

KEY CHARACTERISTIC #4: PROGRAM DELIVERY RESOURCES

Nonformal environmental education programs require careful planning to ensure that well-trained staff, facilities, and support materials are available to accomplish program goals and objectives.

4.1) Assessment of Resource Needs.

The environmental education program has taken steps to ensure that staff, support materials, and facilities needed to conduct the program will be available.

What to look for:

- Resources needed to develop and implement the program have been clearly identified.
- Needed resources, both from within the organization and from its partners or clients, have been agreed to, and are available.

4.2) Quality Instructional Staff.

The planning and conducting of the environmental education program is based on a highly qualified and trained cadre of staff and volunteers.

What to look for:

- Background checks have been performed on prospective staff or volunteers, as appropriate.
- The competencies of program educators (staff or volunteers) have been assessed and it has been determined that they meet applicable competencies such as those outlined in NAAEE's *Guidelines for the Initial Preparation of Environmental Educators*. (See sidebar on next page.)
- The training needs of staff, volunteers, and other presenters or educators have been assessed. Training extends beyond subject

matter and technique, and includes safety and emergency preparedness, handling of disruptive behavior, need for objectivity and balance, etc.

- If needed, a training program for staff, volunteers, and other presenters or educators has been designed and implemented.
- Professional development and enrichment activities are available for staff and volunteers.
- A performance review system to evaluate staff and volunteers is included as part of the organization's personnel policies and procedures. The review system is drawn from and supports specific program goals and objectives.

4.3) Facilities Management.

Safe and appropriate facilities are available for the environmental education program.

What to look for:

- Needed facilities have been reserved or rented.
- Facilities and areas to be used for the program have been surveyed to ensure that there are no medical or safety hazards.
- Needed permits and permissions have been obtained.
- Facilities and grounds meet the letter and spirit of the American's with Disabilities Act.

4.4) Provision of Support Materials.

Effective environmental education programs require that adequate supplies and resources be on hand.

What to look for:

- Equipment, supplies, refills, etc., have been obtained or ordered with sufficient time before the program is scheduled to begin.

Summary of Guidelines for the Initial Preparation of Environmental Educators

Guidelines for the Initial Preparation of Environmental Educators provides a set of recommendations about the basic knowledge and abilities educators need in order to provide high-quality environmental education. Instead of offering fixed rules, these guidelines suggest a broad vision—a goal to work toward and a guide for professional and programmatic development.

Theme #1 – Environmental Literacy

Educators must be competent in the skills and understandings outlined in *Excellence in Environmental Education: Guidelines for Learning (K-12)*.

- 1.1 Questioning and analysis skills;
- 1.2 Knowledge of environmental processes and systems;
- 1.3 Skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues; and
- 1.4 Personal and civic responsibility.

Theme #2 – Foundations of Environmental Education

Educators must have a basic understanding of the goals, theory, practice, and history of the field of environmental education.

- 2.1 Fundamental characteristics and goals of environmental education;
- 2.2 How environmental education is implemented; and
- 2.3 The evolution of the field.

Theme #3 – Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator

Educators must understand and accept the responsibilities associated with practicing environmental education.

- 3.1 Exemplary environmental education practice;
- 3.2 Emphasis on education, not advocacy; and
- 3.3 Ongoing learning and professional development.

Theme #4 – Planning and Implementing Environmental Education Programs

Educators must combine the fundamentals of high-quality education with the unique features of environmental education to design and implement effective instruction.

- 4.1 Knowledge of learners;
- 4.2 Knowledge of instructional methodologies;
- 4.3 Planning for instruction;
- 4.4 Knowledge of environmental education materials and resources;
- 4.5 Technologies that assist learning;
- 4.6 Settings for instruction; and
- 4.7 Curriculum planning.

Theme #5 – Fostering Learning

Educators must enable learners to engage in open inquiry and investigation, especially when considering environmental issues that are controversial and require students to seriously reflect on their own and others' perspectives.

- 5.1 A climate for learning about and exploring the environment;
- 5.2 An inclusive and collaborative learning environment; and
- 5.3 Flexible and responsive instruction.

Theme #6 – Assessment and Evaluation

Environmental educators must possess the knowledge, abilities, and commitment to make assessment and evaluation integral to instruction and programs.

- 6.1 Learner outcomes;
- 6.2 Assessment that is part of instruction; and
- 6.3 Improving instruction.

For more information on the Initial Preparation Guidelines, go to www.naaee.org/npeee/new_ee.php

- Arrangements have been made for needed food, drinks, lodging, etc.
- Financial arrangements have been made to pay for food, entrance fees, supplies, etc., needed during the program and to collect applicable program charges.
- All equipment has been tested under conditions comparable to those likely during the program, and staff members are trained in its use and maintenance.

4.5) Emergency Planning.

A safe and effective environmental education program includes thorough emergency planning.

What to look for:

- Appropriate staff members have received training in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

- Staff members
 - know whom to contact for medical assistance and to report an emergency such as a fire, and they know where the nearest phone or radio is to make the contact.
 - have been trained to recognize poisonous animals and plants and how to avoid them.
 - have been trained to respond to all emergency situations they might reasonably be expected to encounter, such as missing persons.
- A system is in place to warn staff of severe weather (or other emergency situations) and staff members know where to go for shelter or how to evacuate.
- Participants have been provided with relevant information about the program, including level of physical activity, appropriate clothing, equipment needed, safety concerns, etc.

