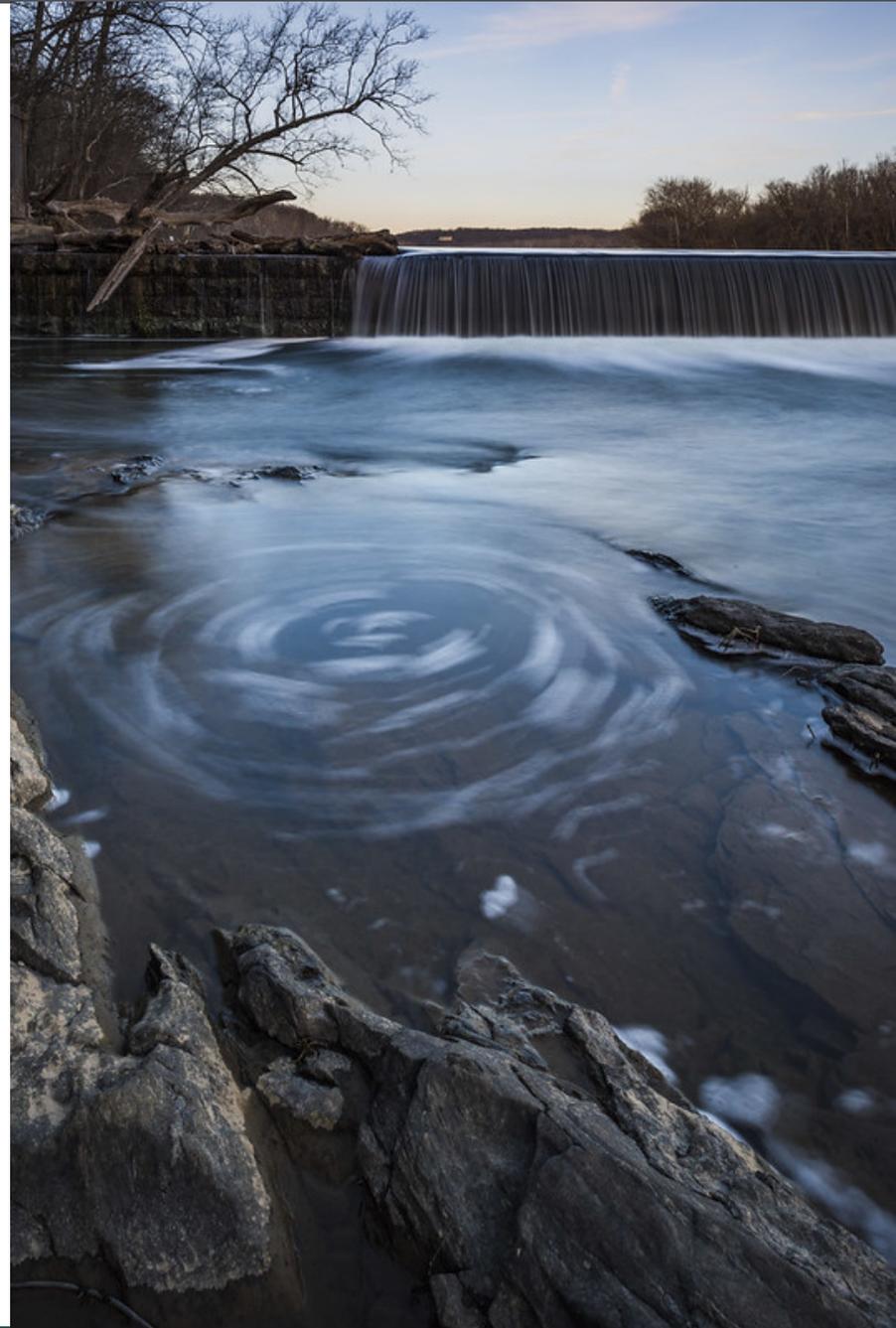
Educational Priorities

- Agricultural Education
- Community Projects
- Career Development



Environmental Priorities

- Improving air quality
- Ensuring clean and safe water
- Ensuring the safety of chemicals
- Revitalize land and prevent contamination
 - Work to manage food waste for environmental benefits; e.g., the benefits of composting, reduction of waste going to landfills, etc



Partnerships

- Not Required
- However, partnerships can strengthen recruitment plans by increasing potential numbers and diversity of audiences, can increase the variety of and accessibility to expertise needed to create a local project, and can assist in meeting the matching funds requirement
- Up to 5 points given for Partnership Letters of Commitment in review and scoring of applications; or, if no partners, an explanation of how the project will be successful without them



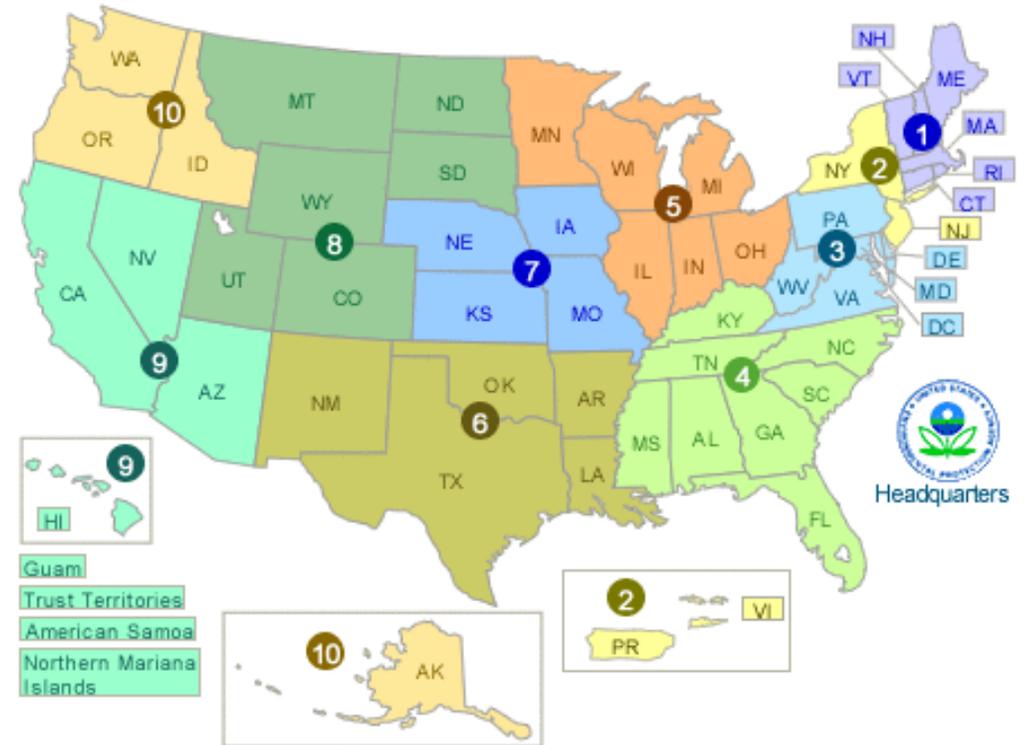
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Who is Eligible?

- Local Education Agency (LEA)
- State Education and Environmental Agencies
- Tribal Education Agency*
- College/University
- NGO – 501(C)(3)
- Noncommercial educational broadcasting entity
- Organizations located in the United States or in U.S. Territories



FAQ

Is a local government agency eligible to apply for a grant?

Yes. The solicitation notice states that "any local education agency...may submit an application." The Environmental Education Act does not define a "local education agency." If there is any question as to whether you are a local education agency, you can check with the state department of education in the state in which you are located.

For purposes of applying for a grant through the current solicitation notice, any local government agency must make sure it is clear in the grant application that it has the authority to conduct education programs. This authority can be demonstrated by providing documentation from the state department of education, referencing the law or bylaws that established the agency, quoting the current official mission statement, and/or showing proof that authority has been set by practice of education programs in the past. Be sure to include this information in a succinct statement in the Project Summary and in the Detailed Project Description, as well as in detail in the Programmatic Capability and Past Performance section of the application.

What Else Affects Eligibility?

- **January 6, 2020 11:59pm EST** deadline must be met.
- Work Plan, Budget, and Appendices must be complete.
- Budget must include request for **no less than \$50,000 and no more than \$100,000**;
 - Minimum match of 25% of total budget.
 - Exactly 25% of EPA funds spent on subawards of \$5,000 or less.
- Proposal must include both **educational** and **environmental** priorities.
- Applicants must demonstrate that proposed project **has not been previously funded** by EE Grants Program – or is being significantly changed, expanded, broadened or enhanced.
- **Multiple proposals** accepted so long as each is for a different project and each is separately submitted.

What the EE Grant Program **Can** and **Can't** Fund

Funded

- Environmental education projects based on sound science that teach or enhance critical-thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills that lead to responsible actions to protect human health and the environment.



Not funded

- Projects that advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action about environmental issues or simply disseminate information.
- Lobbying or political activities.
- Non-education-related research or development.
- Technical training of environmental professionals.
- Construction projects.

FAQ

What does EPA consider to be "technical training for environmental management professionals" and why isn't this considered to be environmental education?

According to the National Environmental Education Act, "Environmental Education does not include technical training activities directed toward environmental management professionals or activities primarily directed toward the support of non-educational research and development." Technical training of environmental professionals generally refers to such activities and programs as certification of technical trades like waste water management, or practical workshops to update skills in areas like air quality monitoring, or on-the-job training of technicians such as green landscapers.

FAQ

What kind of restrictions does your grant program put on construction programs? Would the installation of a rain garden qualify? Or a playground that was built to instruct children how a certain environmental principle works?

The solicitation notice specifically prohibits using EPA funds for construction. The creation of something like a rain garden or a playground should be peripheral to an education project, not its main activity and not the major expense of the budget. This grant program doesn't allow the funds to be used, for example, for the construction of a building, even to hold environmental education classes or house environmental displays, etc. So if expenses to install a rain garden or playground dominate the budget and the project period, and require something like heavy equipment purchase or rental, then most likely the project is more construction than education and therefore ineligible. (Note: Sometimes this grant program has deemed the creation of such things as a nature trail or a bird house as allowable expenses, but even these must be part of a larger education project, not the primary focus of the project and/or expenditure of the budget.)

FAQ

Can our organization spend the majority of our federal funds on a single item such as a vehicle or a large piece of equipment?

Please keep in mind that the purpose of this grant is to promote environmental and conservation stewardship and help develop knowledgeable and responsible students, teachers, and citizens. This grant program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques, as described in this notice, that will serve to increase environmental literacy and encourage behavior that will benefit the environment in the local community(ies) in which they are located.

With this in mind, if expenses to purchase a vehicle, large equipment, or materials to build a vehicle dominate the budget and the project period, then most likely the project runs the risk of failing to meet the very purpose and goals of this solicitation.

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Budget and Cost Items



- SF-424A and Detailed Budget:
 - Both required. Make sure dollar amounts match each other exactly.
- Contracts vs Subaward:
 - Contracts are for purchasing services not directly tied to the accomplishment of the goals of the project; e.g., buses for transporting students to field sites.
 - Generally, contractual services in funded projects must be competed.
 - Sub-grants generally do not have to be competed; but they may not be used to avoid competing contractual services.
 - Sub-grants should go to eligible entities who will help plan or implement the main tasks of the project that directly accomplish the goals set forth in the proposal; e.g., non-profit organizations who provide experts to guide students on field studies.
- Indirect Costs:
 - E.g., rent and admin/office support.
 - Cannot be reimbursed without indirect cost rate agreement.
 - EPA can allow flat 10% rate
 - <https://www.epa.gov/grants/indirect-cost-rate-proposal-information>



FAQ

What is an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement?

An Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is a negotiated agreement between a grant recipient and the cognizant Federal agency which identifies the fairness and basis of the indirect cost rate.

Does an applicant have to have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement in place when they apply for funds from this grants program?

No. An applicant does not have to have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement in place when they apply for a grant. Applicants can begin the negotiations for an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement at the same time that they apply for a grant to this program, or within 90 days of the date of an award of a grant under this solicitation. However, recipients are not allowed to seek reimbursement for indirect costs until an approved indirect cost rate is obtained.



Matching Funds

- Minimum of 25% of **Total Project Budget**
- Total budget = \$120,000 , the minimum match = \$30,000, funding request to EPA = \$90,000

Subaward

- Exactly 25% of **EPA funds** must go to sub-grants of \$5,000 or less
- Funding request to EPA = \$90,000, the total of sub-grants of \$5k or less = exactly \$22,500

The EE Grant Calculator

<https://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>

EE Grant Calculator

EE grants are required to have a non-federal match of 25% of the total cost of the project. Additionally, 25% of EPA funding must be used for subawards, with each subaward having a value of \$5,000 or less. Use this simple calculator to figure out your requirements.

Enter Your Request

EPA Funding Request:

Enter the total amount of funding you are requesting from EPA (no commas).

Your Results

EPA Funding Request:

\$100,000.00

Minimum Non-Federal Match:

\$33,333.33

Minimum Total Budget (EPA Funding Request + Minimum Non-Federal Match):

\$133,333.33

Required Subawards Amount (25% of EPA Funding Request):

\$25,000.00

FAQ

Do the required matching funds have to be in cash, or can they be in-kind donations and services, e.g., a volunteer's or teacher's time working on the project?

Either is acceptable. In-kind contributions of services, and other items like equipment, can count toward the required 25% cost match. Please see Section IV of the solicitation notice for a complete matching funds explanation. As explained in the solicitation notice, the match must be for an allowable cost and may be provided by the applicant or a partner organization or institution. The match may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions and other non-monetary support.

Program Income & Food/Beverage Costs

- Program Income:
 - Money a grant recipient earns as a direct result of a grant-supported activity (e.g., workshop fees).
 - Usually used to pay for eligible, allowable costs that further project goals.
 - May also help finance the required matching funds.
- Food/Beverage Costs:
 - Allowed for “working” breakfast or lunch, or light refreshments during breaks.
 - NOT allowed for evening receptions, banquets, or events where alcohol is served, entertainment is provided or funds are solicited.



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Content of Applications

Standard Forms

- Standard Federal Application Form (SF-424)
- Budget Form (SF-424A) - Section B only – request to EPA, matching share, and total

Work Plan (8 page limit)

- Project Summary (should be concise) – maximum 5 points*
- Detailed Project Description (use headings: what, why, how, who) – max 45 points*
- Project Evaluation (how you will measure success) – max 10 points*



Detailed Budget – Same order and categories as 424A, but with much greater detail. Check against Form 424 and Form 424A to ensure amounts are same. – max 10 points*

Appendices

- Timeline – Major activities and milestones over project period – max 5 points*
- Logic Model - Shows outputs and outcomes – max 5 points*
- Partnership Letters of Commitment – Explain tasks or funding partners to provide – max 5 points*
- Programmatic Capability and Past Performance – max 15 points*

FAQ

Is there a preferred number of files or file type extensions for the application submission?

It is preferred for easier processing that you combine your files into no more than 6 files. PDFs are preferred when possible. Trying to upload a large number of individual files leaves room for error in the uploading and downloading process.

Review and Selection

All eligible applications are evaluated by a panel of reviewers assembled by each Regional Office; includes experts in EE, conservation and education.

Section V assigns points to factors; possible score of up to 100.

Applications are ranked from highest to lowest score.

EPA Regional Selection Official is briefed on score, ranking and other factors* that may be considered for final funding selection.

*These other factors may include the EPA educational and environmental priorities, geographic areas, and audiences that are addressed in the highest ranked proposals.



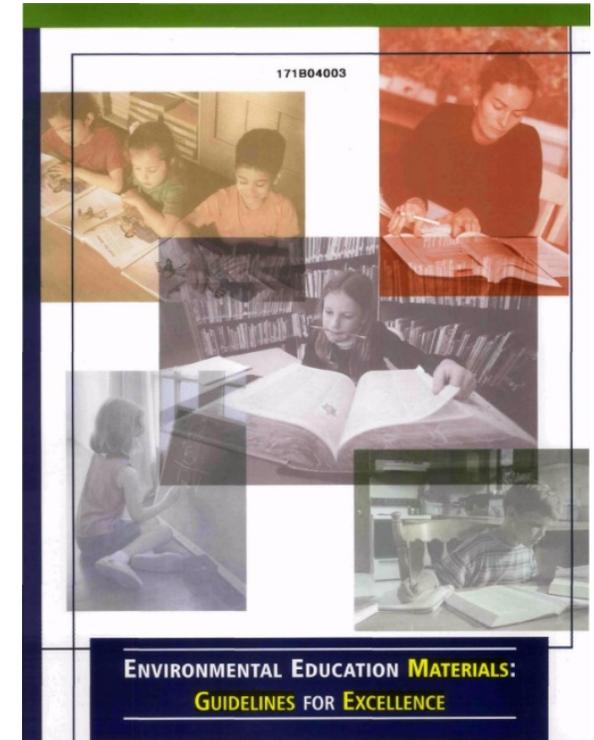
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Helpful Resources

- If you are training educators:
 - Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators.
- If you are developing materials:
 - Guidelines for Excellence in EE series of publications.
- Both are available at:
<http://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-publications>
- When you set up an evaluation of your project:
 - My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant (MEEERA) at: <http://meera.snre.umich.edu/>



Tips for Success

- ✓ Read the RFA and our FAQs before starting the application
- ✓ Apply to the correct RFA!
- ✓ Start early and leave time to review and edit your application – you may even want to seek reviewal from external source
- ✓ Apply Early to avoid missing the deadline
- ✓ Show that the application fits the criteria of the EE Local Grants RFA, by organizing your application around scoring criteria.
- ✓ Check your math – and check it again.
- ✓ Engage and include under-served populations, when possible



I wish I knew!

More Tips

- ✓ Demonstrate adequate match and exact subaward amounts – Use the EE Grant Calculator
- ✓ Write simply and clearly – do not leave out important details; but stick to page limit.
- ✓ Do not assume reviewer knowledge.
- ✓ Explain acronyms/terms.
- ✓ Show your qualifications and demonstrate past successes – in appendix
- ✓ Demonstrate partner support, when appropriate – also in appendix
- ✓ Include plan to measure and evaluate success.
- ✓ Try to limit attachments to 6 or less



And...

- Start early – Leave time to review and edit your proposal.
- Read the RFP (solicitation) and online FAQs thoroughly before beginning your proposal/application – and as many times as you need during the writing process.
- You must use grants.gov to submit your proposal, so have your Authorized Organization Representative register now, and make sure you are current in SAM and DUNS.
 - <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>
 - <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>
- Send questions to EEGrants@epa.gov – after you read the RFP and FAQs thoroughly!

A Few More Questions

Can I talk to someone in EPA's EE Grant Program about my idea for a grant?

No. EPA staff are not permitted to discuss potential grant ideas with potential applicants. The point of contact for the EE Grants Program may answer only technical questions that are not addressed in a current solicitation notice or in the FAQs.

Can I see examples of previously funded projects in each Region, and by Headquarters?

Yes. Visit the main [EE Grants webpage](#) and look under the tab called "Grants Awarded" to see the list and short descriptions of applications previously funded by this program.

Whom should I contact if I am having problems with grants.gov?

Grants.gov is a federal government-wide database; it is not an EPA database. If you are having any problems uploading your application materials or any other such problems, you will need to contact the system administrator for grants.gov. Please DO NOT CALL EPA with questions on grants.gov. Please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or email questions to support@grants.gov

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Where Do I Find More Information?

<https://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>

At the EPA Environmental Education Grant website you will find:

You can find the application instructions on our [Environmental Education \(EE\) Grant Solicitation Notice](#) page.



Our Frequently Asked Questions

Please review the FAQ's online at:

<http://www.epa.gov/education/frequently-asked-questions-about-environmental-education-grants-program>



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Answering Your Questions





If we were unable to answer your question today, please email it to EEGrants@epa.gov **before 5:00pm ET on 1/2/20**

<https://www.epa.gov/education>