

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Conservation Education Program (CEP) Manual

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SECTION 1 – OVERVIEW

1.1 Legislative Authority

The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Act of 1989 established as one of its key provisions the Conservation Education Program (CEP) Board. Annually, the CEP Board is responsible for allocating \$350,000 in grants for conservation education. This publication is intended to provide additional information and guidance as you develop a grant application.

The five members of the CEP Board, as required by law, are appointed, one each, from the state departments of education and natural resources, the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards, Iowa Association of Naturalists, and Iowa Conservation Education Coalition. The Department of Natural Resources provides staff to carry out the duties of the board. The REAP Act recognizes that environmental education is one of the long-term integrated efforts that is needed to conserve and protect Iowa's natural resources. It states the duties of the CEP Board are to: *“...revise and produce conservation education materials and specify stipends to Iowa educators who participate in innovative conservation education programs approved by the board.”*

1.2 Eligibility for Funds

Grant applications may be submitted by institutions of higher learning, government agencies including local school districts, nonpublic schools, area education agencies, organizations, and individuals with an Iowa residence. Preference shall be given to Iowa applicants.

1.3 Grant Application Options and Amounts

Applicants may apply for grants in two ways—through the CEP Standard Grant Program or through the Mini-Grant Program.

Standard Grant Program: Granted amounts are limited to total funds available but, for the standard application, generally do not exceed \$50,000. There is no low-end limit, but due to administrative costs, a minimum of \$3,501 is encouraged.

Mini-Grant Program: Awards in this grant program are limited to \$3,500 and shall not exceed 12 months in length. Established starting with the May 2013 grant round, the Mini-Grant application uses a simplified application and there are fewer grant expectations than with the standard proposal. Grant applicants and awardees must define project success and explain how they will measure success. Reporting requirements are the same as the CEP Standard Grant Program (as outlined in this manual).

SECTION 2 – PURPOSE & PROCESS

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the CEP is to **fund projects with measurable results that engage Iowans with natural resources, benefitting Iowa's environment and its citizens.**

2.2 Definitions

According to the North American Association for Environmental Education (<https://www.naaee.net/what-is-ee>), “EE teaches children and adults how to learn about and investigate their environment, and to make intelligent, informed decisions about how they can take care of it.

“EE is taught in traditional classrooms, in communities, and in settings like nature centers, museums, parks, and zoos. Learning about the environment involves many subjects—earth science, biology, chemistry, social studies, even math and language arts—because understanding how the environment works, and keeping it healthy, involves knowledge and skills from many disciplines.

“EE not only leads to environmentally literate people, but also helps increase student academic achievement.”

2.3 Conservation Education Guidelines

It is a goal of CEP to help initiate long-term EE programs. Each component requires its own proposal, which must stand on its own strengths. Grants approved one year do not guarantee approval of follow-up grants in subsequent years.

2.4 Public Communications Required

In carrying out the work of a grant, applicants are required to include public communications as an activity of their projects. Public communication may include but is not limited to: local, regional or statewide news releases and newsletter articles; social media; presentations; one-on-one communication to/with target audience(s); and/or to/with other audiences (i.e., other teachers, administrators, peers in environmental education, elected officials such as legislators and the REAP Assembly; community leaders; the general public). The goals of communication are to market program activities to potential audiences, to transfer good ideas to EE colleagues, and to inform the public of your project and REAP CEP.

Once a grant is awarded, the CEP Board and/or the CEP Contract Monitor may provide ideas for additional communications activities. In addition, the CEP Board

and/or the CEP Contract Monitor may participate in a public communications activity with the grantee.

Public communications activities are not expected to require significant, if any, costs, but are expected to further the values of conservation education. Among other information, the public communications activities will include an explanation of REAP being a/the source of funding for the grant (i.e., "Funded by the Resource Enhancement and Protection Conservation Education Program (REAP CEP)"). When possible, the following additional information should be included in public communications efforts: "Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP): Invest in Iowa, our outdoors, our heritage, our people. REAP is supported by the state of Iowa, providing funding to public and private partners for natural and cultural resource projects, including water quality, wildlife habitat, soil conservation, parks, trails, historic preservation and more." Go to <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/REAP/REAPFundingatWork/ConservationEducation.aspx> for a downloadable copy of the REAP logo.

2.5 Partnerships Strongly Encouraged

Partnerships extend the reach of projects. For example, they may nudge grantees to expand the scope of their thinking to include partners' needs.

By doing this, long-term relationships may be built with partners, and between partners and the audiences served. A teacher training workshop sponsored by a university might be enhanced by linking with local experts. In that way, teachers from the area served establish relationships with local contacts. Partners also establish relationships with educators.

This may help extend the scope of the project beyond the grant contract period. Examples of potential partners for a water quality effort include DNR's IOWATER and River Clean-Up projects, water treatment facilities, Iowa Academy of Science's Project WET and *many other organizations* involved in water quality.

Partnerships need not be limited to Iowa-based organizations. For example, national water quality organizations may be willing to provide free educational materials, speakers or other valuable tools to contribute to a project. Cooperative arrangements such as these are highly encouraged.

Finally, when possible, networking between granted projects is expected. A list of recent grants awarded (and therefore potential partners) may be found at

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/REAP/REAPFundingatWork/ConservationEducation.aspx>

2.6 Project Sustainability

Sustainability--how the objectives of projects live beyond their grant periods--is an important criteria for grant selection. Components of sustainability include:

- Fostering deeper learning that leads to stewardship
- Fostering new audiences
- Creating new partners
- Identifying future, non-CEP funding

2.7 Evaluation: Behavior/Knowledge Changes

Evaluation of behavior and knowledge changes is an important part of REAP CEP standard grant applications and grant reports. Applicants are asked to explain in their proposals what they expect the intended audience to know or do at the conclusion of the project. More information about evaluation is available at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/REAP/REAPFundingatWork/ConservationEducation.aspx>

2.8 Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Eligible Expenses

The following types of items are eligible for grant funds:

- Salaries and fringe benefits (calculation rates must be included)
- Travel (no more than \$.39 per mile for personal vehicles)
- Supplies (consumable during grant period)
- Specific computer software
- Fees for computer networking
- Other necessary expenses such as stipends to attend training sessions, fees for use of facilities, etc.

Ineligible Expenses

The following items are not allowed for grant funding:

- Computer hardware, including modems
- All audiovisual equipment, including cameras
- Equipment
- Construction, renovation and remodeling
- Out of state travel (unless approved by the Board)
- Development of outdoor classrooms at schools (e.g., signage, prairie seed, fencing, tools)
- Land
- Indirect costs in excess of 10 percent

No matching funds are required, though partnerships are strongly encouraged.

2.9 Review Process

Proposals will be evaluated by the five-member REAP CEP Board. Each Board member will be eligible to vote

on the proposal unless they represent the agency or organization that submitted the proposal.

Grant awards will be determined by the scoring system outlined in the Mini-Grant and the Standard Grant Application Forms.

REAP CEP Board reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received.

2.10 Award Process

Awards will be made according to Board approval and fund availability, and are generally announced in June and December.

All projects must identify a starting and ending date. Once a grantee learns of an award, the grantee may choose to start the project at the grantee's own risk before the grantee has an executed grant agreement. It must be understood that in the event the grant agreement should not be executed, the grantee would assume full responsibility for all incurred expenses and activities. Should an organization not wish to start the project without a fully executed grant agreement, *choose a start date after July 31 or December 31.*

Once the grant agreement is fully executed, reports will need to be submitted. Reimbursement reports for money spent must be maintained. Money will be dispersed and records will be kept in accordance with DNR policy.

Administering organizations will be required to keep all project related records for three years after the grant agreement expires. These records are to be available for audit by the state.

2.11 Reporting Requirements

All midterm and final reports shall use the report forms available at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/REAP/REAPFundingatWork/ConservationEducation.aspx> Reports are to be submitted by their due dates (as outlined in grantees' grant agreements) and emailed to the REAP CEP Coordinator.