



# Grants

## *Environmental Education Grants Program*

### *Introduction*

The Environmental Education Grants Program was established under Section 6 of the National Environmental Education Act of 1990. The goal of the program is to support environmental education (EE) projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to make informed and responsible decisions that affect environmental quality. To be considered EE, a project must enhance critical-thinking, problem-solving, and effective decision-making skills, as well as teach individuals to weigh various sides of an environmental issue to make informed and responsible decisions. Environmental education does not advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action.



### *Project Funding*

Since fiscal year (FY) 1992, Congress has annually appropriated between \$2 and \$3 million to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to award EE grants. The competition for EE grants is considerable, and 200 to 225 grantees are selected annually from among more than 1,300 applications received. Grants are awarded by either EPA Headquarters or regional offices as determined by the cost of the grant.

#### **EPA's current educational priorities are for projects that:**



- \* (1) build state/local capacity to deliver environmental education programs
- \* (2) use EE to advance state/local education reform goals
- \* (3) educate the public through community-based organizations
- (4) educate teachers, health professionals, community leaders, and the public about human health threats from pollution, especially as it affects children
- (5) improve teaching skills
- (6) promote environmental careers
- (7) educate low-income or culturally diverse audiences about environmental issues

\* *EPA Headquarters will fund category 1-3 projects.*

*The regions may fund all of the above types of projects.*

Grants of \$25,000 or less are awarded by EPA's ten regional offices and these grants make up the vast majority of grants issued. As mandated by Congress, a significant number of grants must be awarded by the regions for small projects that cost \$5,000 or less. Grants for more than \$25,000 are awarded by EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and 9 to 12 are usually issued each year. Grants issued by Headquarters are usually for between \$35,000 and \$125,000.

### ***Matching Funds***

Grantees must provide non-Federal matching funds of at least 25% of the total cost of the grant project. The match may be provided by the grant applicant or by a partner organization. The match may be cash or in-kind contributions, such as salaries paid to the project managers and equipment purchased for the project.

## Eligible Organizations

Colleges and universities, local and tribal education agencies, state education or environmental agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and non-commercial educational broadcasting entities are eligible to apply for funds under the program. Grantees are located in all 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and other U.S. Territories.

### Annual grant schedule:



Solicitation Notice – August or September  
Applications due – Mid-November  
Evaluation process – December - April  
Grants awarded – May - June  
Projects implemented - July at the earliest

## Solicitation Notice

Each year EPA issues a "Solicitation Notice" that describes the application procedures and grant priorities for that year and contains all the necessary application forms. The educational priorities for the past annual cycle are listed on the previous page. The Solicitation Notice is published in the *Federal Register*, which is available in many local public libraries. The solicitation, grant writing tips, and other EE grant information including descriptions of grants issued by state, can be obtained at the World Wide Web site identified below.

## Evaluation Process

Grant applications are evaluated in a two-step process which usually involves participation by EE experts outside of EPA at the first level of review. In general, the first ranking is done by non-federal reviewers from schools, universities, state education agencies, and not-for-profit organizations. Often, the evaluation process also includes reviewers from other federal agencies. The second level of review is conducted by EPA, and the factors listed below may be considered prior to the awards being approved by EPA's Regional Administrators or by Headquarters.

### Factors considered in making final selections include:



- cost-effectiveness
- effectiveness of collaboration and partnerships
- environmental or educational importance of the project
- effectiveness of delivery
- geographic distribution of projects



For additional information, visit the World Wide Web at  
<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed>

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