



EARTH FORCE & U.S. EPA REGION 7 SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

TITLE: Building Environmental Education Communities Small Grants Program -- RFP for 2013

Purpose: The purpose of the Building Environmental Education (EE) Communities Small Grants Program is to develop collaborative structures that engage young people in environmental education multiple times. The Program will fund consortia of organizations that agree to work together in a designated community to accomplish this purpose. The program will also fund 4 organizations responsible for supporting the integration of Environmental Literacy Plans into the work for the funded consortia.

Application Deadline: Applications must be submitted electronically by February 28, 2013 by 11:59 pm MST (Mountain Standard Time) to Cara Lynch via email: clynch@earthforce.org. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Number and value of awards: The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$90,000. Earth Force and several review partners will award 19 small grants to organizations. A maximum of 15 grants will go to organizations that apply in unison and agree to work together as a consortium. A consortium will consist of 3-5 organizations working together in a specific geographic location, such as city or town. Organizations applying together as a consortium will identify common goals for their project and collaborate on strategies to collectively achieve them. The collaborating organizations submit one application and funds will be distributed to each organization up to \$5,000/organization. Sub-grantees under our program will be required to demonstrate how they engage young people as leaders solving environmental problems in a manner that develops their civic skills.

The remaining 4 grants will go to individual organizations working directly on the implementation of Environmental Literacy Plans as they relate to the efforts of the funded consortia. Individual organizations may apply for up to \$5,000 each.

Cost-Sharing Requirement: Applicants must demonstrate how they will provide non-federal matching funds of at least 25% of the total cost of the project.

Start Date: Applications should plan for projects to start no earlier than April 1, 2013. Projects should be 12 months in length, and must conclude by April 30, 2014.

Required Webinars: Earth Force will host two applicant webinars to prepare and support consortia through the application process. Please join us on January 29 or February 15, 2013 at 10 AM CST on GoToTraining:

Registration Information For webinar on January 29, 2013:

Please register for EPA Region 7: Building EE Communities Conversation on Tuesday, January 29, 2013 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM CST at: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/2045236011409831424>

The webinar will provide an overview of the application process, including the components of building a collaboration to support your application for a Building EE Communities grant. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the training. At least one member of each applying consortia must attend this webinar.

Registration Information for Webinar on February 15, 2013:

Please register for EPA Region 7 Building EE Communities: Conversation II on Friday, February 15, 2013 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM CST at: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/2614553236690193152>

The webinar will focus on specifics of EE consortia goals and how they meet the Building EE Communities priorities. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the training. At least one member of each applying consortia must attend this webinar.

Contact Cara Lynch at Earth Force (clynch@earthforce.org) with specific questions regarding your application.

Background:

The ultimate goal of environmental education is to develop an environmentally literate and active citizenry. Over the past 15 years, Earth Force has learned that while individual educators can make progress toward this goal, their impact is limited. To build an environmentally literate citizenry, school systems, institutions of higher education, and community stakeholders must work together to develop collaborative structures that engage young people in environmental education multiple times.

Program Goals:

- Expand the conversation about environmentalism to include local organizations working on education reform, transportation, energy efficiency, and housing to increase student access to quality environmental education;
- Establish environmental education consortia in up to five communities in Region 7 that promote student and teacher participation in environmental stewardship leading to improved environmental conditions;
- Establish environmental education consortia that are sustainable and deliver programs relevant to underserved audiences;
- Support the implementation of Environmental Literacy Plans in the Building EE Communities consortia who are awarded funding for their projects.

Building EE Communities Priorities:

Projects will be required to address at least one of the following educational priorities:

- *Human Health & the Environment:* Educating students of any age group, from the very young through the elderly, and training their educators or community leaders on how to teach, in formal and non-formal settings, in the outdoors and in classrooms, about human health threats from environmental pollution and how to minimize human exposure to preserve good health.
- *Community Projects:* Addressing environmental stewardship in a local formal or informal educational context in rural, suburban and urban settings, and using outdoor, place-based, experiential, service learning and/or community-focused stewardship activities as the primary teaching tool(s).
- *Educational Achievement:* Project embeds the study of environmental issues within specific academic content areas that students are required to study and links the project to environmental literacy.

- *Expand the Conversation on Environmentalism and Working for Environmental Justice*: Priority projects link traditional environmental education practitioners with organizations working on social issues within low-income communities.

Eligibility:

Any local education agency, college or university, state education or environmental agency, or nonprofit organization as described in Section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code may submit a proposal. Applicant organizations must operate in Region 7. A teacher’s school district, an educator’s nonprofit organization, or a faculty member’s college or university may apply, but an individual teacher or faculty member may not apply.

Timeline: Projects must begin by May 1, 2013 and conclude by April 30, 2014

Review Process: All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the below criteria and awards will be announced in mid-March 2013.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevance to EPA Education Priorities and Building EE Communities Priorities:
 - *Community projects*: Applicants choosing this category will be asked to demonstrate how their project engages students in community-based stewardship activities that address issues uniquely relevant to local audiences.
 - *Human health and the environment*: Priority will be given to applicants that address the intersection between human health and environmental exposure.
 - *Educational Achievement*: Project embeds the study of environmental issues within specific academic content areas that students are required to study and links the project to environmental literacy.
 - *Expand the Conversation on Environmentalism and Working for Environmental Justice*: Priority will be given to projects that bring together traditional environmental education practitioners with organizations working on social issues within low-income communities.
- Engagement of underserved audiences as measured by socio-economic status;
- Priority given to applicants participating in a consortium of at least three organizations and up to five, working together to implement environmental education and youth civic engagement in a specific community;
- Demonstration that the project embraces youth leadership as a means to develop environmental stewardship and provide measurable results toward that goal;
- Relevancy to moving forward the State’s Environmental Literacy Plans;
- 25% in-kind or monetary match required, a greater match is desirable;
- A focus on “core” environmental problems in urban, rural, or tribal communities;
- If applying as a consortium, at least one representative of the group must attend the webinars.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applications must be submitted in PDF format by **11:59 PM MST February 28, 2013** to the following email address: clynch@earthforce.org. All email submissions must indicate EPA Region 7: Building EE Communities in the subject line to be eligible for review.

Contents of Submission:

1. Work plan (not to exceed 4 single spaced pages total):
 - a) Project summary (must not exceed 1 page)
 - b) Project narrative (must not exceed 3 pages)

2. Detailed project budget (no page limit):
 - a) A detailed project budget and narrative (not the entire organizational budget). Requests must not constitute over 20% of an organization's overall budget.
3. Appendices (no page limit):
 - a) Timeline with milestones, action, etc. The project must begin by May 1, 2013 and be completed within one year from the start date. A mid-year program report (6 months from project start date) must be included using the format Earth Force will provide
 - b) Key personnel resumes (must not exceed 1 page each)
 - c) Letters of commitment from each consortium member, detailing its role in supporting the defined project. NO letters of endorsement or recommendation. Letters of commitment must pertain to the actual project, not the entire organization.

Instructions:

Each Building EE Communities Consortium must submit one application, with letters of support detailing the role of every participating organization. Earth Force, Inc. is required by the EPA to distribute these grant funds in amounts of up to \$5,000 as part of the small grants program. As a result, we are requesting only one budget per project, and distributing the funding to each participating organization for up to \$5,000. The overall budget must detail the amount to be funded to each organization for its project expenses (up to \$5,000) related to the overall goals of the consortium. If you are an individual organization submitting to support consortia integrating and implementing practices outlined in the Environmental Literacy Plans, please follow the same proposal format outline below.

1. Work plan (not to exceed 4 single spaced pages total):
 - a. *Project summary* (must not exceed 1 page):
 - i. Briefly describe, with contact information: 1) your organization, 2) who will manage and implement your project, 3) fiscal agent, if applicable, and 4) amount requested.
 - ii. Project Summary: Provide a summary of your project and how it contributes to the program goals of Building EE Communities.
 - iii. Description of Consortia: Describe who your collaborating partners are and how you are working with them to meet the needs in your community. If you are supporting the implementation of the Environmental Literacy Plans for the consortia, describe how you will work with the consortia/a consortium to accomplish the project goals. Identify the specific grant priorities you will be addressing through this project.
 - b. *Project Narrative* (must not exceed 3 pages):
 - i. What are the community issues to be addressed, and how will environmental education be used to engage youth in addressing these issues?
 - ii. How does the project support the program goals described above? Identify the EPA Priorities and Building EE Communities Priorities the project addresses.
 - iii. Who benefits from the project and how? Does the project embrace youth leadership as a means to develop environmental stewardship?
 - iv. How is this project addressing a genuine need in the community at this time?
 - v. What are the anticipated outcomes?
 - vi. How will you evaluate the success of your project?
2. Detailed total project budget (no page limit)
 - a. A detailed total project budget and brief narrative (not the entire organizational budget) showing all anticipated costs, other sources of funding, and the amount requested. Be specific about items or activities such as personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs and indirect costs.
 - b. Requests must not constitute over 20% of an organization's overall budget.

- c. Please document at least 25% match.
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- 3. Appendices (no page limit)
 - a. Timeline with milestones. The project must begin during the 2013 calendar year and be completed within one year from the start date. A mid-year program report (6 months from project start date) will be required in the format Earth Force will provide.
 - b. Key staff qualifications
 - c. Partnership letters of commitment only if you have partner organizations making a commitment to the project – please NO letters of endorsement or recommendation. Letters of commitment must pertain to the actual project, not the entire organization.