

District of Columbia
Department of Energy and Environment



**NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY
AND
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

Nature Near Schools Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences - 2021
(Short name: NNS MWEE)
RFA # 2021-2114-WPD

Publication Date: 4/30/2021

Application Deadline: 6/14/2021 at 11:59 p.m.

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SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

The Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) solicits grant applications from eligible entities (called “Applicant” or “Applicants”). The goal of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to provide students and teachers at DC Public Schools (DCPS) and DC Public Charter Schools with [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience](#) (MWEE) programming focused on schoolyard assets and natural areas walking distance from school grounds or readily accessible within the District. DOEE is piloting the Nature Near Schools (NNS) MWEE program in SY21-22 in response to the health and safety restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This pilot is expected to be implemented for one school year, while the overnight MWEE program is paused due to pandemic restrictions. DOEE plans on integrating the best practices, identified through implementing the NNS pilot, into the Overnight MWEE when overnight programs are safe to resume.

DOEE has made \$300,000 available for this RFA and intends to make multiple awards. A project could be funded up to \$60,000. One grantee may receive more than one award. Each grantee is expected to implement a NNS program at three schools. An organization may apply for more than one grant if it has the capacity or partnerships to carry out programming for multiple awards. The Watershed Protection Division (WPD) of DOEE will administer this RFA.

1.2 Purpose of the Grant

The purpose of this grant is to continue DOEE's commitment to provide Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) to elementary and middle school students, ideally in third through fifth grade, enrolled in DC Public Schools (DCPS) and DC Public Charter Schools within the health and safety constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Nature Near Schools Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (NNS MWEE) program intends to offer District students the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time learning about their local watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay while immersed natural areas around and near the school. The program will be outdoor and hands-on for students and provide professional development for teachers, advance the integration of environmental literacy into classroom curriculum, and help prepare District students to be competitive in the green economy.

1.3 Source of Funds

The sources of funds for the grant are District of Columbia Anacostia River Clean Up and Protection Fund and USEPA Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant.

1.4 Competition for a Grant

This RFA is competitive. Each Applicant must demonstrate its ability to carry out the activities for the grant for which it applies (called a “project”). A review panel will evaluate the applications for each advertised grant according to the stated list of criteria in each project’s description. The most responsive application/s will be recommended for a grant.

Specifically, an award will be made based on eligibility (Section 1.6), the extent to which the proposed project fits within the scope and available funding of the grant, strength of the application, and the organization’s capacity to achieve the grant’s goals.

Each Applicant may submit more than one application with different projects. If an Applicant responds with more than one project, it must do so in a separate proposal and submit all corresponding required documents.

1.5 Projects and Funds Available

DOEE seeks applications for:

Project Name	Project Amount
Nature Near Schools Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences	\$300,000

1.6 Eligibility

The following are eligible to apply if an “x” appears:

- Nonprofit organizations, including those with IRS 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) determinations;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Government agencies;
- Universities/educational institutions; and
- Private Enterprises.

Other eligibility criteria: Participating schools must be DC Public Schools or DC Public Charter Schools.

Continuing conditions of eligibility are that the information in the application is complete and truthful and that the Applicant at all times is able to meet material conditions stated in its application. Ineligible applicants or applications will not be considered for review.

A material condition can be an eligibility condition or it can be some other condition that a reasonable DOEE evaluator would conclude is necessary to the Applicant's carrying out the proposed project.

For instance, an Applicant's nonprofit status was a condition of eligibility and the Applicant lost its nonprofit tax status. That would be a material change in condition, and would require immediate communication. Another example: Applicant's ability to fulfill the terms of the grant is based on the availability of skilled staff. DOEE awards the grant, and then these staff leave. The Applicant must immediately inform DOEE, and follow up in writing.

1.7 Definitions

District - The District of Columbia.

Grantee - The person provided a grant by the District, including a sub-grantee.

Person - A natural person or a legal entity, including a partnership, firm, association, joint venture, public or private corporation, trust, estate, commission, board, public or private institution, cooperative, the District government and its agencies, and the federal government and its agencies.

Writing - A tangible or electronic record of a communication or representation, including handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostat, fax, photography, word processing computer output, and e-mail. A "signed" writing includes an electronic symbol or process attached to, or logically associated with a writing, and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the writing.

1.8 Permissible Use of Grant Funds

A grantee may use grant funds only for allowable grant expenditures. Grant funds related to work performed will be provided on a reimbursement basis, except that, in limited circumstances, an advance of funds may be provided for grant administration expenses in limited circumstances for good cause approved by DOEE at its sole discretion. (*See* Parts 3.2(6)(A), 6.2; Appendix 1 Paragraph 10.g)

1.9 Grant Monitoring

In its sole discretion, DOEE may use several methods to monitor the grant, including site visits, periodic financial reports and the collection of performance data. Each grant is subject to audit.

1.10 General Terms and Conditions

Appendix 1, “General Terms and Conditions” is incorporated by reference in this RFA. Applicants and Grantees must comply with any and all applicable terms and conditions appearing in Appendix 1.

1.11 RFA Conditions - Promises, Certifications, Assertions, and Assurances

Appendix 2, “Applicant’s Promises, Certifications, and Assurances” (“PCA”), is incorporated by reference in this RFA.

1.12 DOEE’s Authority to Make Grants

DOEE has grant-making authority under:

- The Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard Act of 2004 (D.C. Law 15-340, D.C. Official Code §§ 34-1431-40), including § 34-1436(b) and (c)
- The Water Pollution Control Act of 1984, effective March 16, 1985, as amended, (D.C. Law 5-188; D.C. Official Code § 8-103.01 *et seq.*);
- The District Department of the Environment Establishment Act of 2005, effective February 15, 2006, as amended, (D.C. Law 16-51, D.C. Official Code § 8-151.01 *et seq.*);
- The Comprehensive Stormwater Management Enhancement Amendment Act of 2008, effective March 25, 2009, (D.C. Law 17-371; D.C. Official Code § 8-152.01 *et seq.*); and
- Other applicable laws and regulations.

1.13 Conflicts between RFA and Applicable Law

If any requirement of this RFA conflicts with a provision of any applicable law, including a District or federal law or regulation, the applicable legal provision shall control.

SECTION 2. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

2.1 RFA Release Date

The release date of this RFA is 4/30/2021.

2.2 Additional RFA Information

This RFA is issued on DOEE's website at <https://doee.dc.gov/page/grants-and-other-funding>.

The contact person for this RFA is Pri Ekanayake.

2.3 Applications: When and What

When: All applications must be received at the email address below by 11:59 p.m. on 6/14/2021

An application will be dated and recorded as "received" pending review by DOEE for completeness. DOEE considers an application to be "filed" only if all the required materials are submitted. A late or incomplete application will be considered received, not filed.

What: The contents of the Application are specified in Section 3. Each applicant must submit one electronic copy (e-mail) to formatted as a .pdf.

DOEE will not receive faxed copies.

2.4 Award Announcement

DOEE expects to notify each Applicant in writing of its award status within six to twelve weeks after the application due date.

2.5 Updates and Questions and Answers (Q & A)

Additional information may become available before the application is due. It is the Applicant's responsibility to stay up-to-date on the status and requirements of the grant for which it is applying.

DOEE welcomes questions seeking clarification of matters in this RFA. Questions about the RFA should be sent to with "RE: RFA 2021-2114-WPD" in the subject line.

DOEE will publish updates and Questions and Answers (Q&A) regarding the RFA at doee.dc.gov. DOEE will also create an email list to send updates and information regarding the

RFA. A person can be put on the email list by immediately emailing with the subject line “RE: RFA 2021-2114-WPD – Add me to the email list.”

DOEE will provide the information to those on the email list at the same time the information is uploaded to the DOEE website. DOEE will not mail out updates or Q&A materials.

The cutoff date for receipt of any questions is one week prior to the application deadline.

SECTION 3. APPLICATION CONTENT

3.1 Format

An application must be formatted as follows:

- (a) When printed the application would appear on 8 ½” x 11” paper with one-inch margins;
- (b) Limit each project description to 10 double-spaced pages. Budget tables, flowcharts, photographs, the work plan, and other supporting documentation may be attached in addition to the project description; and
- (c) Scan the document and all of the attachments as one file.

3.2 Application Content

DOEE intends to fund a project that will benefit the environment, and, in particular, the environment of the District. The application should use the following format and explain, in increasing levels of detail, how the Applicant will accomplish this.

(Note: Before drafting the application, please read the project description very carefully to see if there are restrictions for the DOEE grant. For instance, certain activities might be required to take place in the District or the scoring might give extra points to labor sourced in the District.)

(a) Cover Sheet

Include a cover sheet in the format specified in Appendix 3. Make certain that the funding amount requested on the cover sheet matches total amount requested in your budget and budget narrative.

(b) Project Summary

Provide a brief one paragraph summary that explains the project. Please place the summary on the cover page (see Appendix 3). DOEE will not count this cover page as part of the 10-page application limit.

(c) Project Description

Organize the Application’s 10-page section of your application in sections that follow the order of the criteria of the scoring box of Section 7. The review panel will seek an explanation of the following as they evaluate your application:

(1) Goals and Objectives

State how: (a) this project will benefit the environmental goal(s) described in Section 7, and (b) the goal(s) this project will advance. Typically a goal is long-term and diffuse. An objective is specific, and it will be discrete and identifiable. A project with one goal may have more than one objective. For example: The goal of a grant might be clean District rivers. Objectives of the application might be: implement a citywide recycling campaign; install trash traps.

(2) Target Audience

Identify the target audience. Whom will this project engage? Whom will this project benefit and how?

(3) Project Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes

Connect the funded activities to quantifiable outputs that produce desired outcomes. DOEE prefers projects that present quantifiable measures. This will show how the project will advance the goal(s) and meet the objective(s). This enables reviewers to evaluate what the proposed project will achieve if funded.

Activities describe how the objectives will be accomplished. A description of activities may include quantity, frequency, duration, and location. For example: “20 community members will participate in a single two-hour-long workshop. There will be a total of 10 workshops. The workshops will take place at community centers in the evening after typical workday hours.”

An **output** is a short-term quantifiable result that one or more activities achieve. DOEE will measure the outputs in order to determine if the grantee successfully implements the activities. For example: “At the end of the project period, 10 recycling workshops will be held, 200 community members will attend the workshops, and 25 social media posts will appear featuring information about recycling.”

A **project outcome** can be a short, medium, or long-term result. It can occur and/or continue during the project and after the project ends. It can be general in nature; or it can be quantifiable. A project can present multiple outcomes. Even if not quantifiable, DOEE may look for an outcome to show that the project is making progress toward achieving a goal.

For example: After several recycling workshops, this project will yield: (a) the Anacostia River will show substantially fewer floating recyclables by next spring, and (b) 60 % of workshop participants will increase their knowledge about where and what to recycle.

(4) Project Budget

You must submit a numeric budget and a separate budget narrative as part of your application package. For the numeric budget, DOEE strongly urges Applicants to use the budget template format provided (Appendix 4).

The budget narrative must explain and justify every line item in the numeric budget. The explanation should be thorough enough to allow a reviewer to understand why expenditure levels were chosen and how the line item amounts were derived. For example: “Personnel will be paid \$xx per hour times xx hours.”

The budget will be the basis for DOEE’s later evaluation of the project and payment requests. DOEE will require documentation for grant payments, and the entire grant will be subject to audit.

i. DOEE’s standard policy on reimbursements vs. advances

In the overwhelming majority of cases, DOEE’s policy is to reimburse supported, approved, and allowable expenses. If the Applicant seeks an advance payment, it must request advance payment in its application and explain why an advance payment is requested. (*See* Parts 1.8, and 6.2; Appendix 1Section 10.g)

ii. Grantee matches and other contributions

Resources provided by the applicant should appear in the column titled “Non-DOEE Match,” meaning the Applicant intends to provide the indicated resources (i.e., the “match,” and that the resources do not come from DOEE). Entries in this column could include both dollars and the value of the in-kind contributions. For example, in-kind contributions can include staff time, volunteer services, already-paid licensing fees, materials, supplies, and the use of equipment or real estate.

Volunteer hours provided to a grantee or sub-grantee must be valued at rates consistent with those the Applicant’s organization ordinarily pays for similar work, including salary and fringes. If the grantee or a sub-grantee does not have employees performing similar work, the rates must be valued the same as rates ordinarily paid by employers in the same labor market for similar work.

iii. Allowable and non-allowed expenditures

The Applicant must show that all costs in the budget are allowable. Typical allowable costs are:

1. Rental of office space, some vehicles, and some equipment;
2. Employee salaries and benefits;
3. Contractor labor, including professional services;

4. Accounting and bookkeeping services;
5. Communications, including telephone and data services;
6. Printing, reproduction, including signage;
7. Materials and supplies;
8. Computers and printers;
9. Small tools;
10. Some field equipment, typically below \$5,000 in value;
11. Postage and shipping;
12. Necessary travel, meals and lodging; and
13. Insurance.

Non-Allowable costs include:

1. Most major equipment, like vehicles;
2. Lobbying, including salaries and overheads and out-of-pocket expenses;
3. Entertainment;
4. Interest payments on loans;
5. Most food; and
6. Land purchases.

iv. Applicant's indirect costs calculation

An Applicant may include its indirect costs in its budget calculation. (*See* the Nonprofit Fair Compensation Act of 2020, DC Act 23-565 [effective March 2021]) This may be done through use of a cost rate. In budget backup materials the Applicant should identify the basis for the calculation, addressing one of the following bases that District law permits it to choose:

1. Its current, unexpired, federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) rate, a negotiated rate with the federal government;

OR

2. One of the following methods:
 - a. 10% of the grant's direct costs;
 - b. A new negotiated rate with DOEE;
 - c. The same indirect rate that it has used with any District agency in the past 2 years; or
 - d. An independent Certified Public Account's (CPA) calculated rate using federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines

(The cited statute required DOEE to provide for at least one of these listed methods. However, the statute excludes the following from the requirement: foundation; hospital; university; college.) If the Applicant proposes to use the services of a *nonprofit* subgrantee or contractor, it must propose to apply the same indirect cost rate to that entity's services. (See Appendix 1. General Terms & Conditions, Paragraph 14.g)

Federal rules always control for federal funding. For federal funding that passes through the District to the grantee, the indirect cost rate must be consistent with federal regulation 2 CFR 200.331 or its successor.

(d) Applicant

(1) Organization

Describe the named Applicant's history, mission, and current or past projects that demonstrate the organization's capacity to achieve the project's goals. The Applicant can reference its website or attach an organizational brochure or resume.

(2) Key personnel

Identify the key team members for the project and provide brief biographies or their resumes. The team members can be staff, volunteers, subgrantees, or contractors.

(3) Past performance on District Grants/Contracts

Identify District agencies from which the Applicant has received funding as a contractor, grantee, or partner in the past five years. This should be included as a separate attachment and is not counted toward the 10 page narrative limit. Provide specific information including:

1. The grant(s) or contract(s) title;
2. The District agency/agencies;
3. The grant number(s), contract number(s), or other identifier(s);
4. The amount(s) paid; and
5. What was accomplished as a result of the funding(s).

Briefly describe each dispute, investigation, and/or audit, if any, related to any of these District grants or contracts, grants, or partnerships in the past five years.

(4) Partners

DOEE awards a grant to one entity. When that entity is a legal corporation or partnership, DOEE would award to that entity. Sometimes a "partnership" is informal, just a working

arrangement. The “partners” may have decided that multiple participants can improve the success of a project. Such a partnership might be between a government agency, nongovernmental organization (NGO), company, or an individual. One of these “partners” would be the Applicant.

If one or more partners are to be involved in the project, the Applicant must describe each partner’s involvement and resource commitments. The partnering organization should attach a letter of support. If the letter is a hard copy letter, or scanned, the document should be written on the partner’s letterhead, and signed by its authorized official. If the letter is an email, the email should clearly identify the writer and position, the partner, its mailing address, website, and an official’s contact name, telephone number, and email address.

For the following types of partners, provide the documentation indicated.

i. District of Columbia Public Schools

If the Applicant will work with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), it must include a letter of support from the principal of each school with which it will work, and, if available, from each participating teacher. Teachers and principals may send a joint letter.

ii. Property Owner

If the Applicant will work on public land, it must submit a letter of support from an official of the managing agency. Similarly, if the Applicant is to work on private land, it must submit a letter of support from each property owner. If the project includes construction or installation, the letter must acknowledge that the property owner will be responsible (either directly or through an agreement with another entity) for project maintenance.

iii. Partnering Organization

Include a letter of intent from the collaborating organization(s) stating that it agrees to participate in the proposed project, describing the partner’s involvement and resource commitments, and explaining the activities and/or services the partner will provide. The letter should demonstrate that the partnering organization understands the project presented for funding and the activities and/or services that the partner will provide. Under the grant terms and conditions, grant-related work or activity that is contracted, subcontracted or subgranted must be in compliance with applicable District laws, including business licensing requirements and documentation of a claimed tax exempt status.

iv. National Park Service - Exception

Projects that would be carried out on National Park Service (NPS) property will require NPS permission. Sometimes the paperwork supporting such permission takes extra time to complete. DOEE will accept more informal statements generated by responsible NPS officials, including an email statement of intent.

3.3 Work Plan

The application must include a proposed work plan that describes the project's activities and the timeline for project implementation.

3.4 Required Documents

Each of the following documents must be filed as part of the application package. If the document is not in this filing, DOEE may classify the grant application as "received" but not "filed," as specified in Section 2.3. However, if a government agency must issue a required document, and the Applicant has requested the document but not received it, DOEE may accept a copy of the Applicant's written request to the agency for the purpose of deeming the Application "filed."

(a) Certificate of Good Standing

Each Applicant must submit a current Certificate of Good Standing from the District Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. DOEE requires that the submitted Certificate of Good Standing reflect a date within a six-month period immediately preceding the application's submission.

(a) Certificate of Clean Hands

The Grantee shall submit a validated Certificate of Clean Hands (CCH) from the DC Office of Tax and Revenue. The CCH can be obtained through MyTax.DC.gov

(c) Promises, Certifications, Assertions, and Assurances

Each Applicant must sign and submit the "Promises, Certifications, Assertions, and Assurances" ("PCA") in Appendix 2. Signing the PCA is a condition of eligibility for this grant. If the Applicant is not prepared to sign the PCA, it should not apply for a grant. Compliance with the promises, certifications, and assurances in the PCA is a continuing condition of eligibility for this grant.

The PCA must be signed by the Applicant or, if the Applicant is an organization, by a duly authorized officer of the organization.

The PCA also includes a sworn statement verifying that the Applicant is not in arrears (i.e. is “current”) on all obligations outstanding to the District, including all District agencies. The Applicant must be “current” as of the date of the application and the date of a grant award. DOEE requires, as a condition of continuing eligibility, that a grantee stay current on such obligations during the period of the grant.

(d) IRS W-9 Tax Form

The Applicant must submit a current completed W-9 form prepared for the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). DOEE defines “current” to mean that the document was completed within the same calendar year as that of the application date.

(e) Tax Exemption Affirmation Letter

If the Applicant claims it is a nonprofit organization, the Applicant must prove its nonprofit status. The tax exemption affirmation letter should be provided. It is the IRS’s determination letter of non-profit status. If this letter is not available, then the Applicant should provide its most recent IRS Form 990 tax return, if one was submitted. If no return has yet been filed, the organization can submit its application for tax-exempt status. If the group is a “supporting organization” with an IRS tax-exempt status determination, then that organization’s tax exemption affirmation letter should also be submitted.

If there is no IRS tax exemption affirmation letter because the organization is a religious organization, then the Applicant may submit the best evidence it can of its status. Examples of potential best evidence for this purpose include, but are not limited to (i) a letter from the leader of the organization verifying that the organization is a religious group; (ii) a letter from the group’s board chair or similar official, verifying that the organization is a religious group; (iii) the Applicant’s most recently submitted state sales or other tax exemption form, if it exists (Form 164 in the District of Columbia); or (iv) the state’s issued tax exemption certificate or card, if it exists. (*See IRS publication no. 1828, Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations.*)

(f) Applicant’s Current Fiscal Year Budget

The Applicant must submit its full budget, including projected income, for the current fiscal year, using a format at least as detailed as that presented in Appendix 4. Also, the Applicant should submit a comparison of budgeted versus actual income and expenses of the fiscal year to date.

(g) Applicant’s Financial Statements

If the Applicant has undergone an audit or financial review, it must provide the most recent audited financial statements or reviews. If audited financial statements or reviews are not

available, the Applicant must provide its most recent complete year's unaudited financial statements.

(h) Separation of Duties Policy

The Applicant must state how the organization separates financial transactions and duties among people within the organization in order to prevent fraud or waste. This may be a statement that already exists as a formal policy of the organization, or the Applicant may create the statement for purposes of the application. The applicant should state which of these situations apply.

This statement should:

1. Describe how financial transactions are handled and recorded;
2. Provide the names and titles of personnel involved in handling money;
3. Identify how many signatures the financial institution(s) require on the organization's checks and withdrawal slips; and,
4. Address other limits on staff and board members' handling of the organization's money.

(i) System for Award Management (SAM) with Federal Government

The Applicant must be registered in the System for Award Management at www.sam.gov and provide evidence of this registration as part of its application package to DOEE.

(j) Indirect Costs Rate Documentation

If the Applicant seeks a 10% indirect costs rate in its proposed budget, no special documentation is required. However, for another rate, include one of the following documents with the application:

1. Unexpired Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA);
2. DOEE negotiated agreement;
3. A letter from a District government agency, dated within the last two years stating the negotiated indirect cost rate; or
4. A letter from an independent CPA certifying the indirect cost rate was determined by the nonprofit organization's audited financial statements following OMB Uniform Guidance.

SECTION 4. REVIEW PANEL AND APPLICATION SCORING

4.1 Review Panel

This is a competitive grant. The review panel for the RFA will be composed of individuals with

knowledge in the areas directly related to the RFA. The review panel will review, score and rank each Applicant's application.

The panel will recommend the most responsive application for award of the grant.

Review panels vary in size, but typically are made up of three to five people. Review panel members can be from DOEE staff or outside of DOEE, as long as they do not have a conflict of interest.

4.2 Scoring Criteria

The reviewers score each application according to a list of criteria and the points available for each criterion. See Section 7.

The Applicant should read the grant description carefully to determine if matching funds or resources are required, or benefit from preference points.

SECTION 5. GRANTEE DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Submissions if Applicant Will Receive the Grant

Upon acceptance of DOEE's award of the grant, the Grantee must provide the following documents.

(a) Certificate of Insurance

The Grantee shall submit a certificate of insurance giving evidence of the required coverage. *See* Appendix 1, General Terms and Conditions Section 29. Insurance, and Appendix 6. Insurance. Ordinarily DOEE will presume that the budget covers the cost of this required insurance and will not later adjust the grant award for this amount.

(b) Assurance of Continued Truth and Accuracy

Upon receiving DOEE's Grant Award Notice the Grantee must notify DOEE of any changes that may have occurred to its organization since the time of submission of its original application. This obligation continues through the grant period. See also Section 1.11. RFA Conditions - Promises, Certifications, Assertions, and Assurances.

SECTION 6. REPORTING, PAYMENT, and OTHER PROVISIONS

6.1 Reporting Requirements

The grantee must submit the following reports as a condition of continuing eligibility for funding.

(a) Quarterly Status Reports

DOEE will provide a quarterly status report template with the Grant Award Notice. These reports, which discuss grant activities for the preceding quarter, will be due on each of the following dates.

Quarter 1 (January - March):	April 15
Quarter 2 (April - June):	July 15
Quarter 3 (July - September):	October 15
Quarter 4 (October - December):	January 15

If a report's due date falls on a weekend or District holiday, the report will be due the next business day.

The report must detail: actions taken in the quarter preceding the report date, highlight outputs achieved, provide a financial update, and describe unforeseen changes to project timetable, staffing, or partnerships, as well as any other changes that may affect project outcomes.

(b) Final Report

DOEE will provide a final report template with the Grant Award Notice. This report includes quantification by the grantee of the project's outputs and describes the extent to which project outcomes met or will meet the objectives of the funded application. The template requires submission of data and analysis of the data.

6.2 Reimbursement of Project Expenditures, Advances, and Disbursement of Funds

DOEE will not reimburse the grantee for any work undertaken before DOEE awards the grant.

DOEE will reimburse the grantee only for expenditures incurred to perform work under the grant. Ordinarily DOEE pays out grant funds as reimbursements. Advances are exceptions; not the rule. In limited cases, DOEE may advance funds at the beginning of the grant period for good cause approved by DOEE at its sole discretion. If the Applicant seeks an advance payment, **it must request such payment in its application** and explain why an advance payment is being requested. (*See* Parts 1.8, 3.2(c)(6)(A); Appendix 1 Section 10.g)

DOEE operates on the District's fiscal year, which starts October 1 of a calendar year and ends September 30 of the next calendar year. Ordinarily, there is no requirement for weekly or

monthly invoicing. The grantee should submit each reimbursement request/invoice during the fiscal year for work performed within that same fiscal year. Each request/invoice must include supporting documentation.

Reimbursements will be mailed to the address on file for the grantee. DOEE may make electronic payments in lieu of mailing checks. DOEE generally pays timely, approved, supported grant invoices within 30 days after DOEE receives them.

DOEE may withhold up to the final 10% of a grant until all required activities have been completed, including receipt of the final report. The grantee should treat the prospect of such withholding as likely.

SECTION 7. PROJECTS PROPOSED FOR GRANT FUNDING

7.1 Summary: Project Name, Period, and Available Funds

Project Name

Nature Near Schools Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences – 2021

Introduction

A [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience](#) (MWEE) is defined as a learner-centered experience that focuses on investigations into local environmental issues and leads to informed stewardship actions. MWEEs are composed of multiple elements (outlined in the Implementation Plan below) that include learning both outdoor and in the classroom, and are designed to increase the environmental literacy of all participants. The MWEE model applies multidisciplinary practices to help students connect with their local environment, enable them to take actions, and make decisions that contribute to stronger, more sustainable, and equitable communities. To ensure equal access, NNS MWEE must be free to all participants and participating schools. The applicant cannot require payment from participants and participating schools.

For a full definition of a meaningful watershed educational experience, see https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Revised_MWEE_definition_-_FINAL.pdf

The Nature Near Schools Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (NNS MWEE) is a pilot program that follows the MWEE model. It seeks to achieve the outcomes of a MWEE curriculum model, ensuring that the program utilizes easily accessible outdoor spaces.

The NNS MWEE will provide funding for creative, student-oriented projects at the elementary and middle school level, with a focus on third- through fifth-grade students, on schoolyards or at natural areas within walking distance from school grounds, or otherwise readily accessible within the District, such as Kingman and Heritage Island. Participating schools must be DC Public Schools or DC Public Charter Schools.

MWEE programs encourage observation, foster critical thinking, develop problem-solving skills, and instill confidence in students. This NNS model is being piloted while traditional overnight experiences are unavailable due to the health and safety restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. DOEE expects to integrate the NNS model into the overnight program in future school years, and will work with grantees to do this effectively.

The NNS MWEE pilot supports the environmental literacy commitments in the District, including the DC State Board of Education (SBOE) resolution ([SR21-1, Jan 2021](#)) to support school access to funding for outdoor learning options. The resolution states that community-based environmental and outdoor education programs are equipped to assist schools with

offering innovative and supportive partnerships that were available to many of these schools across the city pre-pandemic.

In addition, the NNW MWEE works toward the District's [2020 Environmental Literacy Plan](#) Goal of ensuring all District students graduate with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to make informed decisions and take actions that impact the community and environmental systems.

Project Period

The project period is one year. These are pilots for one year.

If DOEE has the funding and a pilot appears successful, DOEE may extend a grant and may fund the extension, at its discretion. Grantees may have the grant period extended and receive additional funding if DOEE deems it appropriate. Extensions may not be available for all grantees and will depend on grantee performance, availability of funds, and DOEE's determination.

Available Funding

A total of \$300,000 is available for this competition. DOEE expects to make multiple awards for up to \$60,000.

An applicant may apply for and receive more than one grant. An organization is welcome to submit applications for more than one project. Each project still requires participation in at least three schools. Each project requires a complete, separate application. DOEE will assess each application, and the identified project, separately.

7.2 Project Description

DOEE is seeking to provide activities at multiple school sites as part of the NNS MWEE Program ("the Program") during the 2021-2022 School Year. The Program should be an integral and ongoing part of classroom activities and curriculum, and not enrichment or ancillary.

DOEE envisions the Program as including:

- At least five meetings or lessons covering any of the following topics:
 - Watersheds
 - Pollution prevention
 - Food web
 - Geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere interactions
 - Natural systems (e.g. wildlife, plants, and water cycle)

- Social systems (e.g. stewardship, communities, transportation systems, and schools)
 - A culminating student-driven stewardship project
 - Stewardship or action can take many forms but must be student-driven to directly address an issue within their school, city, neighborhood, or community. Students must be actively engaged, and to the extent possible, drive the decision-making, planning, and implementation of the project.
- Use of schoolyards or natural spaces near schools or accessible within the District, such as Kingman and Heritage Island, for lessons and stewardship projects. The emphasis is on individualized curriculum delivered to each school and its local environment. The grantee will need to tailor programming to fit the natural and built environment near the school to offer students the opportunity to connect with the elements that surround them. Outdoor field experiences should allow students to learn how to work in a natural, uncontrolled environment and offer them opportunities to explore how individual and collective decisions impact their surroundings. In addition, the program should:
 - Connect standards-based classroom learning with outdoor field investigation to provide students a deeper understanding of the natural environment.
 - Engage the student through instruction, data collection, experiments, and conversations with experts.
 - To the greatest extent possible, taking into consideration health and safety protocols, the Program should take place almost entirely outside, with students participating in outdoor field experiences sufficient to collect the data required for answering the research questions and informing student actions.
 - Encourage observation, foster critical thinking, develop problem-solving skills, time for reflection, and instill confidence in students that is specific to the natural space around their school.
 - Virtual components will be allowed if health and safety guidelines require them.
- Multi-disciplinary educational experiences that offer a unique opportunity to make strong connections among subject areas and reflect an integrated approach to learning. Use elements of science and social studies standards to increase knowledge of environmental processes and systems, build skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues, and increase personal and civic environmental responsibilities.
- Teacher engagement in a professional development setting to ensure teachers have the content knowledge to support students' stewardship projects.
- Partnerships with participating schools throughout the school year and develop a program that is reflective of the local environment. See School Interest Participation Form (Appendix 7) below, under Additional Components.

- Equitable engagement of students in DCPS and DC Public Charter Schools throughout the District. This addresses potential barriers to participation, especially for students that are considered “at risk”. Students that are “at risk” are identified as homeless, in the District’s foster care system, qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). At least two of the three schools included in the proposal must have Title 1 designation.

An application should incorporate the following components:

- 1. Implementation Plan** that allows for flexible implementation throughout the school year.
 - a. Flexibility means ability to pivot programming from to virtual if necessary and meet specific school health and safety guidelines and field trip policies as applicable for any of the above components.
 - b. DOEE will not fund a project that relies solely on utilizing bus access to natural areas. Bus trips may be allowed for a portion of grant activities so long as they are consistent with health and safety guidelines and with advance permission.
- 2. The application should address all the following MWEE Elements:**
 - a. **Issue Definition:** The MWEE curriculum includes a student-led environmental question, problem, or issue requiring background research and investigation.
 - b. **Outdoor Field Experiences:** The outdoor field experiences should be student-led to the extent possible with students actively involved in planning the investigation, taking measurements, or constructing the project within appropriate safety guidelines.
 - c. **Stewardship Projects:** Students should participate in a project that provides them with a better understanding of the actions they can take to protect and conserve natural resources, and allow them to have a sense of control over the outcome of environmental issues.
 - d. **Synthesis and Conclusions:** Students should analyze and evaluate the results of their investigation of the issue. The results should be synthesized and communicated to an external audience such as other classrooms, schools, parents, or the community. This allows students to become stewards of their actions and decisions.

- e. ***Classroom Integration & Teacher Support:*** Each curriculum should be connected to what is occurring in the formal classroom; therefore, teachers should be encouraged to participate in and help students during field experiences, stewardship projects, and other MWEE programming.
 - f. ***Local Context:*** Students should be connected to their local watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay. Students should be offered the opportunity to explore how individual and collective decisions impact their surroundings.
 - g. ***Sustained Activity:*** Each curriculum should include sustained activities that stimulate and motivate the student from beginning to end. Experiences such as simulations, demonstrations, or “nature walks” may be instructionally useful, but alone do not constitute a meaningful watershed educational experience.
- 3. Letter(s) of Support** from collaborative partner(s), if applicable, that include a description on how partner(s) will work with the lead applicant to ensure at least three schools participate in the program and all other goals are accomplished.
- 4. School Participation Interest Forms (Appendix 7)** to be completed by each interested school and submitted with the application. The form confirms the school’s interest but does not require the grantee to work solely with the school that has completed the form. Each grantee will be required to confirm participating schools with DOEE once grants are made. The application should equitably engage students in DCPS and DC Public Charter Schools throughout the District and address potential barriers to participation, especially for students that are considered “at risk”. Students that are “at risk” are identified as homeless, in the District’s foster care system, qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). At least two of the three schools included in the proposal must have Title 1 designation.
- 5. Teacher Engagement & Training Plan** that identifies how the applicant will engage with teachers throughout the grant period, with the primary goal of providing teachers with training and resources to integrate the NNS MWEE content into their curriculum independent of this pilot in future years. Teacher trainings can be scheduled independently or in collaboration with established professional development days.
- 6. Evaluation Plan** that outlines how the grantee will evaluate the outcomes of the Program. A process evaluation should describe student learner-centered experiences focusing on investigations into local environmental issues. In addition, a mid-year evaluation should be utilized to assess challenges and lessons learned during the implementation of the Program.

7. Budget that shows the cost per-school, with an explanation of the expenses that comprise the per-school cost. For the grant year, provide two cumulative numbers for each budget category, one number as of September 30, and the other number as of the end date.

Project Outcomes

- Participating students will increase their knowledge of their local environment, ecology and sources of pollution to the Anacostia, Oxon Run, Rock Creek, and Potomac Watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay;
- Participating students will better understand how individual and collective decisions impact their surroundings and the Anacostia, Oxon Run, Rock Creek, and Potomac Watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay;
- Participating students will better understand what actions to take to protect and conserve natural resources, and strategies to reduce pollution; and
- Teachers will integrate Program content into their curricula long term.

Project Outputs

- Number of participating students that will have a hands-on Program connecting them to their local environments;
- Participating classes will have at least five sessions that constitute a NNS MWEE;
- Number of participating teachers provided with professional technical support to effectively incorporate curriculum;
- Number of participating teachers engaged in segments of the program
- Number of participating teachers receiving additional support and professional development to meet Next Generation Science Standards and ELP goals;
- Number of participating students that will have successfully completed an outdoor environmental stewardship project or a field study in or near their school grounds; and
- Number of outdoor and/or hands on activities that allow students to explore and utilize their school grounds or outdoor spaces near schools for learning.

Deliverables

- Report documenting the following:
 - Grades and number of students that participated in the Program;
 - Number of teachers that participated in the Program;
 - Green space in or near the school that was utilized for the Program; and
 - Other metrics as defined by DOEE on a report provided by DOEE;
- Documentation of each grantee staff's approved background checks, as required by DCPS and Charter Schools;
- Documentation of coordination among participating schools for grantees (indicated by School Participation Forms), with updates as needed due to programmatic changes;
- Copy of the curriculum;

- Program schedule for lesson or meetings at schools;
- Pre- and post-Program student and teacher survey, with both opinion and fact-based questions;
- Mid-year evaluation utilized to assess challenges and lessons learned during the implementation of the Program;
- Quarterly status reports using template provided by DOEE showing accomplishments, progress to date, summary of surveys, lessons learned, and detailing the completion of project objectives, with the 3rd quarter progress report providing a more in-depth analysis of the NNS model and recommendations for integration into an overnight program in future school years;
- A final report, including pictures of the project; and
- Monthly, or as needed, check-ins with DOEE grant manager as a grantee group.

Application Scoring

Each Application will be scored according to the criteria below.

	Scoring Criteria	Points
1	A detailed plan that excels at providing the components for a NNS MWEE with a clear work plan that delineates responsibilities.	20
2	Proposed curricula that include lessons individualized to the school, grade, and local environment.	20
3	Provides a strong and detailed plan for school engagement throughout the year and School Participation Interest Forms for each school included in the proposal.	15
4	Includes a strong and equitable engagement strategy for students in DCPS and/ or DC Public Charter Schools throughout the District and addresses potential barriers to participation; at least two of the three schools included in the proposal must have Title 1 designation.	15
5	Includes a strong engagement strategy for teacher professional development	10
6	Includes a thorough evaluation plan to evaluate student outcomes and learning in the Program	10
8	Presents an adequate and reasonable numeric budget and a reasonable narrative justification for the funds.	10
	TOTAL	100

SECTION 8. CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS

Instructions for applicants: Ensure that you answer all of the questions below. In the column to the right, indicate Yes, No, or NA for “not applicable”. Submit this completed document as one of the first pages of your application.		
1	Is the cover sheet (Appendix 3) completed and signed – and included as part of the application?	
2	Is the application from one entity, as the Applicant?	
3	Does the application include a Table of Contents?	
4	Is the named Applicant eligible for funding according to section 1.6 of the RFA?	
5	If project eligibility conditions appear in Section 1.6 of the RFA, does the project fit these conditions?	
6	Is the application formatted in accordance with section 3.1 of the RFA?	
7	Does the application include a project description and all of the information required for the scoring rubric that appears at the end of Section 7 of the RFA?	
8	Is there a numeric budget?	
9	Is there a budget narrative justifying each budget line item?	
10	Do the line items in the application budget consider the allowable and non-allowable costs in Section 3.2 subsection c.4 of the RFA?	
11	Did the applicant read the General Terms and Conditions document (Appendix 1)?	
12	Does the application package include the first page and signed last page of the DOEE Promises, Certifications, Assertions, and Assurances (Appendix 2)?	
13	Does the application package include a Certificate of Good	

	Standing that reflects a date within 6 months of the deadline date?	
14	Does the application package include a valid Certificate of Clean Hands?	
15	Does the application package include IRS W-9 Tax Form?	
16	If the Applicant is a nonprofit organization does the application package include a Tax Exemption Affirmation Letter?	
17	Does the application package include the applicant's current fiscal year budget?	
18	Does the application package include the applicant's most recent audited or unaudited financial statements?	
19	Does the application package include a Separation of Duties Policy as described in Section 3.4 subsection (h) of the RFA?	
20	Is the Applicant registered in the System for Award Management (SAM)?	
21	If the Applicant is eligible to claim indirect costs and is claiming more than 10% of direct costs, does the application package include supporting documentation for the indirect cost rate?	
22	If applicable, does the application package include letters of support from other entities?	
23	If requested, does the application include resumes of key personnel mentioned in the application?	

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – General Terms and Conditions

Appendix 2 – Promises, Certifications, Assertions, and Assurances

Appendix 3 – Cover Sheet

Appendix 4 – Grant Budget Template

Appendix 5 – Points for Local Entities

Appendix 6 – Insurance Requirements

Appendix 7 – School Participation Interest Form

Filename: 07 5273 rfa template rev 03-2021.docx
Rev 02-2021