

CEQ-EPA Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators Application

Program History

The Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators (PIAEE) recognizes outstanding kindergarten through grade 12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for learning for their students. Up to two teachers from each of EPA's 10 regions, from different states, will be selected for this award. Since the passage of the 1990 National Environmental Education Act, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), administers this award to nationally honor, support and encourage educators who incorporate environmental education in their classrooms and teaching methods.

Eligibility

- Teach K-12 on a full-time basis in a public school that is operated by a local education agency¹, including schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- Hold a current teaching license from the state (or valid reciprocity from the state for a license from another state);
- Have a minimum of 5 years of K-12 teaching experience, including at least 3 years of teaching environmental education;
- Anticipate a classroom teaching assignment involving environmental education for the upcoming school year;
- Be a citizen of the United States, its territories or possessions, or lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residency²; and
- Has not been a recipient of this award in the past 5 years.

Application Requirements:

There are 5 sections to the application:

Section 1: General Information about the teacher

Teachers will provide contact information, perform an eligibility review, and provide summary of teaching experience.

¹ For this program, a local education agency is one as defined by section 198 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (now codified at 20 U.S.C. 7801(26)).

² The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services defines lawful permanent residency as any person not a citizen of the United States who is residing in the United States under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant, also known as "Permanent Resident Alien," "Resident Alien Permit Holder," and "Green Card Holder."

Section 2: Essays

Applicants are required to respond to essay questions addressing the selection criteria: Innovation, Achievement, Service to the Community and Underserved Communities, Leadership, and Integration.

Section 3: Sample Teaching Materials

Applicants must include sample teaching materials that demonstrate the teacher's work with students.

Section 4: Letters of Support

Each application must include 3 signed letters of support from an administrator at the teacher's school, a fellow teacher, and a past or current student.

Section 5: Final Checklist

Applicants must complete a final checklist, certifying that they have completed all required sections of the applications.

Selection Criteria

Teachers must have an outstanding record of teaching. Each of the factors below is meant to illustrate the applicant's record of teaching. Applicants will be judged by the responses to the questions in each of these five factors, as well as their sample teaching materials and letters of support.

Innovation (25 points)

- A. How does the teacher make learning about the environment unique, fun and exciting for his or her students? For example, does the teacher use experiential or place-based learning in ways that go above and beyond the practices of other teachers? Please be sure to demonstrate or exemplify this in the sample teaching materials.
- B. How does the teacher tailor his/her teaching methods to the needs of his/her student population?

Achievement (15 points)

- A. What positive changes has the teacher seen in student academic achievement and behavior or attitude concerning participation in the teacher's environmental education program?

Service to the Community and Underserved Populations (20 points)

Many schools are part of communities that include minority, indigenous, low-income and underserved populations. Communities and their schools may also be located in places that are heavily impacted by environmental pollution. While your community and school may or may not be considered one that is impacted, please answer the following.

- A. How does the teacher extend environmental education beyond the classroom? Are the teacher's students participating beyond the classroom in environmental, conservation, or earth science extracurricular or community-based projects and activities?
- B. How does the teacher inspire the surrounding community, including parents/guardians and members of the community to participate in environmental education activities?

Leadership (15 points)

- A. How does the teacher serve as a model for students and teachers with his/her approaches to teaching about the environment?

Integration (10 points)

- A. How does the teacher help to integrate environmental education into the broader school curriculum or coordinate environmental education with other teachers and academic subjects?

Sample Teaching Materials (10 points)

Letters of Support (5 points)

Winners and Honorable Mentions

- Winners will receive a Presidential award plaque and up to \$2,500 to be used to further their professional development in environmental education.
- Award winners' local education agencies will also receive up to \$2,500 to fund environmental activities and programs. These funds cannot be used for construction costs, general expenses, salaries, bonuses, or other administrative expenses.
- A congratulatory letter from a senior official from EPA and/or the White House.
- Honorable Mention recipients will receive certificates of recognition.

Program Timeline

Application Deadline: May 16, 2016

Notification of Application Status: Week of June 3, 2016

EPA and White House Press Release Announcing Winners: Early August 2016

Submission Instructions

- Applications are accepted electronically and by hard copy. We prefer to receive applications by email.
- All applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. ET on May 16, 2016.
- Please ensure that the required supporting materials are included with the application submissions – a checklist is found on the last page of this application.
- All applicants will receive an email confirmation that their application was received.

Electronic Submissions

Email complete application package, including all supporting materials, to PIAEE@epa.gov. Please include “Application for 2015-2016 PIAEE” in the subject line.

Hard Copy Submissions

Hard copies must be sent by a commercial delivery service and must be delivered by 5 p.m. ET on May 16, 2016 to be eligible for consideration. All applicants will receive a confirmation email upon receipt.

Mail complete application package to:
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environmental Education
Attn: Carly Carroll
William Jefferson Clinton Building North, Room 1426-A
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, MC 1704-A
Washington, DC 20460

The public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 hours per response. Send comments on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates, and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden, including through the use of automated collection techniques to the Director, Collection Strategies Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2822T), 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20460. Include the OMB control number in any correspondence. Do not send the completed form to this address.

Application Section 1: Contact

Teacher Contact Information:				*required information
Prefix:	*First Name:	*Last Name:	MI:	Suffix:
*Home Address:				
*City:		*State:		*Zip:
*Primary Email Address:			*Home Phone:	
Secondary Email Address:			Mobile Phone:	

School Information:		
*School Name & Street Address:		
*City:	*State:	*Zip:
*School Email address:		*Phone #:
*School Website:		
*School Tax ID#:		Fax #:
*Principal Name:		*Principal's Signature:
*Principal Email:		

Grades:												
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Teaching Experience:
How many years has the teacher taught K-12?

Eligibility:

Check each box to confirm that the teacher meets the general eligibility requirements.

<input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher educates K-12 full time in a public school (including a Bureau of Indian Affairs school) that is operated by a local education agency ³ .
<input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher has a teaching license from the State (or valid reciprocity from the State for a license from another State).
<input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher has at least 5 years of teaching experience, and at least 3 years of teaching an environment-based curriculum and/or environmental education.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher has a classroom teaching assignment involving environmental education for the coming year.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher is a citizen of the United States, its territories or possessions, or lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residency ⁴ .
<input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher has not been a recipient of this award in the past 5 years

Where did you hear about this award program?

<input type="checkbox"/>	EPA website	<input type="checkbox"/>	EPA Headquarters Staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	A friend or colleague	<input type="checkbox"/>	EPA Regional Staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	Press/Media
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please Specify):		

³ For this program, a local education agency is one as defined by section 98 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (now codified at 20 U.S.C. 7801 (26)).

⁴ The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services defines lawful permanent residency as any person not a citizen of the United States who is residing in the United States under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant, also known as “Permanent Resident Alien,” “Resident Alien Permit Holder,” and “Green Card Holder.”

Application Section 2: Essays

- Essays are listed under the following five headings: Innovation, Achievement, Service to the Community and Underserved Populations, Leadership, and Integration.
- Teachers should be certain to clearly address every question in each heading area in a separate, attached document. Teachers must include sample teaching materials and may reference throughout their essays.
- If the teacher's response to a particular question cites information provided in response to another question, or in the sample teaching materials, the response should clearly indicate where the information is located so that the reviewer may easily find it.
- Essay length, font type and size specifications: The total length of essays must not exceed 9 pages. An essay may start on the same page as the previous essay ended. Additional pages will not be read or evaluated. Essays are to be written in Times New Roman font, size 12, line spacing 1.5, and margins no smaller than 1 inch.

Essay 1: Innovation

- A. How does the teacher make learning about the environment unique, fun and exciting for his or her students? For example, does the teacher use experiential or place-based learning in ways that go above and beyond the practices of other teachers? Please be sure to demonstrate or exemplify this in the sample teaching materials.
- B. How does the teacher tailor his/her teaching methods to the needs of his/her student population?

Essay 2: Achievement

- A. What positive changes has the teacher seen in student academic achievement and behavior or attitude as a result of their participation in the environmental education program?

Essay 3: Service to the Community and Underserved Populations

Many schools are part of communities that include minority, indigenous, low-income and underserved populations. Communities and their schools may also be located in places that are heavily impacted by environmental pollution. While your community and school may or may not be considered one that is impacted, please answer the following.

- A. How does the teacher extend environmental education beyond the classroom? Are the teacher's students participating beyond the classroom in environmental, conservation, or earth science extracurricular or community based-projects and activities?
- B. How does the teacher inspire the surrounding community, including parents/guardians and members of the community, to participate in environmental education activities?

Essay 4: Leadership

- A. How does the teacher serve as a model for students and teachers with his/her approaches to teaching about the environment?

Essay 5: Integration

- A. How does the teacher help to integrate environmental education into the broader school curriculum or coordinate environmental education with other teachers and academic subjects?

Application Section 3: Sample Teaching Materials

Sample teaching materials must be submitted separately as attachments to this application.

Content: Materials from one unit/curriculum or module that the teacher has taught. Indicate how these materials were used, and how the students responded to them.

Source(s): The materials may be original to the teacher or may be from an existing education curricula source. If existing education curricula or activities are submitted, the source of the materials must be documented.

Length: The total length of the sample teaching materials may not exceed 5 pages. A brief description of how the materials are used must be included. Teachers may include up to 5 pages of photos, which must be clearly labeled. Photos are optional. Web links to supporting materials, such as photos (5 pages or fewer) and sound and/or video recordings (10 minutes or fewer or total playing time) may also be provided but must be accompanied by a brief description of the project. Reviewers will not attempt to find online content for invalid hyperlinks, so please make sure they are active.

Sample Material Titles:

Please briefly list the titles of the materials that are included with this application in the space provided.

Sample Material Use and Student Response:

Please briefly indicate how these materials were used and how the students responded to them, within the space provided.

Application Section 4: Letters of Support

Each application must include a total of three signed letters of support. Letters must come from:

- An administrator from the teacher's school
- A fellow teacher
- A past or current student

Letters of support should not exceed one page and must include the following:

- Relationship to the teacher;
- Familiarity with the teacher and the work for which the teacher is being considered; and,
- Perspective on why the teacher's work is unique and innovative in the field of environmental education, and how the teacher might inspire others to use environmental education.

The letters must be submitted as attachments to the application. In the boxes below, identify the individuals who provided letters of support for this teacher.

Letter 1: Administrator

Name	Title
Organization/School	Email Address

Letter 2: Fellow Teacher

Name	Title
School	Email Address

Letter 3: Past or Current Student

Name	Address or Email

Application Section 5: Final Checklist

Before submitting, be sure your application package includes:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed application, with essay responses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of teacher's teaching license, state teacher certificate, or copy of online record (an active weblink). Do not send original certificates.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sample teaching materials.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Three letters of support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signature

Teacher Signature

Date