

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Office of Environmental Education: Solicitation Notice, Environmental Education Grants Program (CFDA 66.951), Fiscal Year 2004

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Section I. Overview and Deadlines

A. Overview

Subject to Congressional action to appropriate funds for EPA's Environmental Education Grant Program, this document solicits grant proposals from education institutions, environmental and educational public agencies, and not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) organizations to support environmental education projects. This grants program provides financial support for projects which design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. This program is authorized under section 6 of the National Environmental Education Act of 1990 (the Act) (Pub. L. 101-619).

Please Note: In recent years, EPA has traditionally received funding of approximately \$3 million annually for this grant program. At the time of issuance of this Solicitation Notice, future funding for the program is uncertain because the federal budget for 2004 is not yet final. However, EPA decided not to miss the annual grant cycle by failing to issue a Solicitation Notice. Since EPA cannot currently anticipate what the appropriation from Congress, if any, will be, we are advising potential grant applicants to refer to our Web site closer to the application deadline to determine the status of funding for the program (www.epa.gov/enviroed). EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

This solicitation notice contains all the information and forms necessary to prepare a proposal. If your project is selected as a finalist after the evaluation process is concluded, EPA will provide you with additional Federal forms needed to process your proposal. These grants require non-federal matching funds for at least 25% of the total cost of the project.

B. Environmental Education versus Environmental Information

Environmental Education: Increases public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues and provides the skills to make informed decisions and take responsible actions. It is based on objective and scientifically sound information. It does not advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action. It teaches individuals how to weigh various sides of an issue through critical thinking and it enhances their own problem-solving and decision making skills.

Environmental Information: Proposals that simply disseminate "information" will not be funded. These would be projects that provide facts or opinions about environmental issues or problems, but may not enhance critical-thinking, problem solving or decision-making skills. Although information is an essential element of any educational effort, environmental information is not, by itself, environmental education.

C. Due Date and Grant Schedule

(1) **Due Date**—January 6, 2004 is the *postmark* due date for an original proposal signed by an authorized representative plus two copies to be mailed to EPA. Proposals mailed or sent after this date will not be considered for funding.

(2) **Rejection Letters**—EPA Headquarters and the 10 Regional Offices mail these letters at different times as determined by scheduling to accommodate review teams. Letters are usually sent within 6 months after submission of proposals.

(3) **Start Date and Length of Projects**—July 1, 2004 is the earliest start date that applicants should plan on and enter on their application forms and timelines. Budget periods cannot exceed *one-year* for small grants of \$10,000 or less. EPA prefers a one-year budget period for larger grants, but will accept a budget period of up to two-years, if the project timeline clarifies that more than a year is necessary for full implementation of the project.

D. Addresses for Mailing Proposals

Proposals requesting over \$25,000 in Federal environmental education grant funds must be mailed to EPA Headquarters in Washington, DC; proposals requesting \$25,000 or less from EPA must be mailed to the EPA Regional Office where the project takes place. The Headquarters address and the list of Regional Office mailing addresses by state is included at the end of this notice. Note that in some locations EPA addresses differ for postal versus courier service.

E. Dollar Limits Per Proposal

Each year, this program generates a great deal of public enthusiasm for developing environmental education projects. Consequently, EPA receives many more applications for these grants than can be supported with available funds. The competition for grants is intense, especially at Headquarters which usually receives over 250 proposals and is usually able to fund 10 to 15 grants or about 5% of the applicants. The EPA Regional Offices receive fewer applications and on average fund over 30% each year.

Grants in excess of \$100,000 are seldom awarded through this program. Although the Act sets a maximum limit of \$250,000 in environmental education grant funds for any one project, because of limited funds, EPA prefers to award smaller grants to more recipients. In summary, you will significantly increase your chance of being funded if your budget is competitive and you request \$5,000 or less from a Regional Office or \$100,000 or less from Headquarters.

Section II. Eligible Applicants and Activities

E. Eligible Applicants

Any local education agency, state education or environmental agency, college or university, not-for-profit organization as described in section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or noncommercial educational broadcasting entity may submit a proposal. Applicant organizations must be located in the United States and the majority of the educational activities must take place in the United States, Canada and/or Mexico.

"Tribal education agencies" which may also apply include a school or community college which is controlled by an Indian tribe, band, or nation, which is recognized as eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians and which is not administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tribal organizations do not qualify unless they meet this criteria or the not-for-profit criteria listed above. The terms for eligibility are defined in section 3 of the Act and 40 CFR 47.105.

A teacher's school district, an educator's nonprofit organization, or a faculty member's college or university may apply, but an individual teacher, educator, or faculty member *may not*.

F. Multiple or Repeat Proposals

An organization may submit more than one proposal if the proposals are for different projects. No organization