



Federal Appropriations for Environmental Education

National Environmental Education Act Programs/ EPA Office of Environmental Education

Our Request

We urge Congress to appropriate \$9.5 million for fiscal year 2026 to this extremely successful and essential program. This is the amount is level with FY '25 appropriation. The National Environmental Education Act programs are situated in the EPA Office of Environmental Education, and support local and national environmental education initiatives.

Funding for the programs is set by both the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. We, along with much of the environmental and STEM education communities, strongly urge continued funding of these important programs.

FY 2026 appropriations support letter circulated by:

Rep. Joe Neguse (CO-2); contact for House staff: Abbie Callahan, Abbie.Callahan@mail.house.gov

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (NY); contact for Senate staff: Theo Miller, Theodore_Miller@gillibrand.senate.gov

The Case for National Environmental Education Act Programs

- The benefits of the program are aimed at local and regional communities, and there's a robust national sharing of best practices during and after the grant activities.
- Non-regulatory programs complement or replace other agency functions, with some projects aiming to remove the need for regulations by facilitating voluntary water and land stewardship by citizens and students.
- The NEEA programs completely integrate with and give context to STEM education in schools.
- The EPA grants are locally peer-reviewed and thoroughly evaluated, with only the top few percent of the many quality applications being funded.

The Individual National Environmental Education Act Programs

EPA Office of Environmental Education and Grant Program

The Environmental Education Grants Program supports environmental education projects that increase the public's awareness about environmental issues and provide them with the knowledge and skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. The program targets students, teachers, and citizens and has granted \$2–3 million annually via more than 3,500 grants since 1992.

<https://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-grant-descriptions> - Scroll down to filter by state

National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)

NEEF, the only Congressionally chartered nonprofit for environmental education, is a national leader in providing lifelong environmental learning. NEEF connects people to knowledge they can use to improve the quality of their lives and the health of the planet, focusing on areas the public easily connects with in everyday life—weather, work, health, nature, land, and education.

- Working with local broadcast meteorologists delivers environmental education messages on practical ways viewers can have a positive impact on the environment. Environmental education messages reach 90 million

households. 4.7 million Spanish-speaking households were reached with Spanish language environmental education messages.

- Working with businesses engages employees in sustainability practices throughout a company as part of everyday operations. NEEF employee engagement “best practices reports” were developed with 20 companies representing 4 million employees.
- Trained 50 health care providers as “nature champions,” who in turn trained over 1800 others. These professionals reach an estimated 300,000 patients and their families per year with the message that time outdoors is highly beneficial to their health. www.neefusa.org

EE360+ - Teacher Training and Capacity-Building for the Field.

The five-year initiative, ee360, strengthens the field by building infrastructure through leadership clinics, developing state certification programs, using technology, expanding access to resources, and understanding and communicating the value of environmental education. The project involves these leading partners: NAAEE, Antioch University, the Center for Diversity and the Environment, Earth Force, the NAAEE Affiliate Network, Project Learning Tree, Stanford University, University of Oregon, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM, National Park Service, NOAA, and U.S. Forest Service. The EPA Office of Environmental Education is a funder of this critical program through the National Environmental Education Training Program.

<https://naaee.org/programs/ee360>

The initial National Environmental Education Act of 1990 authorization sunsetted after five years, but Congressional champions and/or the President have inserted it as a line item every year since.

For More Information

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