



## Funding Request Letters for Outdoor School Guidance for 2024

### Statement of Purpose

From 2014 to 2017, Gray Family Foundation invested in the successful effort to secure state funding to support outdoor school programs. In November 2016, Oregon became the first state in the country to fund a full week of outdoor education with the passage of Measure 99. In July 2017, Governor Kate Brown signed into law a bill providing \$24M in funding for the next biennium to support 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to attend outdoor school. Oregon State University Extension (OSU Extension) is tasked with allocating these secured funds to support this statewide program through grant awards to school districts and education service districts (ESDs). In the last several years, OSU Extension has also been able to offer grants to districts, outdoor school program providers, and camp facilities to support efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion and build capacity of districts, programs, and sites to more effectively serve all types of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. To learn more about these funds, please visit OSU Extension's Outdoor School site at <https://outdoorschool.oregonstate.edu/>.

Despite the availability of these funds, Gray FF recognizes that not all schools and communities are prepared or eligible to directly apply for programmatic funding from OSU Extension Outdoor School. The Gray Family Foundation's Outdoor School Grant Program seeks to increase the capacity of schools and outdoor school providers to deliver high quality outdoor school experiences to all Oregon 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Because of our investments, we anticipate:

- more districts and ESD's will apply for outdoor school programmatic funding from OSU Extension in future years,
- improved access to outdoor school programs for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> students throughout the state,
- systematic integration of environmental education in the K-12 system will increase,
- outdoor school providers will be more prepared to effectively engage and support the diverse populations of Oregon,
- the outdoor school experience will increasingly reflect the diverse perspectives, knowledge and relationships all people in Oregon bring as stewards of their natural and built environments.

### Eligibility

We will consider proposals submitted by schools, districts, colleges, government agencies or 501(c)3 non-profit organizations serving Oregon. Any sponsored program provider activities should align with the applying organization's mission. For additional questions, [please contact Gray FF staff](#).

### Scope of Requests Sought

In 2024, Gray Family Foundation is accepting three types of funding requests in support of outdoor school. **Please note that 2024 is likely the last year Gray Family Foundation will be offering outdoor school-specific funding support.** We continue to encourage providers, schools, districts to engage with and leverage the funds and grants available via Measure 99 through OSU Extension Service Outdoor School. If you are a private/independent school please review the guidance below around exploring accessing Measure 99 funds before submitting a request:

- **Planning grants for schools or districts.** These grants will support the planning required to launch or revise an outdoor school program in geographic regions or amongst communities currently with limited or no outdoor school opportunities. Schools, districts or ESDs can submit a request for a planning grant to support launching an outdoor school program with the intention of applying for programmatic funding from OSU Extension Service Outdoor School in the future.
- **Planning grants for outdoor school program providers.** Current or prospective outdoor school program providers may request funds to plan how to better serve all 5th and 6th grade Oregon students. Specifically, Gray FF seeks to increase the capacity of program providers to deliver high quality, culturally responsive programming to better serve all Oregon communities.
- **Program grants to schools or student groups currently ineligible to apply for OSU Extension Service Outdoor School funding.** Gray FF acknowledges that there are limitations of how OSU Extension Service funds may be distributed which may exclude private, charter and home school students from eligibility. In the past several years there have been solutions developed in collaboration with ESDs and public schools that allow independent and charter schools to access Measure 99 funds. *Gray FF will still accept requests for programmatic grants to help these students participate in the outdoor school experience but encourages schools to first explore alternative options with their local ESD or public school system.*

A planning grant may be used to support any necessary activities to launch or revise an outdoor school program which may include but is not limited to: identifying school, district and community needs and opportunities for outdoor school; program planning; curriculum development; partnership development; staff/volunteer development; and other activities to lay the foundation for implementing a successful outdoor school program.

Gray FF is interested in reviewing proposals for a range of funding levels that best support the scope of work required. If proposing developing and launching a new outdoor school program, please ensure that there is potential demand for a program in your region and reflect that in your proposal (i.e. schools/districts actively interested in the proposed program).

Funding is not eligible for requests that include:

- delivery of outdoor school programming for districts and ESDs eligible through OSU-Extension funding; please refer to [OSU-Extension funding](#) for this purpose
- program delivery support for program providers
- summer camps, day camps, etc.

- planning outdoor school experiences that will serve students outside the targeted 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grades
- capital campaigns, site improvements or acquisitions of land
- deficit funding
- elimination of operating deficits
- annual fund appeals or endowment funds
- religious activities
- grants or loans to individuals

### Application Process

Eligible institutions should submit a letter of interest (2 pages maximum) and a budget of applicable expenses for consideration to [grants@grayff.org](mailto:grants@grayff.org) with subject line: "OUTDOOR SCHOOL LOI-Applicant Name"

Specific questions/elements to address in your letter of interest (required):

1. A cover sheet that includes:
  - a. Organization/School/District Name:
  - b. Contact Person:
  - c. Phone:
  - d. Address:
  - e. Email Address:
  - f. Tax ID:
  - g. Note: If you have a fiscal sponsor, please include a letter from the fiscal sponsor acknowledging they are willing to manage funds for this project.
2. Are you requesting a planning or program grant?
3. Amount of money you are requesting and the total project budget.
4. **What?** What does outdoor school mean to your organization or community? Describe the current and historical status and/or model of outdoor school in your region.
5. **Why?** Why do you need support for outdoor school? Include any persistent boundaries/challenges, emerging opportunities, cultural/regional contexts, and other relevant factors. If you are a school, district or ESD, please include why you do not feel prepared to apply directly to OSU-Extension for programmatic funds at this time.
6. **How?** How do you anticipate approaching either planning, revising or delivering (as applicable) an outdoor school experience? Please describe the activities that will be supported with Gray FF funds.
7. **Who?** Who will be engaged in the planning process or program activities (as applicable)? And, who will benefit from this work?
8. If a school, district or ESD requesting a planning grant, when you would seek OSU-Extension programmatic funds?
9. Project budget, which includes but is not limited to (if applicable):
  - Personnel (e.g. staff, substitutes, etc.)
  - Services (e.g. contractors/consultants, staff development, etc.)
  - Travel (e.g. staff mileage, etc.)
  - Supplies & Equipment
10. Other revenue/funding for the requested project

- Contributed support (e.g. grants, business or individual donations, in-kind support, etc.)
- Earned support (e.g. fundraisers, fees, student/family contribution, etc.)

[Please contact Gray FF](#) for assistance or clarification on any part of the application process. If you require submitting your request in an alternative format other than described, please contact Gray FF staff.

### Outdoor School Grantee Expectations

**Utilize available support resources.** The [“Launching, Managing and Sustaining an Outdoor school Program”](#) guide provides excellent recommendations on approaching the planning and design of an outdoor school program. Gray FF staff and valued partners will also provide learning opportunities in varied formats to support grantees in the successful development of outdoor school programs. It is recommended that grantees utilize applicable opportunities and available resources to support the implementation of best practices in the design and delivery of outdoor school.

**Grant reporting.** Gray Family Foundation appreciates the opportunity to learn about your successes and lessons learned. At the end of your grant, you will be expected to submit documentation of final expenses and simple written grant report. Details are available on our website here. <https://grayff.org/grants/grantee-reporting/>.

### Grant Deadlines

The Gray Family Foundation Board of Directors meet four times annually to make decisions on Outdoor School grant requests. The grant review process begins after receiving a completed application and usually takes four to six weeks. If you have a time sensitive request, we generally recommend applying by the following dates and grant awards will be made until funds are fully expended.

Applications received no later than...	Will generally be considered in...
January 22	Mid-February
May 6	Late-May
August 9	Early-September
October 18	Mid-November

### Questions?

More information about Gray FF grant programs can be found on our website <http://www.grayff.org>

If you have other questions, you may contact the Gray Family Foundation at 503-552-3511 or [grants@grayff.org](mailto:grants@grayff.org).

**Anti-Discrimination Policy:** The Gray Family Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion, national origin, political or union affiliation, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected status recognized by local, state or federal law. Grant recipients must hold similar standards.