



General Grant Program Guidelines 2013 Revised, July 2013



Office of Environmental Education
Lazarus Government Center
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049
(Visitors: 50 W. Town Street, Suite 700, Columbus, Ohio 43215)
Phone (614) 644-2873
Fax (614) 728-1275
Email: oeef@epa.state.oh.us
Web Site: <http://epa.ohio.gov/oeef/EnvironmentalEducation.aspx>
Grant Management System: <https://ebiz.epa.ohio.gov>

Environmental Literacy

The purpose of the Ohio Environmental Education Fund is to improve environmental literacy in Ohio.

Objective environmental education is the key to ensuring this literacy. Goals of environmental education include:

- increasing awareness and understanding of natural and human-made environments;
- fostering attitudes that value the environment;
- developing skills for identifying and addressing issues; and
- cultivating a commitment for personal action.

OVERVIEW

The OEEF created by the General Assembly is administered by the Director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) and provides approximately \$1 million annually in grants to support environmental education efforts within the state of Ohio. The OEEF derives its monies from one-half of the civil penalties collected from violations of Ohio's air and water pollution control regulations.

The OEEF funds education projects that target three audiences: (1) the general public; (2) the regulated community and (3) pre-school through university students and teachers.

The policies and programs of OEEF are developed through the collaborative efforts of a 12-member Advisory Council, and agency administrative staff.

NEW EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2013

Ohio EPA is interested in using OEEF funds to support projects that are closely linked to the Agency's overall priorities and efforts to protect Ohio's Environment. For the April and July 2013 grant cycles, we are primarily interested in funding projects related to three of the most pressing current environmental issues confronting the state. **Proposals for projects addressing other environmental education topics will only be considered for funding after proposals targeting these three highest-priority issues have been considered.**

1. **Improving air quality and efforts to reduce emissions.** Fundable projects might include efforts to work with local officials or organizations to encourage alternative public transportation initiatives or similar public awareness campaigns.
2. **Using innovative practices to limit the volume and pollution of storm water runoff in order to improve water quality in receiving streams and rivers.** Fundable projects might include efforts to persuade developers, site designers, local officials, businesses and residents to use options such as permeable pavement, vegetated roofs and swales, rain gardens and rain barrels, passive treatment trains, storm water

treatment wetlands, low-impact development techniques, sediment and erosion controls, and naturally functioning storm water infrastructure.

- 3. Reducing nutrient loadings to Ohio's streams and lakes, to improve water quality and prevent Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs).** Fundable projects might include efforts to persuade local communities, businesses, agricultural producers, livestock operations, golf courses and other entities to adopt nutrient management projects, sediment control projects (filter areas), controlled drainage water management systems, livestock exclusion and manure management, conservation crop rotation projects with cover crops, riparian re-vegetation/protection projects, and alternative technologies such as anaerobic digesters; efforts to persuade businesses and residents to maintain septic systems and apply lawn and garden fertilizers responsibly; and efforts to educate the public about the causes, dangers and prevention of HABs.

Additional educational priorities for 2013 include:

Business Innovation: helping regulated entities, and particularly small business, understand and comply with Ohio's environmental laws and regulations

Community Outreach: designing and implementing model projects to educate the public about technical aspects of environmental issues or environmental health issues in their communities. In addition to the three highest-priority issues outlined above, Ohio EPA is interested in supporting education efforts related to source water protection, brownfields cleanup and redevelopment, and endorsed watershed plans. Copies of all state endorsed watershed action plans may be found at the following Ohio DNR ftp site:

[ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil & Water Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/](ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil%20&%20Water%20Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/)

In addition, Ohio EPA will consider educational efforts which highlight human health threats from environmental pollution, and how to minimize human exposure to preserve good health. Issues of current priority to Ohio EPA include reduction of ozone precursors, airborne particulates, waterborne diseases and toxic chemicals such as mercury in the environment. The OEEF prefers not to fund projects that focus primarily on human health without a strong environmental component. Anti-smoking and tobacco education programs are not appropriate for this grant program.

Energy Innovation: education about energy efficiency and conservation, alternative fuels and energy sources, and green building principles. OEEF is not able to fund actual energy saving infrastructure, though, for example, interpretive exhibits or signage with real-time display of a building's energy use would be eligible for funding.

OEEF GRANT APPLICATION POLICIES

Deadlines/Review Dates

There are two grant application deadlines each year, one in the spring and the fall. (When these fall on a holiday or a weekend, the deadline moves to the next business day.)

Awarded projects cannot commence until approximately four months from the deadline date due to the time required for review and fiscal administration of the grants. Applicants must incorporate the schedule below when planning project activities.

Letter-of-Intent Deadline	Completed Application Deadline	Ohio EPA staff/peer review	Council Review	Ohio EPA Director Decision	Earliest Start Date
March 26, 2013	April 2, 2013	April 3 - 30	May 1-16	May 31	July 1, 2013
July 18, 2013	July 25, 2013	July 26 – September 6	September 9 - 25	Oct. 31	Dec. 1, 2013

Applicant Eligibility

Any organization based in Ohio (e.g., public or private, tax-exempt or proprietary associations, formal or non-formal educational) or governmental agency. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

General Grant Amounts and Project Duration

General grants are awarded for projects costing between \$5,000 and \$50,000. Please **round off all requests to the nearest dollar amount**. Grant terms are for 24 months but we encourage projects to be completed within **12 months** of the start date.

Multiple or Repeat Proposals

An applicant may not submit more than one application during a grant cycle. **No organization will be awarded more than one grant at a time, or during a twelve-month period.** Grant recipients should complete all obligations of their current grant, including submittal of final reports, before applying for another grant. Due to limited resources, OEEF does not extend projects beyond the identified grant period. OEEF prefers to provide seed money to initiate new projects or to advance existing projects that are expanding in some significant way. No organization will be awarded more than three grants.

ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

OEEF Does Not Fund:

- basic research such as data collection, surveys, and stipends for researchers
- beautification projects or landscaping
- fund raising or membership drives
- food or beverages
- grants, scholarships, stipends or fellowships to be given by the OEEF grant recipient to a third party. Grant funds may be used to pay for substitute teachers to enable teachers to participate in OEEF-funded field trips. Grant funds may also be used to provide classroom supplies to enable teachers to implement new programs, but not to provide cash payments to teachers for these supplies. Grant funds may not be used to pay for graduate credits that participants may earn at these events. Grant funds may not be used to provide services such as septic system cleanouts to project participants at a discounted cost.
- Pass-throughs of cash or incentive prizes to project participants
- indirect costs, general operations, or overhead charges: e.g., rent, utilities, monthly phone charges. Individual long distance phone calls related to the project are eligible.
- political advocacy, campaigning, legislative lobbying, or litigation programs
- real estate acquisitions or due diligence research related to such acquisitions
- construction activities including building construction, improvements to existing structures, wetlands construction, or the rental or purchase of heavy equipment
- reimbursement for the expense of any time, supplies or equipment purchased prior to the effective start date of the signed grant agreement
- staff salaries greater than 10% of the total amount of grant funds requested (grant funds requested to pay staff benefits and contractual salary/benefits will be included in this 10% cap)
- applications from entities who have defaulted on the performance of grant commitments on prior OEEF-funded projects
- travel expenses (e.g. lodging/mileage in or out of state, vehicle rentals).

In developing their proposals, grant applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the OEEF's preferred characteristics for regulated community, general public and pre-school to university projects. These characteristics are posted on the <http://epa.ohio.gov/oee/EnvironmentalEducation.aspx> Website. Note that any K-12 education projects in formal settings must also provide specific examples showing how student learning activities align with the Ohio Department of Education's Academic Content Standards, posted at <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?Page=2&TopicID=1695&TopicRelationID=1696>

OEEF APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Applications will undergo three levels of review: by the Ohio EPA staff, the OEEF Advisory Council and Ohio EPA director, who consider the application in light of the OEEF's overall funding priorities and other applications submitted that cycle.

Ohio EPA Staff Review

Applications will be reviewed for completeness by the OEEF staff, using the "OEEF Staff Review Checklist". The OEEF staff has also been directed by the OEEF Advisory Council to assign extra points to proposals that provide a stronger match than the required 10%; and proposals that demonstrate strong collaboration. Proposals will also be reviewed by additional Ohio EPA staff with appropriate substantive expertise, using the "OEEF Peer Review Checklist".

OEEF Advisory Council

The OEEF Council consists of 12 members, assigned by statute and appointed by elected officials to represent various constituencies. The Council members advise and assist the director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency in grant funding decisions. Proposals the Council recommends for funding are forwarded to the director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Director of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

The director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency provides the final review of grant applications. Council meeting minutes are forwarded with the applications that are recommended for funding. All decisions of the director are final.

FILLING OUT THE ONLINE APPLICATION

Applications must be submitted electronically through OEEF's online Grant Management System (GMS). OEEF no longer accepts paper applications. Applicants will find information on the OEEF and previously funded grant projects on Ohio EPA's website, at <http://www.epa.ohio.gov/oeef> . The online software for applying for a grant is located at <https://ebiz.epa.ohio.gov>

Applications are submitted to the OEEF through a two-step process. First, the applicant creates an account in the eBusiness Center, located at: <https://ebiz.epa.ohio.gov>. The applicant then fills out an electronic **letter of intent** (LOI) to apply for a grant. This letter is a short form requesting contact information, the amount of funds requested, and a few questions about the target audience, location, and content of the proposed project. Once the LOI is submitted, the applicant will receive an e-mail saying whether or not it is approved. If it is approved, the applicant can begin the second step, filling in the sections of the **application**. The applicant can use the "save" buttons, log out of the system, and return to work on the application when convenient. The draft application will remain open for edits until the applicant uses the "submit" buttons to submit the various sections of the final proposal. Once

an applicant has hit the “submit” button in any section of the application, that section is locked against further edits. Prior to the application deadline, the applicant may call or email the the Office of Environmental Education to request that their application be “unlocked”, but please understand that this may take several hours or overnight.

General grant application settings limit the number of characters that can be entered in the project description. *All* parts of the proposal must be entered into the appropriate section of the online application form. It is possible to “cut and paste” text from other software into some of the application sections, but other sections such as the budget and activities timeline must be entered directly. No attachments to the application should be uploaded except for a single electronic file containing all the signed letters of support and collaboration for the project, described below.

Please direct all inquiries regarding OEEF's grant program policies and procedures, or the status of a grant application, to the OEEF staff at (614) 644-2873 or oeef@epa.state.oh.us. Please contact the eBusiness Center help desk if you need assistance with your user ID or password at 1-877-372-2499.

PRE-REVIEW OF DRAFT APPLICATIONS

Applicants are encouraged to call the OEEF office to discuss project ideas early in the application process. OEEF staff members are happy to provide a formal pre-review of applications, to ensure that the application meets the guidelines, and to offer suggestions. Please complete the draft in the OEEF Grant Management System well ahead of the deadline, the earlier the better, in order to allow yourself adequate time to respond to staff suggestions and make changes. *Use the “save” buttons rather than the “submit” buttons if you wish to request a pre-review, so that you will still be able to make changes in response to suggestions.* OEEF staff members are only able to pre-review a proposal once, so please complete and “save” as much of the draft as possible before calling or e-mailing a request for a pre-review to the OEEF office.

Application Components

- Application Cover Sheet, with Audience Categories and Project Issues (This will initially be generated from your Letter of Intent, but you may make edits to change some of the information after you are issued a user ID and password)
- Executive Summary (write this *after* the rest of the application is complete)
- Project Description
 - Audience Need
 - Qualifications of Organization and Key Personnel
 - Continuation and Replication Plan for after the grant ends
 - (Sustainability)
 - Budget Narrative, providing explanatory details for items in the budget spreadsheet
- Budget (Both Grant and Match)
- Project Description
 - Objectives

- Activities
- Timeline for activities
- Outcome Measurements
- Applicant Contact Information (also generated from your Letter of Intent, but you will need to add additional contacts such as the fiscal agent for the grant)
- Uploaded pdf file with signed letters of collaboration and support (scanned from author's letterhead)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this Section, please provide an executive summary to provide an overview of the project being proposed. We strongly suggest that you prepare this section after finishing the rest of the application. Write in plain language such as you might use to describe your project to a family member. Be as concise as possible, and avoid professional jargon. After reading the executive summary, the reader should be able to clearly answer who will learn what, where, when, why, and how about this project. Don't forget to mention how many students or people are expected to participate. The Executive Summary should include at least a sentence or two on each of the following:

Audience Need. Provide a sentence or two about why the target audience needs this particular education project and how your organization is prepared to address this need.

Key Personnel. Provide a sentence or two explaining what type of organization you represent, and why you are qualified to carry out the proposed project.

Overall Project Objectives. Briefly describe what the project will accomplish in the proposed grant timeline. Define who and how many will benefit, what they will learn, and how this knowledge will benefit the community and the environment.

Major Activities. Briefly outline the types of activities that will carry out the above objectives.

Overall Cost. Give the total project cost, the amount to be funded from OEEF, and the amount of match provided from the applicant organization and from other sources.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION PART I

Audience Need

Provide documentation to show why the project is needed by the specific audience being targeted. State the need in terms of audience's need, NOT the applicant organization's. Describe how the need for the project was determined, and how meeting the need will meet the applicant organization's goals. Explain what benefits will result from meeting the need, and for whom. Demonstrate that the project will not duplicate other educational programs. The need statement should be expressed quantitatively whenever possible.

Example of a Need Statement for a General Public project: “The role of soil in storm water storage, erosion, septic system operation, stream sedimentation and flooding is often poorly understood by residents. The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) recently conducted a survey of soil knowledge among 485 local landowners at two community events. 61% reported that they did not know what type of soil they have on their property, yet 89% thought this knowledge would be important. This survey also reported that 80% of Franklin County landowners feel that increased information about soil properties would be helpful to them in making land use decisions that impact water quality in local streams. By providing information specifically on soils, the SWCD is fulfilling its own mission and supporting the efforts of multiple local jurisdictions in Franklin County to educate their residents about storm water management. These communities do not currently include soil-specific information in their public awareness materials.”

Example of a Need Statement for a Regulated Community or Industrial Sector project: “In a 2001 survey of our membership, 65% of the respondents admitted to having difficulty understanding which new storm water control regulations apply to them. Fifty percent said they would not be comfortable calling a regulatory agency to ask that question. By providing an easy-to-use toolkit to help industry managers determine their regulatory status, we will be fulfilling our mission of service to the members of our trade association, and helping them achieve regulatory compliance. Because our seminars will include hands-on troubleshooting tips from companies experienced with these rules, this program will augment the guidance documents available from state and federal regulatory agencies.”

Qualifications of Organization and Key Personnel

Qualifications establish the credibility of the organization, its partners, and persons directly involved in the proposed project. Describe your organization and how this project fits into your organization's long-range plan. Provide qualifications of key personnel by including brief biographical sketches within the narrative. Biographical sketches should include education, abilities, relevant experience working with the target audience, and relevant expertise in the environmental subject matter. Include experience on projects previously funded by the OEEF. Please provide a position description for staff not yet hired.

Continuation and Replication Plan (Sustainability and Transferability)

Describe what will happen to the project when the grant ends. Describe if and how your project could serve as a model that could be replicated by others for similar audiences. Discuss how you intend to share the results of your project with others, for example in newsletter articles, on the Web, or through presentations at professional meetings. Indicate careful consideration of the need for the project to continue, and whether continued reliance on future grant support will be needed.

Budget Narrative

Fill in this section AFTER you have completed the budget tab, providing any needed details to explain how the amounts listed in the line items of your application budget were calculated. Provide justifications to help reviewers understand the need for higher-cost equipment or other items.

BUDGET TAB

You may want to complete this section after you have completed the objectives and activities on the Activities Tab. Prepare your project budget using the format provided in the OEEF Grant Management System. Be sure the budget is realistic and appropriate to your objectives. **A 10% match in cash contributions from the applicant and/or other funding sources is required for all proposals.** Larger matches are encouraged to demonstrate the applicant organization's commitment to the project. Indicate the contributed amount on the lines provided. Double check to be sure the budget is accurate and consistent with the budget narrative. **Please round all amounts to the nearest dollar.**

Personnel:

Substitutes: Provide unit cost for substitute teachers. (Grant funds may be used to pay for substitute teachers to enable teachers to participate in OEEF-funded field trips.)

Non-Personnel:

You may use the definitions traditionally used by your organization when identifying expenditures under the supplies and equipment. OEEF generally regards supplies as consumables, and equipment as hardware.

Supplies: Itemize large quantity or higher priced items and provide unit price (e.g., rewritable CDs, 10 pkg. of 50 @\$122/ea). Some items may be grouped together and given a total price, but be sure to identify the items or give a title to the group of items (e.g., postage/envelopes; safety goggles/latex gloves). Vague entries such as "office supplies - \$500" will not be funded.

Equipment: Itemize and provide unit price (e.g., YSI model #55 handheld dissolved oxygen meters, 3 @ \$699/ea).

Printing: Itemize, provide number of copies & unit price (e.g., 1000 @ 50 cents/page = \$50.00).

Other: Provide line items that do not fit under Supplies, Equipment or Printing expenditures. List each item separately (e.g., Resource Guides) and provide unit price. Do not title an entry "Miscellaneous" or "Contingencies". OEEF funds cannot be used to pay for food or beverages of any kind.

Contractual:

Identify the service being provided, the name of the organization or individual providing the service, number of hours and hourly wage. Monies from the OEEF

grant cannot be used to cover indirect costs for contractual services. Any contractual services related to the grant shall not relieve the Grantee of any of its responsibility under the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement.

Indicate income to be generated from the proposed project, if any.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION PART II (ACTIVITIES TAB)

This section of the online application requires you to first name and enter a specific objective, then attach appropriate associated activities to that objective, filling in the expected start and end date for each activity, and the percentage of the overall project budget associated with each activity. You will also be asked to provide a short-term and long-term outcome measurement for the results of the objective. Your project may have more than one objective, depending upon which audiences are learning what. There may be more than one activity for each objective. In general, however, you should try to limit the number of objectives to keep the project focused and workable.

Objectives

Define what the project will accomplish specifically in terms of who will learn what. Define how the project will carry over to benefit the community and the environment. Explain how the project will meet one or more of OEEF's educational priorities. The *Guidelines for Excellence* recommend **SMART** objectives that are:

- **S**pecific,
- **M**easurable,
- **A**ppropriate to the audience,
- **R**elevant to the audience's needs, and
- **T**ime-bound.

Sample Objectives

Weak: Our after-school program will help children read better.

Better: Our after-school remedial education program will assist 50 children in improving their reading scores by one grade level as demonstrated on standardized reading tests administered after participating in the program for 6 months.

Example of an Objective for a General Public project: "The project seeks to increase residents' understanding of the relationship between improper land use practices and deteriorating water quality in Alum Creek, Blacklick Creek, and Big Walnut Creek, and the influence individuals can have on both. The proposed public awareness campaign will educate a potential audience of 15,000 county residents on strategies to address flooding, erosion, and dumping. The program will also encourage interaction between 2000 local residents and their streams through activities such as canoe floats, kick-seining, and stream cleanups. This project meets the OEEF education priority of community issues by supporting education related to the endorsed watershed plan for the Middle Scioto River."

Example of an Objective for a Regulated Community and Industrial Sector

project: “This project will develop and disseminate a matrix on the applicability of new storm water control regulatory requirements, to address the OEEF’s priority of compliance assistance. After comment by Ohio EPA regulatory staff, the matrix will be field tested by a group of 20 small company environmental compliance managers, to verify that at least 90% can use it to correctly identify the appropriate regulations. Then it will be presented to at least 350 similar managers of small companies in a series of regional workshops; promoted on our association Web site, and offered to at least two industry publications. We will survey workshop attendees after six months about the usefulness of the matrix in maintaining compliance with storm water regulations.”

Activities

Activities should be specific, sequential, reasonable for accomplishing the objective, and appropriate for the age of the audience. They should also be relevant to real-world issues affecting, or affected by, Ohio citizens and regulated entities. Demonstrate that the project does more than disseminate information: show how learners will engage in hands-on activities, problem-solving, and/or skill-building. Explain how the activities will utilize or adapt already existing environmental education materials. If new materials must be developed, provide a justification. Include what steps will be taken to ensure that the project information is scientifically valid and unbiased, and that more than one point of view is being presented.

Timeline: Enter a start date and stop date for each activity. Please keep in mind, activities being paid for with OEEF grant money cannot be initiated until the lead organization has a signed grant agreement. It can take up to several weeks from the date a grant award is announced until the agreement is signed.

Outcome Measurements

For each objective, describe the means of measuring the *initial* outcome of the project. Detail the methodology used to determine whether objectives were achieved, and how the project’s *long-term* effects will be monitored and measured. What indicators of success will be used, and who will be conducting the evaluation?

CONTACT INFORMATION (CONTACT TAB)

This section of the online application form will initially be filled in automatically from the information you provided in your letter of intent. You may add or remove contacts from this section. Each application should list contact information for the Project Director, Fiscal Agent and the Authorizing Agent .

Project Director: *the person with primary responsibility for carrying out the project*

Fiscal Agent: *This is the person with primary responsibility for managing grant funds, who will assist the project director in preparing all required expenditure reports.*

Authorizing Agent: *This is the individual who will sign the Grant Agreement contract on behalf of the recipient organization.*

SUBMITTING THE FINAL VERSION OF YOUR APPLICATION

Use the “save” buttons in each section of the online application for as long as you are still making edits, and if you wish for the OEEF staff to pre-review your draft application. Once you have made all the changes you wish to make to the draft, check “yes” that you have completed that section in each section of the application to submit and lock that portion of the application. Review the checklist on the Application Summary tab of the online application to be sure that you have completed each section of the proposal and uploaded your letters of support and collaboration. Then use the “Submit Application” button on the Application Summary tab of the online application to submit and lock the final version of your application. Once this final version of the application has been submitted, you will receive an email message confirming receipt of your application.