

## 1. Introduction

Hello, and welcome to the EPA Environmental Education Grant Program Webinar.

The focus of this presentation will be on the highlights of the current Environmental Education Regional and Headquarters Model Grants Program solicitation notice. First I will go over the major requirements of this year's solicitation, then point out other highlights. This presentation will also cover the content and format of your application, how to submit an application, what documents are needed in an application, and the review and selection process. It may help if you have a copy of the solicitation in front of you to take notes of the Section references as needed.

## 2. The 2013 Solicitation

For Fiscal Year 2013 the Office of Environmental Education (OEE) at EPA has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Environmental Education Grants Program. Under the current RFP, titled, "2013 Request for Proposals for Regional and Headquarters Model Grants", EPA will have approximately 2.6 million dollars in funding available for environmental education projects. The purpose of these grants is to promote environmental stewardship and help develop knowledgeable and responsible students, teachers and citizens. Our past RFPs have been highly competitive; EPA has been able to fund less than 10% of the applications it receives most years.

While the EE Grants Program has existed since 1990, this year's solicitation is different from previous grant solicitation opportunities. The current RFP combines the regional model grant program of FY 2011 with the Sub-award program of FY 2012.

This year's program will give funds to a Prime Recipient to develop a model grant project that has the potential to be replicated in other regions AND make sub-awards to organizations to conduct environmental education activities

The Prime Recipient is the entity that directly applies for and receives funds from EPA in response to this RFP.

The Prime Recipient is required to award **exactly** 25% of the EPA funds received in sub-awards. These sub-awards **must be** 5,000 dollars or less. This requirement is to fulfill a requirement in the National Environmental Education Act to award 25% of EPA's Environmental Education Grant Program's obligated funding to projects of \$5000 or less.

EPA expects to award between 22 and 32 grants nationwide. The deadline for submission of applications for this RFP is February 4, 2014.

## 3. Who is Eligible to Apply?

The applicant must be an eligible organization as described in the Section III (A). We frequently receive questions about eligibility and publish those on our Frequently Asked Questions page. Please consult it before e-mailing us, as many questions can be immediately answered there.

#### **4. What Type of Project Will EPA Fund?**

EPA will fund projects focused on all age levels and in both formal and informal settings.

In addition to the categories on the slide, EPA will NOT fund projects that are information or outreach without an educational focus or projects that advocate a particular view point.

As for projects involving technical training, we do not consider teachers to be environmental professionals so we will fund teacher training.

#### **5. Model, Replicable Projects**

In addition to the qualities listed, applicants must demonstrate that proposed project has not been previously funded by EPA or that it is significantly changed from the previously funded project.

We will accept multiple proposals as long as each is for a different project and each is submitted separately

We encourage applications for projects that provide a variety and range of educational and environmental priorities, geographic areas, and audiences as compared to the pool of previously funded projects. Please visit our website at [epa.gov/education](http://epa.gov/education) to learn about previously funded projects.

#### **6. Environmental Priorities**

The application must address at least one of the EPA's environmental priorities listed in detail in Section I (C) of the RFP. Please note that for the first two priorities, projects can address either focus. For instance, a project does not need to address both climate change and air quality. Similarly, a project does not need to take action on both toxics and chemical safety. Either one is sufficient.

#### **7. Educational Priorities**

The application must address at least one of the educational priorities listed in more detail in Section I (C) of the RFP.

To repeat, in order to be eligible, all projects and proposed activities must be educational in approach, must address at least one of EPA's educational priorities AND one of EPA's environmental priorities.

#### **8. Tips for Success**

First and foremost, please READ THE RFP THOROUGHLY BEFORE STARTING TO WRITE YOUR PROPOSAL. Pay close attention to the definition of environmental education in Section I (B) and the education priorities outlined in Section I (C). Also, take careful note of the threshold eligibility requirements as outlined in Section III (C).

Start early and leave enough time to review and edit your proposal. Have someone else in your organization review it.

If you are using grants.gov to submit your application, your organization must be registered on grants.gov and that can take up to a week, so ask an authorized organizational representative to start now.

Make sure your application is complete before submitting it. Applications missing sections or otherwise incomplete may be eliminated for further consideration.

## **9. Application Tips**

On this slide, we'll discuss how to make your application more competitive.

In addition to these tips, please remember to make it clear that you are an eligible entity as defined in Section III (A) and that sub-awards will go to eligible entities as defined in Section III (A).

Do NOT ask for more than \$200k.

The project start date in proposals should be no earlier than June 1, 2014.

## **10. Content and Format of Applications**

This slide lists all the documents we'll need from you.

Organize your application as it is outlined in the RFP and adhere to the page limits.

In terms of the timeline, be realistic. Your timeline must show how you will seek out good candidates for the sub-awards, how they will be selected, how selections are made, how you will make the awards, manage them, and evaluate their performance.

Have a clear focus and clearly define measurable quantitative and qualitative outputs and long term outcomes for the Prime Recipient and sub-awardees that you will complete during the project period. The sample logic model in the RFP and on the website will help you articulate these.

Please do not submit extra materials such as maps, brochures, CDs, or links to web sites for more information. They will not be reviewed by the evaluators. And, do not assume reviewers' knowledge—please explain everything clearly and concisely.

## **11. Budget and Cost Items**

Applicants must provide matching funds that are valued at 25% of the total project budget. For example, if the total budget of the proposed project is \$200K and the applicant is requesting \$150K from EPA, the required match would be \$50K. Clearly show that you have the required 25% match and where it will come from. The 25% match can come from cash or in-kind from your own organization or from a third party.

If you are asking for indirect costs, you must have an indirect cost rate on file with EPA. However, if you don't, then you can use a flat rate of 10% (if you are a non-profit) and that rate must be used for the life of the project.

Program income such as workshop fees can be used for the 25% match.

In terms of food and beverage, remember that EPA will not pay for receptions or any event where alcohol is served.

The SF 424A and a detailed budget document are required and make sure that the totals match.

## **12. Example Award/Subaward Distribution**

Each recipient (the “Prime” recipient) of a grant under this solicitation is required to award exactly 25% of the funds received from EPA to eligible sub-awardees/sub-grantees in the form of sub-awards of \$5,000 or less.

All “Prime” recipients of awards under this RFP must ensure that all the sub-awards they award with funds from this program go to entities that would qualify as “eligible applicants” to this program as defined in the RFP.

The remaining budget may be used to seek and select sub-awardees, manage these sub-awards, evaluate the project and sub-award activities, and conduct other eligible activities as defined in the RFP, such as teacher training workshops.

Choose your sub-award audience carefully and explain why this audience was chosen. If you are reaching diverse populations, including but not limited to low income, minority and tribal communities, make sure to explain that in the proposal.

Base your project goals on the needs of the sub-award community you will be reaching.

Please note you do not need to identify the sub-awardees at this point in the application process.

## **13. Partnerships**

You are not required to have partners to implement your project, but partners can help strengthen your project. If you don’t have partners, you must explain in detail how your organization will implement the project without them.

If you do have partner organizations making a commitment to the project, include letters reflecting this. Please do not submit letters of endorsement or recommendation if you don’t have partners.

## **14. How to Apply**

After you determine whether you’re eligible and complete the application and budget forms, you’re ready to apply.

Section IV of the RFP outlines how to apply for a grant in detail. Applicants have two choices for how they submit their applications: hard copy or electronic submission.

First, we'll describe the hard copy submission process. Applicants choosing to submit applications in hard copy must submit an original and 2 copies of the application materials by mail, express delivery service, or hand delivery. Applications should be sent to the Regional Office of the EPA region in which the project will be located, or to Headquarters if the project will be national in scope or cross EPA regional boundaries. The 10 EPA Regional Offices and the EE contacts in them are listed in Section VII. The original, signed package must be postmarked by 11:59 pm local time, February 4, 2014 or hand delivered by close of business to the appropriate Headquarters or Regional Office on February 4, 2014.

The second method is electronic submission through grants.gov. Please note, we **will not** accept applications via e-mail to either [EEgrants@epa.gov](mailto:EEgrants@epa.gov) or any of the identified contacts. You must go through grants.gov.

Electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an official representative and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Electronic application are due to grants.gov by February 4, 2014, 11:59 pm eastern time. Please see Appendix D of the RFP for additional instructions.

## **15. Review and Selection Process**

When we receive your application, we will confirm receipt as soon as possible.

After that, we will review applications to determine if they meet the threshold eligibility requirements laid out in Section III (C). If you do not meet the requirements we will notify you within fifteen calendar days of our determination. We will then begin the evaluation process.

## **16. Scoring Chart**

All eligible applications will be reviewed and scored by either Regional or Headquarters review panels. The highest possible score is 100.

Applications will be ranked by score from the highest to the lowest. Maximum and total points awarded for each section of the application are outlined in the RFP in Section V (A) and illustrated here.

Other factors such as educational and environmental priorities, geographic area and audiences reached may also be considered for the final selection.

Please remember that evaluation and ranking is a complex process that takes months.

## **17. Helpful Resources**

Here are some resources that will help you with various aspects of proposal development.

If you are training educators we recommend: Guidelines for Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators on <http://epa.gov/education/resources.html>

If you are developing materials, check out:

- The Guidelines for Excellence in EE series of publications listed at the above web site.
- The Ocean Literacy Framework at [http://oceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/?page\\_id=47](http://oceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/?page_id=47)
- The Energy Literacy Framework at [www1.eere.energy.gov/education/energy\\_literacy.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/education/energy_literacy.html)
- The Climate Literacy Framework at [www.globalchange.gov/resources/educators/climate-literacy](http://www.globalchange.gov/resources/educators/climate-literacy)

If you are developing your evaluation plan, read: My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant at <http://meera.snre.umich.edu>

All these resources are available online at the URLs listed on the slide.

### **18. More questions**

Finally, if you have more questions, please visit our website. Of particular note is our Frequently Asked Questions page, where we answer a variety of questions about the grant program, the application process, eligibility, the budget, partnerships, terms, and priorities. If you don't find an answer there, please e-mail [EEgrants@epa.gov](mailto:EEgrants@epa.gov). For legal reasons, we're only allowed to answer questions about the process, not about the content of your application.

Thank you for listening, and good luck.