



EPA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM TUTORIAL

Introduction to the Environmental Education Grants Program

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 Solicitation/RFP Notice for complete details.

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EPA Environmental Education Grants Program

The Environmental Education Grants Program, sponsored by EPA's Office of Environmental Education (OEE), Office of External Affairs and Environmental Education, 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.

Opportunities for Environmental Education Grants at EPA

Based on the availability of funding, the following programs have been offered:

EE Regional Grants Program

Supports environmental education projects with awards of varying values, up to \$250,000. EPA awards grants each year based on funding appropriated by Congress. Annual funding for the regional grants program ranges between \$1million and \$2.5 million.

EE Sub-Grant Program

Gives funds to a Prime Recipient (i.e., the entity that directly applies for and receives funds from EPA in response to the Solicitation/RFP) to award sub-grants of \$5,000 or less to organizations to conduct environmental education activities. Annual funding for the sub-grant program ranges between \$1million and \$2 million annually.

Each of these grant opportunities may be offered once per fiscal year in a separate, distinct Solicitation/RFP, based on the availability of funding. See any current RFP for complete details.

Preparing 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?

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.
- A noncommercial educational broadcasting entity as defined and licensed by Federal Communications Commission.
- Applicant organizations must be located in the United States or territories and the majority of the educational activities must take place in the United States; or in the U.S. and Canada or Mexico; or in U.S. Territories.

*“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 United States to Indians because of their status as Indians and which is not administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The terms for eligibility are defined in Section 3 of the National Environmental Education Act and 40 CFR 47.105.

What 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/curricula 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.

*If appropriate quality curricula is not available please use the *EE Materials: Guidelines for Excellence* in creating new curriculum:
<http://www.epa.gov/education/eepubsEPA.htm#guidelines>

Application Components

- (1) Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance*
- (2) SF 424A Budget Information*
- (3) Work Plan (not to exceed 7 pages total)
- (4) Detailed Budget
- (5) Appendices
 - Timeline
 - Logic Model
 - Programmatic Capability and Past Performances
 - Partnership Letters of Commitment

* Standard Forms (SF) 424 and 424A are required to apply for federal grants. They are available at www.grants.gov and <http://www.epa.gov/education/grants/index.html#grants=1>.

Format of the Work Plan

(not to exceed 7 pages)

Work Plan should include:

- Project Summary (not to exceed 1 page of the 7)
- Project Description
 - What
 - Why
 - How
 - Who
- Project Evaluation

Project Summary

(not to exceed 1 page of the 7)

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

- EPA educational and environmental priorities targeted by 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 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 project.
- **How:** Discuss how the project goals and objectives will be met.
- **Who:** Identify the target audience(s).

Project Description: What

- Explain the goals and objectives of your project. What are you trying to achieve?
- 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 Solicitation/RFP notice.
- Identify an educational priority, as defined in the RFP, and explain how it will be addressed.

Project Description: Why

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

Project Description: How

- Explain how you will reach your goals and objectives.
- Identify your activities and the materials and 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: 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.
- If medium- and long-term outcomes will be measured during the project period, indicate how you will track these.
- 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>*

*Website developed in part with EPA funding.

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.
- Ensure project activities align with items in the budget.
- Explain return on investment, as defined in the RFP.
- Include indirect costs (when appropriate).
- Review RFP-specific guidelines regarding sub-grants and contracts.

For additional information regarding the budget portion of your application, please see the EPA EE Grants Program Tutorial on Budgets located at: <http://www.epa.gov/education>

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 qualifications.

- **Letters of Commitment**

- 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; Measuring success	
Educational Materials	Assessment of learning; measuring success		
Videos, CDs, DVDs, websites			
Conferences and presentation of results			

Submitting the Proposal

- 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 by grants.gov.
 - Submit by 11:59 pm 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; get your application postmarked by 11:59 pm local time on the application deadline date.
 - Or - Hand-deliver your proposal by close of business on the application deadline date to the appropriate regional 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 proposal and a copy of the proposal itself.

Review and Selection

- 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 from highest to lowest score.
- Highest scoring applications will be asked to provide additional information before selections are finalized.
- Selected applicants will be notified within 6 months of submission.
- Non-selection notifications will be sent 15 calendar days after the final decisions are made.

Formal Reports to EPA

- Grant recipients must submit periodic formal progress reports, as per the award agreement.
- Two copies of a Final Technical Report and two copies of all work products must be sent to the EPA Project Officer within 90 days after the end of the project period.
- Specific financial, technical, and other reporting requirements to measure the grant recipient's progress will be identified in the EPA grant award agreement.

Disputes

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 (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 full dispute resolution procedures at :www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm

Unliquidated Obligations

Unliquidated obligations are award funds that have not been used during the grant period.

An applicant that receives an award is expected to manage assistance agreement funds efficiently and effectively and make sufficient progress toward completing the project activities as described in the work-plan in a timely manner.

This tutorial is a general overview of the Environmental Education Grants Program. Please consult the current Solicitation/RFP for complete details.

For general information about the Environmental Education Grant Program please contact Karen Scott: scott.karen@epa.gov

For questions about the current Environmental Education Grant Solicitation please contact: eegrants@epa.gov

Visit <http://www.epa.gov/education/grants/> for additional information.

This is the first of a two-part Environmental Education Grant Tutorial.