

# **EPA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM TUTORIAL**

Introduction to the Environmental  
Education Grants Program

December 2013

This tutorial is a general overview of the EPA Environmental Education Grants Program and is the first of two tutorials on the grants application process. Please consult any current open RFP Notices for complete details.



# **EPA Environmental Education Grants Program**

The Environmental Education Grants Program, sponsored by EPA's Office of Environmental Education (OEE), provides financial support for projects which design, demonstrate and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods and/or techniques.



# Purpose of the Environmental Education Grants Program

- Increase public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues
- Enhance critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills when considering environmental issues
- Provide the public with the skills needed to weigh various sides of an environmental issue and take responsible actions



# **FY 2013 Environmental Education Grant Opportunity**

(Based on the availability of funding)

## **Environmental Education Model Grant Program**

- 1) Provides financial assistance for projects that will serve as models that can be replicated in a variety of settings.
- 2) Provides funds to a Prime Recipient (i.e., the entity that directly applies for and receives funds from EPA in response to a RFP) to award subgrants of \$5,000 or less to organizations to conduct environmental education activities.



# Who is Eligible to Apply?

- Any local education agency, college or university, state education or environmental agency or a tribal education agency\*
- A nonprofit organization as described in Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
- A noncommercial educational broadcasting entity as defined and licensed by the Federal Communications Commission
- The Applicant Organization must be located in the U.S. or territories and the majority of the educational activities must take place in the U.S. or in the U.S. and Canada or Mexico

\*Tribal education agencies that are eligible to apply include a school or community college which is controlled by an Indian tribe, band, or nation, which is recognized as eligible for special programs and services provided by the U.S. to Indians because of their status as Indians and which is not administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The terms of eligibility are defined in Section 3 of the National Environmental Education Act and 40 CFR 47.105.



# What Types of Projects are Eligible?

## **Eligible:**

- 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.
- The use of existing environmental education materials and curriculum is preferred over developing or designing new ones.

## **Ineligible:**

- 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



# Before You Prepare an Application...

- Are you applying to a grant program with goals similar to your own organization's?
- Are your organization and project eligible?
- Are you proposing to do a project that fits in with the short-term goals of your organization for the period of time the project will run?
- Do you have the resources to meet the financial match requirement (or do you know how you will get them)?
- Do you have the resources to carry out the project as proposed?



# Components of the Application

- Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF 424A, Budget Information
- Work Plan (not to exceed 8 pages total)
- Detailed Budget
- Appendices
  - Timeline
  - Logic Model
  - Programmatic Capability and Past Performance
  - Partnership Letters of Commitment



# Format of the Work Plan

(not to exceed 8 pages)

Work Plan must include the following:

- Project Summary
- Project Description
  - What
  - Why
  - How
  - Who
- Project Evaluation



# Project Summary

Provide a brief overview of the project, including the need for the project, goals and objectives. Also include:

- EPA educational and environmental priorities targeted in the project
- Audience (s) to be reached
- Delivery methods
- Applicant organization and partnerships for this project
- Previous EPA EE grants awarded to applicant organization
- Brief explanation of how the funds will be spent



# Project Description

Describe exactly what the project will achieve and how it will accomplish these goals. Use the following headings:

- **What:** Detail the goals and objectives of the project
- **Why:** Explain the need for the project
- **How:** Discuss how the project goals and objectives will be met
- **Who:** Identify the target audience (s)



# Project Description in Detail: What

- Explain the goals and objectives of your project and what you are trying to achieve with this project
- Identify the environmental issue you will be addressing. Explain why you have chosen it and why this issue is important to your specific audience
- Explain how your project will increase environmental stewardship as defined in the RFP
- Identify the education priority as defined in the RFP and explain how it will be addressed



# Project Description in Detail: Why

- Why are you doing this project?
- Explain the need for your project
- Cite studies or sources of information, where appropriate, that verify the need for your project



# Project Description in Detail: How

- Explain how you will reach your goals and objectives
- Identify your activities, the materials, and the delivery methods that will be used
- Explain how you will achieve your outputs and outcomes
- Define how you will complete all basic steps of your project from beginning to end
- Explain how your project has the potential for wide application and could serve as a model for others



## Project Description in Detail: Who

- Identify your target audience (s) and the numbers to be reached
- Discuss the needs of that audience and why you chose to target them
- Explain your recruitment plan to attract your target audience (s), and identify any incentives to be used such as teacher stipends or continuing education credits
- Indicate if your project addresses the burdens environmental problems place on under-served or vulnerable subpopulations



# Project Evaluation

- Explain how you will determine that you have met the project goals
- Indicate how you will track outputs and short-term outcomes
- Indicate how you will track medium- and long-term outcomes if they will be measured during the project period
- Evaluation plans may be qualitative or quantitative

For help planning your evaluation, visit My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant at <http://meera.snre.umich.edu>. Partial funding for web site development provided by EPA.



# Detailed Budget

- Use the required format detailed in the RFP
- Explain how all funds will be allocated
- Indicate where matching funds will come from and how they will be utilized
- Align project activities with the items in the budget
- Explain the return on investment, as defined in the RFP
- Include indirect costs as appropriate
- Review RFP-specific guidelines regarding subawards and contracts



# Appendices

- **Timeline**
  - Include anticipated start and end dates for each step of the work plan as well as other milestones that help explain in chart form how the work plan will be implemented
- **Logic Model**
  - Use a table to illustrate outputs and short-, medium-, and long term outcomes. See example on next slide.
- **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**
  - Explain how your organization is qualified and equipped to conduct the project; detail staff qualification
- **Letters of Commitment**
  - Include letters from partner organizations making a specific commitment to the project. Letters of general endorsement will **not** be accepted



# Example Logic Model

Sample Logic Model of PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES (examples of outputs and outcomes for various types of model EE projects)			
OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
Short-term	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Recruitment of teachers, students, or other target audience	Increased access to environmental education resources and programs	Changes in awareness about issues and decisions that affect the environment	Establishment of sustainable environmental education programs
Training	Students and teachers learn skills	Students and community leaders make decisions to improve their environment	Improved environmental literacy and environmental change for the better
Workshops/Clinics	Increased environmental knowledge	Specific actions are taken to improve the environment	Increased stewardship leads to civic responsibility for environmental protection, habitat preservation, and prevention of environmentally induced human health problems.
Courses	Increased motivation to become stewards and protect habitat and the environment	Environmental stewardship is underway	
Field Trips	Educators are motivated to train others	Assessment of actions to improve the environment;	
Educational Materials	Assessment of learning; measuring success	Measuring success	
Videos, CDs, DVDs, websites			
Conferences and presentation of results			



# Submitting Your Application

- Review for spelling, grammatical and mathematical errors
- Number the pages (e.g. 1 of 10)
- If you intend to submit electronically:
  - Register at Grants.gov early and familiarize yourself with the site
  - Do not submit items or forms not requested by the RFP or Grants.gov
  - Submit by 11:59pm EST on the application deadline date
  - Save all confirmation emails from Grants.gov
  - Track your application at Grants.gov
- If you intend to submit your proposal in hard copy:
  - Use USPS or a commercial delivery service; application must be postmarked by 11:59pm local time on the application deadline date
  - OR** Hand-deliver your application by close of business on the application deadline date to the appropriate EPA office
  - Provide the requested number of copies
  - Do not submit items or forms not requested in the RFP
- Retain all materials you used to develop the application and a copy of the application itself



# Review and Selection Processes

- A panel of external reviewers and/or EPA staff will review all eligible applications
- Each application will be scored out of a possible 100 points
- Applications are ranked highest to lowest score
- Highest scoring applications will be asked to provide additional information before selection is finalized
- Selected applicants will be notified within 6 months of submission
- Non-selection notifications will be sent approximately 15 calendar days after the final decisions are made



# Dispute Process

Disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in the Federal Register, Volume 70, Number 16, Wednesday, January 26, 2005. on pages 3629 and 3630.

- After unsuccessful applicants have been notified that their application was ineligible or not selected, applicants may then, upon request, obtain a timely debriefing on the basis for the Agency's decision
- Debriefings may be oral or written, but are mandatory if the applicant intends to file a dispute. This is in order to minimize misunderstandings between the Agency and the applicant and provide an opportunity to expeditiously resolve differences without the need to file a formal dispute
- The applicant may file a formal dispute within 15 calendar days after the debriefing

Read the dispute resolution procedures at: [www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm)



## In Conclusion...

- This tutorial is a general overview of the EE Grants Program. Please consult the current RFP for complete details. Details regarding how to develop a budget for this program are in the next tutorial.
- For **general** information about the EE Grants Program, please contact Ginger Potter: [eegrants@epa.gov](mailto:eegrants@epa.gov)
- For **specific** questions about the current EE Grants Program RFP, please contact: [eegrants@epa.gov](mailto:eegrants@epa.gov)
- Visit <http://www.2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants> for additional information