ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANTS PROGRAM

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 also provide leadership, funding, and accountability for that education. This act also established a special, nonlapsing 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 the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to accomplish the purposes of this act.

Seasonal Grant Time Line (Dates to be determined annually)

Fall   Grant round opens. The *Environmental Education Grants Program Manual* is available at www.dep.pa.gov, Search: EE Grants

Winter   Applications are due. Grant applications must be submitted electronically at: www.dep.pa.gov/EE_Grants.

Spring   Awards to be announced in Spring, 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.

Eligible Applicants

- Public schools and school districts (K-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

Climate Change

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

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

Environmental Justice

Education programs designed to empower and engage residents and officials of communities located in Environmental Justice areas, (as defined by the U.S. Census), develop meaningful solutions that address local environmental issues and public health concerns.

Grant Program Award Categories

DEP's Environmental Education Grants Program provides funding for education projects that foster an understanding of natural world functions and cultivate critical thinking and actions that promote environmental protection and sustainable resource management. Two types of awards are available for projects addressing the Environmental Education Grants Program Priorities:

General Grants may be awarded in amounts ranging from $3,001-$20,000 (LEVEL I) for implementation of large scale regional or statewide environmental education projects or in amounts ranging from $20,001-$85,000 (LEVEL II), for non-formal projects engaging youth and teachers at the local, state, and national levels. **Mini Grants**, of up to $3,000, may be awarded for local (school, county, municipality, or other defined area) environmental education projects.

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.

Non-formal Environmental Education Projects

- Environmental education programs implemented outside of formal, K-12 school settings.
- 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 implemented within the formal, K-12 school setting.
- Projects must relate to the State Academic Standards in Environment and Ecology, and/or Science and Technology. Applicants are encouraged to integrate STEM (Science, Technology Engineering and Math) concepts.
- 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, web tools, and/or other appropriate tools.

Sustainable Schools: Coordinate programs to develop green, sustainable K-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 by first benchmarking with Energy Star's Portfolio Manager. 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.

- o **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.

Project Narrative

Grant Proposals *shall include a project narrative reflecting:*

- The credentials of the applying organization, project leader and others, including partners and subcontractors, involved with the project's implementation;
- One or more of the DEP EE Grant Program priorities;
- The project's goals and expected outcomes;
- The project's audience(s) and delivery location(s);
- The type of project (Formal or Non-Formal);
- A project timeline, with specific project benchmarks;
- An assessment strategy, including metrics, designed to evaluate audience changes;
- A description of how the project will be promoted at local, state, and national levels, as applicable;
- A strong technology component that integrates use of social media, web-based applications, and/or other appropriate technological tools and resources (General Grants); and
- A plan to sustain the project after grant funds end.

Additionally, General Grant Level II project narratives will:

- Describe a non-formal environmental education program designed to widely* engage teachers and youth at the county, state, and national levels. (*Teachers and students from at least 60 Pennsylvania counties will directly participate in the project);* and
- Demonstrate that at least 30% of program participants are members of an Environmental Justice Area.

Grant Partners

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

Grant Match

General grant projects are **required** to provide a 20 percent (20%) project Match (cash funds or in-kind contributions). Although not a required, Mini-grants are *encouraged* to include a project Match. Project Match may be provided by the applying organization and/or one of its partners.

Note: With the exception of People Costs, ineligible expenses, other state agency money, or state agency-supplied services or materials may not be designated as Match funds.

Eligible Grant Expenses

People Costs (May not exceed 35% of grant funds)

- Wages and benefits directly related to project implementation, including project director, staff, and clerical support.
- Private consultants, including wages/benefits and/or contractual fees for service.
- Stipends for school teachers and administrators for work done outside the normal work day.
- Substitute teacher pay, at the current daily rate.

Travel Costs

- Personal mileage can be reimbursed at the current GSA rate. For more information, visit www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715.
- Transportation costs at a flat fee rate.

Resource Costs

- Educational resources such as books, library/research resources, software, test kits and field guides.
- Supplies such as native plants, mulch, garden shovels, hoes, trowels, gloves, building materials, signage and nets.
- Equipment such as microscopes, binoculars, handheld GPS units, weather stations, structures and equipment, such as energy audit equipment.
- Specific laboratory equipment. If more than $1,500 is proposed for equipment, the narrative must designate where the item(s) will be located and how the item(s) will be used after the project ends.

Other Costs

- Photocopying, printing, binding, graphic layout
- Project-specific phone charges
- Facility rental
- Advertising/marketing
- Website
- Postage

Ineligible Grant Expenses

- People costs greater than 35 percent of the total requested amount of grant funds
- Food or beverages
- Lodging, Airfare and Out of state travel
- Computer hardware for general office use (i.e., laptops, iPads/tablet computers)
  - No more than 10 percent of the entire grant can be used to purchase program-specific technology
- Award items (certificates, plaques)
- Indirect costs, including general operations or overhead charges, such as rent, utilities, monthly phone, or website hosting charges
- Boats, kayaks, paddle boards, and canoes (to purchase or rent)
- Cameras, including go-pros and drones
- Clothing (t-shirts, hats)
- Lawn mowers and other power equipment
- Furniture for general office use
- Grants, scholarships or fellowships to be given by the grant recipient to a third party
- Grant funds may not be used to pay for graduate or other continuing education credits
- Pass-through of cash or incentive prizes to project participants, e.g. grant funds may not be used to provide services (such as septic system cleanouts) to project participants at a discounted cost
- Promotional items, such as stress balls, laser pointers, magnets, pins, etc.
- Reimbursement for expenses prior to the July 1 effective start date

General questions about the Environmental Education Grants Program may be directed to:

RA-epEEgrants@pa.gov