

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANTS PROGRAM

### Support for Environmental Education Projects

Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) Environmental Education Grants Program provides funding for Non-formal and Formal environmental education projects. The goal of environmental education is an environmentally literate citizenry, prepared to make informed decisions and take positive actions to help ensure the state's natural resources are available for the use and enjoyment of future generations. The DEP Environmental Education Grants Program will not provide funding for projects that are not entirely focused on environmental education.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Education Act of June 22, 1993 (P.L. 105, No. 24), states that "it is the policy of this commonwealth that environmental education is critically important to encourage a citizenry which has the ability to help promote a healthy environment and an understanding of the functioning of the natural world and the necessity for environmental protection and sound resource management.

This act authorizes and requires the departments of Education, Conservation and Natural Resources, and Environmental Protection to develop and implement environmental education programs for the citizens of Pennsylvania and to provide leadership, funding, and accountability for that education. This act also established a special, non-lapsing fund - the Environmental Education Fund. The fund is supported by five percent of the money collected from environmental fines and penalties, to be appropriated to DEP and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to accomplish the purposes of this act.

### Seasonal Environmental Education Grants Program Timeline (Dates to be Determined Annually)

- Fall** Grant round opens.
- Winter** Application deadline.
- Spring** Awards to be announced barring unforeseen circumstances which may result in announcement delays.
- July 1** Awarded projects may begin. All projects must conclude by June 30 of the following calendar year.

### Environmental Education Grants Program Application

DEP Environmental Grant applications must be submitted electronically:  
[www.esa.dced.state.pa.us/Login.aspx](http://www.esa.dced.state.pa.us/Login.aspx)

### Environmental Education Grants Program Manual, Forms, and Instructions

The DEP Environmental Education Grants Program Manual, required forms, and related instructions are available at [www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/EnvironmentalEducation/Grants/pages/default.aspx](http://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/EnvironmentalEducation/Grants/pages/default.aspx)

### Eligible Environmental Education Grants Program Applicants

Public schools and school districts (PreK-12) (including Intermediate Units and Charter Schools)

- Incorporated private schools (under limited circumstances, private religious schools may be exempted from the incorporation requirement)
- Incorporated conservation and education organizations and institutions
- Universities and colleges
- County conservation districts
- Incorporated nonprofit organizations
- Businesses (must be registered to conduct business in Pennsylvania)

### Environmental Education Grant Program Priorities

DEP's Environmental Education Grants Program has identified three (3) priorities:

#### Climate Change

Environmental Education projects to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and negative impacts of climate change including floods, changes to groundwater, pests, disease, agricultural disruptions, and potential threats to human health.

## **Water**

Environmental Education programs promoting effective ways to reduce non-point source and source water pollution to improve water quality.

## **Environmental Justice**

Education programs designed to engage audiences (youth and/or adults) living and/or working within Environmental Justice areas. Use the DEP *Environmental Justice Areas Viewer* to verify communities located within Environmental Justice areas. Visit: [Environmental Justice Areas Viewer](#)

## **Environmental Education Grants Program Project Types**

Non-formal and/or Formal Education types of projects may be delivered:

### **Non-formal Environmental Education Projects**

- Environmental education programs that are *not* integrated into formal, PreK-12 classes and/or Higher Education course curriculums.
- Non-formal projects can be designed to reach any audience including, but not limited to, youth, and may occur through a variety of venues such as afterschool activities, summer camps, 4-H programs, FFA, faith-based forums, and community workshops and special events.

### **Formal Environmental Education Projects**

- Environmental education programs implementing classroom curriculum (PreK-12 and/or higher education).
- Projects must relate to the [State Academic Standards](#) addressing *Environment and Ecology (sunsets June 30, 2025)*, and/or *Science and Technology (Sunsets June 30, 2025)*, or the Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability ([STEELS Hub - SAS \(pdesas.org\)](#)) standards.
- Projects will:
  - Occur within the local context (i.e. schoolyard, neighborhood, town, or community);
  - Be learner-driven, whereby students define a local issue and potential solution(s);
  - Reflect student participation in one or more outdoor field experiences;
  - Provide for student led Stewardship and/or Civic Action projects;
  - Introduce students to potential career opportunities involving environmental sciences and related fields;
  - Provide opportunities for teacher collaboration and professional development, including Act 48 credit, whenever possible;
  - Promote diverse partnerships involving local municipalities, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities, businesses, etc.; and
  - Encourage the use of technology by utilizing and integrating social media, mobile applications, webtools, and/or other appropriate tools.

**Sustainable Schools:** Coordinate programs to develop green, sustainable PreK-12 schools. Applying organizations will focus on reducing environmental impact, school health, or outdoor classrooms, including energy efficiency and conservation, water quality and conservation, sustainable school transportation, waste and recycling, climate change, air quality, radon/improving indoor air quality, or integrated pest management.

- Schools may form and enhance an energy team with teachers, students, building facility managers, and administrators with the goal to reduce the school building's energy use through PA Pathways to Green Schools. Schools may develop and implement school-centered energy conservation plans, including student-led energy audits. Schools may partner with colleges or universities, non-profit environmental education centers, STEM organizations, math and science collaborative, or other organizations.
  - **Curriculum Integration Projects:** Articulate the Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology into the formal K-12 curriculum for the entire school district, private school, charter school, or cyber school. Schools may coordinate workshops to be attended by representatives from all schools and grade levels within the school district or private school. Any tentative workshop dates must be included in the application. Remember, the goal of this project is for permanent change.

- **Curriculum Revision Projects:** Applying schools will use their district's fully aligned matrix to revise or write new lesson plans to integrate the Environment and Ecology Standards into the school's curriculum. Assessment of the integration is required. The district's fully aligned matrix must be submitted with the application.
- Encourage the use of technology by utilizing and integrating social media, mobile applications, web tools, and/or other appropriate tools.

### **Environmental Education Grants Program Funding Categories**

Three types of awards are available for projects addressing the Environmental Education Grants Program Priorities:

**Mini Grants**, of up to \$5,000, may be awarded for local (school, county, municipality or other defined area) environmental education projects.

**General Grants Level I** may be awarded in amounts ranging from \$5,001-\$30,000 for implementation of large-scale environmental education projects, such as School District-wide projects, engagement of multiple communities, collaboration involving multiple counties or statewide projects

**General Grants Level II** in amounts ranging from \$30,001-\$65,000 are available for non-formal projects engaging youth and teachers at three (3) levels: *local, state, and national*.

### **Project Audiences**

Projects may deliver both formal and non-formal education programs to *any* audience, including, but not limited to, youth, teachers, municipal officials, farmers, developers, site designers, businesses, and homeowners or other community residents. People living and working within Environmental Justice areas are considered priority audiences.

### **Project Partners**

Project partners are **required** for General grants. Project partners are *encouraged* for Mini grants.

### **Project Match**

Match (Cash and/or In-kind) is required for all projects. General grant projects are **required** to provide a 20 percent (20%) Match. Match in any amount is required of Mini grants (20% is encouraged).

**Note:** Ineligible grant expenses, other state agency money, or state agency-supplied services or materials may not be designated as Match. Although People costs exceeding 50% of the amount of grant funds requested are considered ineligible grant expenses, People costs in any amount maybe used as Match.

### **Eligible and Ineligible Environmental Education Grant Expenses**

Grant payments are provided for approved eligible expenses, incurred during the designated project period, on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursement will not be provided for ineligible expenses, including People costs that exceed 50% of the grant award amount. **Please refer to the Environmental Education Grants manual for a listing of Eligible and Ineligible Grant Expenses.**

**Eligible Grant expenses** may include:

- **People Costs** (Not to exceed 50% of requested grant funds) for wages and benefits, private consultants, schoolteacher stipends and substitute teacher pay
- **Travel Costs**, including mileage at the current GSA rate ([www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715)), transportation costs at a flat fee rate and lodging
- **Resource Costs**, such as educational materials and supplies and equipment/technology
- **Other Costs**, such as photocopying, printing, postage, and facility rental

**Ineligible Grant Expenses** may include, but are not limited to:

- Food or beverages
- Airfare and out-of-state travel
- Indirect costs, such as general office overhead, furniture, utilities, and equipment
- Award items (certificates, plaques) and Incentive prizes
- Boats, kayaks, paddle boards, and canoes (to purchase)
- Photography cameras and drones

- Personal items such as water bottles and clothing
- Promotional items, such as stress balls, laser pointers, magnets, pins, etc.
- Lawn mowers and other power equipment
- Pass-through cash, Grants, scholarships or fellowships to be given by the grant recipient to a third party
- Graduate or other continuing education credits

### **Environmental Education Grant Application Requirements (Refer to the EE Grants Program Manual)**

Grant Applications must be submitted electronically and include the following documents:

1. Project Proposal;
2. Scope of Work form;
3. Detailed Budget sheet; and
4. Letter(s) of Commitment.

Applications that fail to provide all required documents will be considered incomplete and ineligible for EE Grant Program funding.

#### **Project Proposal**

Project Proposals shall include a description of the project including its goals and anticipated outcomes. Elements of the proposal shall include, but not be limited to identifying one or more DEP Priorities, the project audience(s), an assessment strategy, a plan for presenting the project at conference, meeting or other appropriate event, and a means for sustaining and/or expanding the project after the project period ends.

#### **Scope of Work Form** (download, follow instructions, and complete the document)

The project's Scope of Work will reflect the major work components (Benchmarks) to be completed within the project period. Benchmarks will be listed chronologically by Target Date of completion.

#### **Detailed Budget Sheet** (download, follow instructions, and complete the document)

The project's Detailed Budget sheet will reflect eligible project costs including People, Travel, Resources, Other, and Match. Project Match (Cash and/or In-kind) provided by the applying organization and/or its Partners must be substantiated by a Letter of Commitment.

#### **Letter of Commitment** (download and follow instructions)

Signed Letter(s) of Commitment are required from the applying organization and/or its Partners reflecting the type (Cash and/or In-kind) and monetary value of the commitment, and a description of the task(s) to be performed and/or item(s) to be provided.

#### **Environmental Education Grants Program Assistance**

The Environmental Education Grants Program fact sheet is intended to provide an overview of the Environmental Education Grants Program. Please refer to the current Environmental Education Grants Program Manual for additional guidance. General questions about the Environmental Education Grants Program may be directed to: [RA-epEEgrants@pa.gov](mailto:RA-epEEgrants@pa.gov).

DEP values working with partners who share our view that diversity and equity are integral to success in restoring and protecting the environment for all Pennsylvanians. As we work to demonstrably improve the inclusivity of our programs and processes, we also encourage our partners to pursue increased inclusivity in their operations. In this way, Pennsylvania's natural resources are best protected as "the common property of all the people," as identified in our state constitution.

For more information, visit [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov).