

### Section III. Eligible Activities and Funding Priorities

L. What general activities are eligible for funding under this program?

As specified under the Act, the *environmental education* activities that are eligible for funding under this program *must include, but are not limited to*, at least one of the following:

1. designing, demonstrating, or disseminating environmental curricula;
2. assessing environmental and ecological conditions or specific environmental issues or problems;
3. training or educating teachers, faculty, or related personnel; or
4. fostering international cooperation in addressing environmental issues and problems in the United States, Canada, and/or Mexico.

Under Section III.L.1. above, *EPA strongly encourages applicants to demonstrate or disseminate existing environmental curricula rather than designing new curricula* because experts indicate that a significant amount of quality curricula have already been developed and are under-utilized. EPA will consider funding new curricula only where the applicant demonstrates that there is a need (e.g., that the new curriculum has not been designed for a certain audience, existing curricula cannot be adapted well to a particular local environmental concern, or existing curricula are not otherwise accessible). The applicant must specify what steps they have taken to determine this need (e.g., you may cite a conference where this need was discussed, the results of inquiries made within your community or with various educational institutions, or a research or other published document).

M. What activities are *NOT* eligible for funding under this program?

Funds cannot be used for:

1. construction projects;
2. technical training of environmental management professionals;
3. non-educational research and development; and/or
4. environmental information projects.

Under Section III.M.4. above, EPA will not fund construction activities such as the acquisition of real property (e.g., buildings) or the construction or modification of any building. EPA may, however, fund activities such as creating a nature trail or building a bird watching station as long as these items are an integral part of the environmental education project, and the cost is a relatively small percentage of the total amount of federal funds requested.

Under Section III.M.4. above, EPA will fund only *environmental education*

projects, *NOT* projects that are solely designed to develop or disseminate *environmental information*. As discussed under Section I.C. above, *environmental education* teaches critical-thinking, problem-solving skills, and decision-making skills. By contrast, *environmental information* provides facts or opinions about environmental issues or problems, but does not enhance critical-thinking, problem-solving, or effective decision-making skills. Although information is an essential element of any educational effort, environmental information is not, by itself, environmental education. In other words, environmental education teaches people how to think, not what to think.

N. What specific type of projects will EPA fund?

*EPA will fund only those proposals which meet the criteria specified under #1 and #2 below. Proposals which do not meet these criteria will not be funded.*

1. As specified under the Act, all proposals *MUST discuss how the proposed project:*

- a. is new or significantly improved;
- b. has the potential for wide application; *AND*
- c. addresses a high priority environmental issue.

Applicants must define "new or significantly improved," "wide application," and "high priority environmental issue" as they relate to each individual project. For example, a project may be *new or significantly improved* if it reaches a specific community for the first time, develops a new or improved teaching strategy, or uses a new or improved method of applying existing materials. Similarly, a project may have *wide application* if it targets a large and diverse audience in terms of numbers or demographics or if it can serve as a model program elsewhere. Finally, a project may address a *high priority environmental issue* if the applicant demonstrates its importance to the community, state, or region being targeted by the project (e.g., one community may have significant air pollution problems which makes teaching about human health affects from and solutions to air pollution important, while rapid development in another community may threaten a nearby wildlife habitat, thus, making habitat or ecosystem protection a high priority issue).

2. *All proposals MUST also focus on ONE of the following:*

- a. improving environmental education teaching skills for teachers, faculty, and other nonformal educators (e.g., through workshops);

b. educating teachers, students, or the public about human health problems from environmental pollution;

c. building state, local, or tribal capacity to develop and deliver environmental education programs;

d. promoting environmental careers among students;

e. educating members of a community through a community-based organization; *OR*

f. educating the general public to be more environmentally conscious in making informed decisions and taking responsible actions through print, film, broadcast, or other media.

*All proposals MUST clearly identify which of the above the proposal will focus on. You will NOT increase your chances of being funded by focusing on more than one of the above.* The terms used under Section III.N.2.a-f. are defined below.

The term *workshop* refers to training activities that prepare educators to utilize environmental education materials. Workshops may be directed toward young people and/or adults in formal and/or informal settings. (A formal setting is a school, college, university, or other similar institution devoted to learning; an informal setting may include a museum, nature center, park, or community center which may not be devoted to learning but often includes such activities). Workshops should emphasize a process, problem-solving, and investigative approach to learning, and use a "hands-on" approach to learning that leads to the development of problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

The term *building state, local, or tribal capacity* refers to the development and implementation of plans designed to improve the coordinated delivery of environmental education at the state, local, or tribal level. This should involve a coordinated effort by the primary environmental education providers from the respective state, local, or tribal government in the planning and implementation of the project (e.g., State Departments of Education or Natural Resources, local school districts, and state, local, and tribal environmental education coordinating councils). Examples of how to build state, local, or tribal capacity include the development of plans for:

- identifying and assessing needs as well as setting priorities;
- creating grant programs or identifying funding sources for environmental education providers; and/or
- identifying environmental education teacher training needs.