

The Gray Family Foundation

Invites Proposals for the

2015 Environmental Education Program

Grant Deadlines for Three Project Categories

Environmental Professional Development for K-12 teachers and volunteer mentors

Thursday, January 15th, 2015 - Grants awarded in May

Outdoor School Programs for 5th and/or 6th grade students

Monday, June 15th, 2015 - Grants awarded in September

Community Field Trips for 5th through 8th grades

Wednesday, July 15th, 2015 - Grants awarded in October

Approximately \$750,000 will be available for the 2015 grant cycle. The average grant size is \$13,500.

Statement of Purpose

Since 2007, the Gray Family has supported students and teachers in connecting with outdoor environments through a variety of environmental literacy experiences. The Environmental Education Program seeks to encourage a strong local land ethic, sustainable communities, and stewardship of the natural environment by citizens throughout Oregon. The Foundation is committed long term to institutionalizing a series of age-appropriate experiences that build a sense of place and responsibility toward Oregon and the region.

Funding Goals for the Environmental Education Program

- Strengthening and developing programs that provide outdoor experiences for youth from early childhood through grade 12.
- Creating, expanding, and improving programs that connect schools with their communities and provide students with practical hands-on experience in addressing environmental issues both locally and globally.
- Supporting programs committed to creating comprehensive, significant lasting change in educational systems, fostering improved understanding of and interaction with our natural systems.
- Encouraging programs that explore and integrate boundaries between art and science and connect creativity with the natural environment.

In addition to promoting quality environmental literacy outcomes in the following three categories, the GFF looks at projects that bring greater levels of equity, diversity, and inclusion to their programs. We look for environmental education that encourages student engagement at a crucial time for student development and include the following practices:

- trained, qualified, and consistent staff who provide safe outdoor experiences for youth;
- developmentally appropriate curriculum;
- culturally appropriate materials; and
- effective outreach to parents.

Three Project Category Descriptions

Environmental Professional Development for K-12 teachers and volunteer mentors

Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000 per year will be awarded for one year to non-profits, schools, and government agencies that provide professional development for teachers and volunteer mentors in sustainability-related topic areas.

The foundation will give preference to:

- Projects that introduce teachers and volunteer mentors to, and further educate them about, the field of sustainability.
- Programs that train teachers and volunteer mentors so that they can effectively employ experiential, outdoor focused, place-based, and inquiry-based learning.
- Programs that encourage teachers and volunteer mentors to lead and mentor projects promoting sustainability in their schools and communities.
- Programs that strengthen civic responsibility in communities, especially around issues of environmental sustainability and restoration.

Overnight, Residential Outdoor School Programs for 5th and/or 6th grade students

Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000 per year will be awarded for one year to non-profits, schools, and government agencies. Grants provide fifth and/or sixth grade students in Oregon with an outdoor-oriented educational, residential, experiential, interdisciplinary experience that engages the senses and employs recognized best practices.

The foundation will give preference to:

- Programs 5 days in length.
- Programs that give scholarships to students in need (every student able to participate) and programs of schools exhibiting high need (i.e., Free and Reduced Lunch).
- Programs that engage college or high school students as mentors.
- Programs that have extensive community support and well-developed partnerships.
- Programs that incorporate pre- and post-trip curriculum work.
- Programs that assess both short- and long-term changes in participants' understanding of required standards, natural systems, and environmental literacy.

Community Field Trips for 5th through 8th grades

Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000 per year will be awarded for one year to non-profits, schools, and government agencies that provide field trips and community experiences promoting environmental literacy.

The foundation will give preference to:

- Initiatives to improve curricula about land use planning, Oregon history and Oregon geography.
- Organizations and schools that provide field trips to learn about community infrastructure designed to protect our communities and ecosystems.
- Organizations that create and maintain community natural places located within public transportation districts or that are within biking or walking range of schools.
- Projects that help students, families and their communities understand, interact with and support school and community gardens and local farms and food systems.
- Projects that allow students to engage with the environment through local stewardship experiences and encourage youth involvement in stewardship projects.

Application Information

GFF makes grants to schools, government agencies, and nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations. Please refer to our website at www.grayff.org for examples of recent successful projects and amounts granted.

All grant applications are accepted through an online system which will be available via a link on our website three months prior to each grant deadline.

Environmental Professional Development applications will be accepted starting Friday **November 14th, 2014**.

Outdoor School applications will be accepted starting **April, 15th, 2015**.

Community Field Trips applications will be accepted starting **May 15th, 2015**.

Evaluation Requirements

The Gray Family Foundation values the process of evaluation. In an effort to support the abilities of our grantees to conduct evaluations of their projects and programs, the GFF requires a two-step evaluation process.

1. Upon notification of an award and prior to check distribution, grantees must submit an Evaluation Framework proposal specific to their grant category.
2. After the project is complete, and within 1 year of grant award, grantees must submit an Evaluation Report Form in order to be considered for future funding.

The Evaluation Framework should take applicants at least 2 hours to complete. To give you a sense of what type of information is required, please review the objectives listed below. Grantees will choose at least 2 – 4 of the following objectives as part of their evaluation tracking:

Part I (Choose at least one objective from #1-3)

As a result of the program or curriculum, the number of...

1. ...individuals participating in nature-oriented experiences will increase.
2. ...teachers and volunteer mentors who lead projects promoting sustainability and stewardship in their schools and communities will increase.
3. ...youth involved in stewardship projects (e.g., habitat restoration, water and energy conservation, school gardening, reduction of ecological footprints) will increase.

Part II (Choose at least one objective from #4-10)

As a result of the program or curriculum, participants will increase their...

4. ...ability to strengthen civic responsibility in Oregon communities (e.g., around issues of environmental sustainability and restoration).
5. ...geographic understanding of Oregon (e.g., connections between social, cultural, and economic systems and the physical environment, physical and human characteristics of places and regions, land use and settlement patterns, connections between local, regional and global communities, resource distribution and use).
6. ...understanding of how community infrastructure (e.g., landfills, wastewater treatment plants), food systems (e.g., school gardens, community gardens, local farms), and land use planning can help to protect our communities and ecosystems.
7. ...appreciation of the natural world and human relationships to it especially in the Pacific Northwest.
8. ...understanding of natural systems and how humans are interconnected to these systems.

As a result of the program, teachers and volunteer mentors will increase their...

9. ...ability to lead projects (e.g., service learning, stewardship) promoting sustainability in their schools and communities.
10. ... ability to align and integrate effective experiential, outdoor focused, place-based, and inquiry-based learning into the curriculum.

Required evaluation documents and additional guidelines are available on the GFF [website's evaluation page](#).

Questions?

More information about GFF grants programs, application processes, and evaluation requirements can be found on our website www.grayff.org.

If you have other questions, you may contact the Gray Family Foundation at 503.552.3500 or grants@grayff.org.