



# 2021 EPA Environmental Education Grant Program:

## EE Local Grants Requests for Applications (RFAs)

2021 Webinar

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

This webinar provides a general overview of the 2021 EE Local Grants RFAs and the Environmental Education Grant application process. Please consult the RFAs for complete details.





# 2021 EPA Environmental Education Grant Program Webinar

October 21, 2021

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

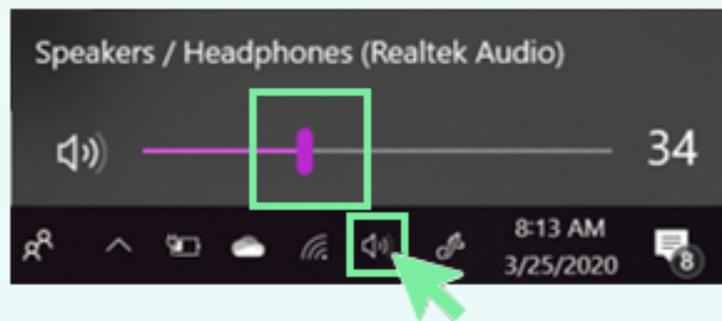
# Housekeeping



## Meeting Audio

- ✓ Attendees must use **Device Audio** (computer, headset, tablet, or smart phone)
- ✓ Presenter Audio Only (like a TV broadcast)
- ✓ If you cannot hear, ensure your system/device audio is turned up and not muted

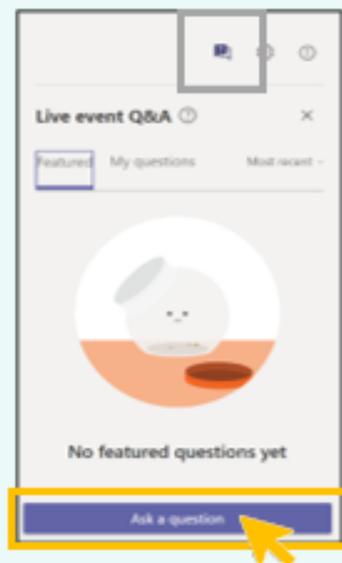
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## Meeting Q&A's

- ✓ Ask a question under Live Event Q&A panel
- ✓ Click "Ask a question"

*Q&A panel is located on the top right side of the Live Event window.*



## Closed Captions/Translation

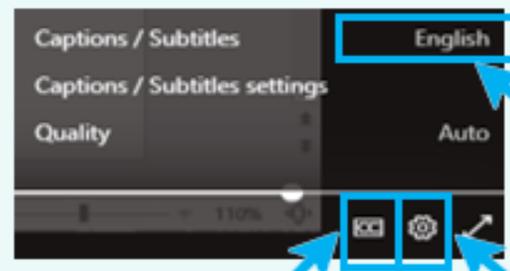


Turn on/off Live Captions



Change Settings/Language

*CC panel is located on the bottom right side of the Live Event window.*



# Note

**Disclaimer:** This presentation provides a general overview of the EE Grants Program and the federal grant application process. Please consult each Request for Application (RFA) for the most complete and current details.



# Today's Agenda

1. The Basics of the EE Grant Program and Current RFAs
2. Who and What We Can and Cannot Fund
3. New This Year
4. Budget and Cost Items
5. Contents of Applications and Review/Selection for Awards
6. Helpful Resources and Where to Find More Information
7. Tips for Success
8. Q&A



# Submitting Questions



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# The EE Grant Program

Fund locally-focused EE projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques



# The Purpose

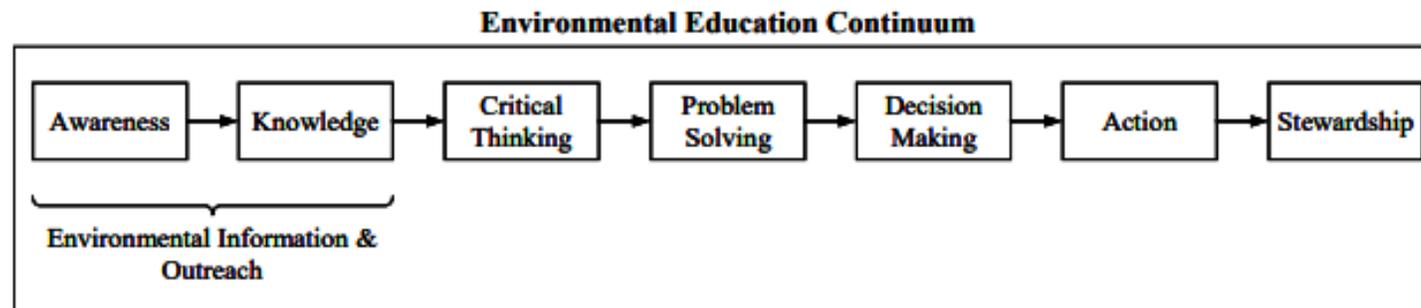
- Increase public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues
- Promote environmental stewardship
- Provide the public with the skills needed to weigh various sides of an environmental issue and take responsible actions



# Defining Environmental Education

## Environmental Education

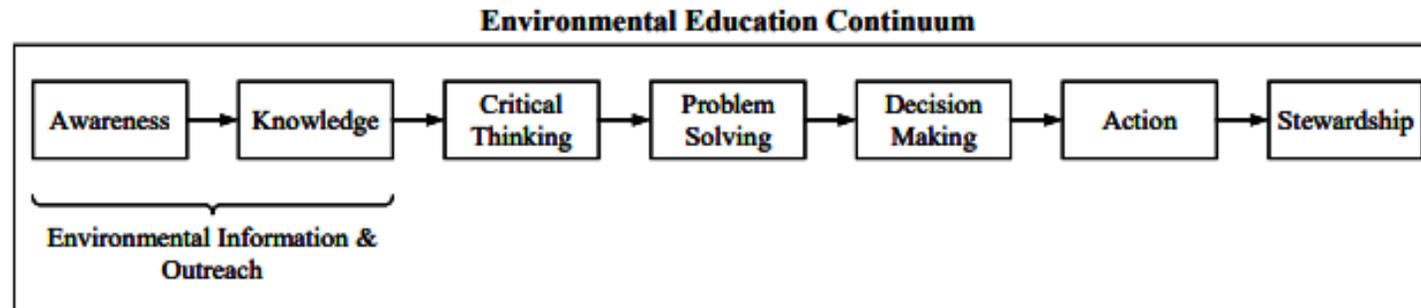
- Teaches how to weigh various sides of an issue through **critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making skills** on environmental and conservation topics... with an ultimate goal of environmental and conservation stewardship.
- **Environmental information** is a component, but only addresses awareness and knowledge, usually about a particular environmental 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).



# FAQ

## Can my project focus on environmental information and outreach?

No. Environmental education may include environmental 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.



# What's Happened Since 1992?

- **3,859** grants awarded-ranging from \$1000 to \$250K
- Approximately **\$85.1 M** in funding total
- Largest # of applications in a year: **1,500**
- **306** applications for 2020

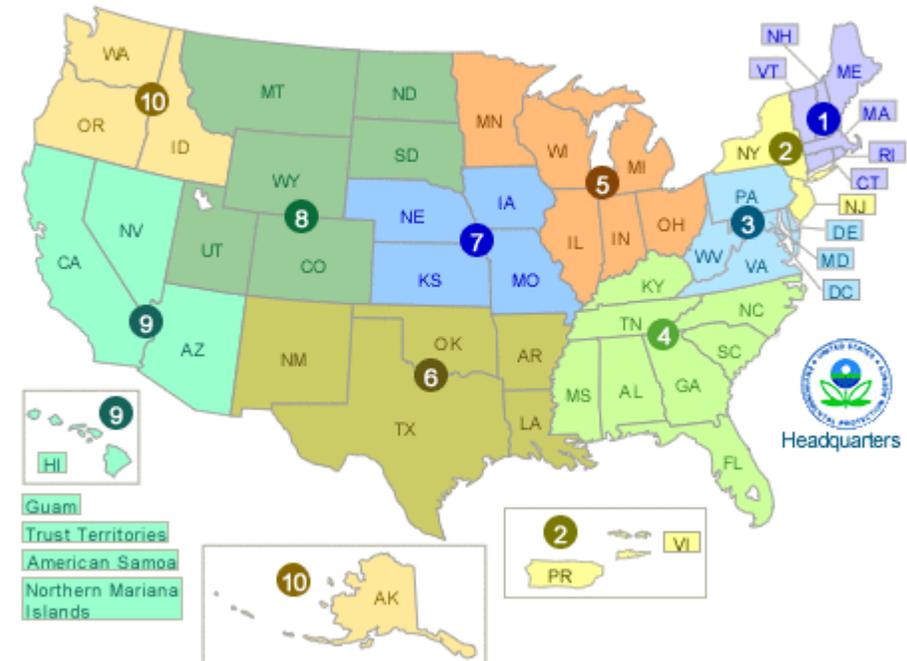


# A Closer Look at Recent Competitions

Region	Total # of Applications in FY18	Grants Awarded FY18	Grants Awarded FY19	Total # of Applications in FY20	Grants Awarded FY20
Region 1	61	3	3	27	3
Region 2	65	4	3	36	3
Region 3	51	3	4	38	3
Region 4	65	3	3	47	4
Region 5	67	4	4	47	5
Region 6	56	4	3	22	3
Region 7	23	4	3	14	3
Region 8	35	4	4	13	3
Region 9	64	4	4	38	4
Region 10	46	4	5	24	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>35</b>

# FY21 EE Grant RFA Basics

- 10 RFAs issued on 9/24/21 (CFDA# 66.951)
- Anticipating 3-4 awards from each of RFAs, 30 - 40 awards total
- Grant Awards: no less than \$50,000 and no more than \$100,000
- Proposals must include both educational and environmental priority
- Required: matching funds and a subaward program
- **Application Deadline: December 6, 2021 by 11:59pm ET**



# Target Audiences

- Rural, suburban, and urban locations
  - **Underserved Communities**
- Any age group
  - Students at all levels, members of a community, educators, and community leaders.
- Formal and non-formal educational settings.



# The FY21 Priorities

## Educational & Environmental



# Educational Priorities

1. Community Projects
2. Career Development
3. Environmental Education  
Capacity Building
4. Environmental Justice



# Environmental Priorities

1. Addressing Climate Change and Improving Air Quality
2. Ensuring Clean and Safe Water
3. Cleaning Up our Communities by Revitalizing Land and Preventing Contamination
  - Sample Topic: Engage individuals in exploring their local communities to identify previously contaminated sites and develop solutions and actions plans to revitalize the land, making the community safer and greener in the process.



# 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 to Apply?

- Local Education Agency
- State (and local) Education and Environmental Agencies
- Tribal Education Agency\*
- College/University
- NGOs – 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.

## **May an organization apply for 501(c)(3) status at the same time as they apply for a grant, or do they have to have the status approved before they submit their application to the EPA?**

Yes. An organization may apply for 501(C)(3) status at the same time that they apply for a grant, but the organization must have its 501(C)(3) status **ALREADY APPROVED** by the IRS to be eligible for an award under this grant program. If an applicant becomes a finalist for a grant but does not have its 501(C)(3) status approved by the time of the award, it will not be eligible for the award.

# What Else Impacts Eligibility

- **December 6, 2021 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.)

**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 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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# What's New This Year?

- Underserved Communities
- Expected Outcomes
- Pandemic-Related Challenges



# Underserved Communities

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, “Underserved Communities” refers to one or more of the following:

1. People/communities of color, tribal and indigenous populations that may be disproportionately impacted by environmental harms and risks
2. High-Poverty Areas
3. Persistent Poverty Counties
4. Title 1 Schools

# Identifying Underserved Communities

*(See Appendix E of RFA)*

- High-Poverty Area
  - <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/acs-percentage-poverty-2015-2019.html>
  - <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>
- Persistent Poverty County
  - <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45100>
- Title I School
  - <https://nces.ed.gov/globallocator/>

# How to Organize this Information within Application?

<b>Target Communities</b>							
<b>Location Details</b>			<b>Underserved Community Status</b>				
<b>City/Town &amp; State</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Census Tract Code</b>	<b>High Poverty Area (Poverty Rate)</b>		<b>Persistent Poverty County</b>	<b>Title I School Participation (# and Name)</b>	<b>Other (include other relevant data as needed in additional rows)</b>
			<b>By County</b>	<b>By Census Tract</b>			
Grant Park, MD	Prince George's County	*****	Yes 20.66% <sup>1</sup>	NA	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes (2 – East Elementary School, West Middle School) <sup>3</sup>	<i>Additional demographic information</i>
Silver Spring, MD	Montgomery County	*****	No	Yes 34.86% <sup>4</sup>	No	Yes (1 – Rachel Carson High School) <sup>5</sup>	<i>Additional demographic information</i>
Arlington, VA	Arlington County	*****	No	No	No	Yes (1 – Long Branch Middle School) <sup>6</sup>	<i>Additional demographic information</i>

# Expected Outcomes

Applications that address one or more of the short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes listed in Section I (F)(2) may be scored higher under this sub-factor.

## Short-Term Outcomes

- Increase in awareness and knowledge of local environmental issues
- Develop critical thinking skills for effectively addressing local environmental issues
- Greater feeling of connection to nature
- Increased interest in environmental careers

## Medium-Term Outcomes

- Increase in time spent on EE in the classroom and outdoors in nature
- Adopting pro-environmental behavior such as changing lifestyle habits, participating in restoration activities, and taking other actions aligned with environmental protection and improvement
- Increase in number of schools with EE
- Increase number of environmental stewards

## Long-Term Outcomes

- Increase in the number programs honoring diversity in outdoor spaces
- Improved biodiversity
- Improved educator access to training on environmental topics and EE methods and materials
- Ecosystems become more resilient through their restoration and overall improvement through the implementation of successful managements plans

# Pandemic-Related Challenges

All applicants asked to describe plan to continue project activities should they face pandemic-related challenges during project period (e.g., restrictions to field trips, in-person learning, workshops, community-based field work, etc.).



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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.
  - Subawards generally do not have to be competed; but they may not be used to avoid competing contractual services.
  - Subawards 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.

# FAQ

## **Is there a threshold amount where grantees are required to compete their contracts?**

Yes. Recipients must compete procurement contracts in excess of the 2 CFR 200.320(a)(1) micro-purchase threshold which is currently \$10,000 for most recipients. Please refer to the [Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for additional information on competition requirements for EPA grants.

# FAQ

**Do you have a graphic that summarizes the roles and responsibilities of a prime recipient, a partner, a subrecipient and a contractor?**

	Must be eligible as defined in Section III of the solicitation notice	Can provide match	Can receive sub awards	Must compete to receive award	Performs work integral to grant project	Performs Tasks non- integral or non-substantive to project
<b>Partner</b>		x	x (if an eligible entity)		x	
<b>Subrecipient</b>	x	x	x		x	
<b>Contractor</b>		x		x		x
<b>Prime Recipient</b>	x	x		x	x	

# Indirect Costs & Indirect Cost Rate

- Indirect costs defined in [2 CFR 200.1](#)
  - E.g., Rent and admin/office support
- Indirect Cost Rate - Percentage of an organization's costs allowed for overhead and administrative expenses, determined to be fair within the boundaries of sound administrative principles.
- EPA Indirect Cost Rate Proposal Information:  
<https://www.epa.gov/grants/indirect-cost-rate-proposal-information>

# FAQs

## **If I don't have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement and do not apply for one, does this mean I am not eligible to allocate event 10% for indirect costs?**

No. Revisions to 2 CFR 200.414(f) effective in November 2020 allow any recipient that does not currently have a negotiated indirect cost rate to use a de minimis 10% rate distributed to Modified Total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1. This 10% rate may be used indefinitely (unless an indirect cost rate is subsequently negotiated) and must be used consistently for all Federal awards. Refer to EPA's [IDC Policy](#) and [IDC Guidance](#) for additional information.

# Matching & Subaward Requirements



## Matching Funds

Minimum of 25% of **Total Project Budget**

Funding Request to EPA = \$90,000, and the total budget = \$120,000, the minimum match = \$30,000

## Subawards

Exactly 25% of **EPA funds** must go to subawards of \$5,000 or less

Funding request to EPA = \$90,000, the total of subawards of \$5k or less = exactly \$22,500

# The EE Grant Calculator

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

\$  [Go](#)

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

### Your Results

EPA Funding Request: \$

Minimum Non-Federal Match: \$

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

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

# FAQ

## **If awarded the grant, am I responsible for ensuring the awardees of the subawards are eligible for funds?**

Yes. The prime recipient of the grant funds must ensure that all subawards they award with funds from this program go to entities that would qualify as "eligible applicants." More information on eligibility can be found in Section III of the solicitation notice.

## **When I apply do I need to know and have outlined in the application (or complete application for selected finalists) which entities or organizations will receive subawards?**

No. The applicant does not have to know to whom they will be awarding subawards at the time they submit their proposal/or complete application for selected finalists. However, applications must outline the process and criteria that will be used for selecting the subrecipients.

# 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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# Application Content



## Standard Forms & EPA Forms

- Standard Federal Application Form (SF-424)
- Budget Form (SF-424A) - Section B only – request to EPA, matching share, and total
- EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
- EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre-award Compliance Review Report

## Work Plan (8-page limit)

- Project Summary (recommended, one page) **\*max 6 points\***
- Detailed Project Description (use headings: Community Description, What, and How) **\*max 46 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 13 points\***

## Appendices

- Timeline - Major activities and milestones over project period **\*max 5 points\***
- Logic Model - Shows outputs and outcomes **\*max 5 points\***
- Programmatic Capability and Past Performance **\*max 10 points\***
- Partnership Letters of Commitment - Explain tasks or funding partners to provide **\*max 5 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 attachments when submitting an application via grants.gov. PDFs are preferred when possible. Trying to upload a large number of individual files leaves room for error in the uploading and downloading process.

## **Do the Detailed Budget and the Appendices count towards the 8 page limit?**

No. The Detailed Budget and the Appendices (i.e., Timeline, Logic Model, Programmatic Capabilities and Past Performance, and Partnership Commitment& Letters) - are not included in the 8-page limit. While there is no page limit on appendices, typically the range is 8-10 total pages for all appendices. However, all pages of an application appendix will be reviewed regardless of whether they fall into the typical 8–10-page range or not.

# Review and Selection

- All eligible applications are evaluated by a panel of reviewers assembled by each Regional Office; includes experts in EE 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 & Where to Find More Information

- EPA EE Grants Homepage
  - <https://www.epa.gov/education/grants>
- EE Grant FAQs
  - <https://www.epa.gov/education/frequent-questions-about-environmental-education-grants-program>
- 2021 RFAs
  - <https://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grant-solicitation-notice>
- RFA Models and Templates
  - <https://www.epa.gov/education/grants#helpful>
- Descriptions of previously funded EE Grants
  - <https://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-grant-descriptions>
- Join EPA's EE Listservs
  - <https://www.epa.gov/newsroom/email-subscriptions-epa-news-releases>

# Helpful Resources Continued

- 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 (*external sites*):
  - EEVal: <https://evaluation.naaee.org/>
  - My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant (MEEERA) at: <http://meera.snre.umich.edu/>

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# Tips for Applying

- ✓ Read entire [RFA](#) and all [FAQs](#) before starting application
- ✓ Apply to the correct RFA!
- ✓ Start early and leave time to review and edit your application
- ✓ Check your math – and check it again
  - [EE Grant Calculator](#)
- ✓ Organize Work Plan in order (and with headings) listed in RFA



# Tips for Applying Continued

- ✓ Organize application around scoring criteria (listed in Section V of RFA)
- ✓ Demonstrate how your project will benefit one or more underserved community(ies)
- ✓ Write simply and clearly – do not leave out important details; but **stick to page limits**
- ✓ Explain acronyms/terms and do not assume reviewer knowledge



# And...

- ✓ Demonstrate adequate match and exact subaward amounts
- ✓ If listing subaward recipient names in application, confirm eligibility of all subrecipients
- ✓ Include plan to measure and evaluate success
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Limit attachments to 6 or less
- ✓ Send questions to [EEGrants@epa.gov](mailto:EEGrants@epa.gov) or your [Regional EE Coordinator](#) – after you read the RFP and FAQs thoroughly!



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# Q&A





**Contact Info:**  
**Office of Environmental Education**  
**[EEGrants@epa.gov](mailto:EEGrants@epa.gov)**