

CHAPTER 12 CONSERVATION EDUCATION

561--12.1 (455A) Purpose. The purpose of these rules is to define procedures for the administration of funds within the conservation education program board account for production and revision of conservation education materials and to specify stipends to Iowa educators who participate in innovative conservation education programs approved by the board. The conservation education program shall serve Iowa citizens by providing effective curricula, program materials and educator stipends to increase environmental awareness and understanding of stewardship, and enhance natural resources. Expenditure of funds from the conservation education program board account shall be in accordance with this policy.

561--12.2 (455A) Conservation education program policy. The conservation education program board shall constitute a long-term integrated effort to support conservation education for Iowa educators and students. To support this policy, the board may establish guidelines from time to time to direct applicants to priority areas for funding and shall give preference to grants that meet these guidelines. The board may provide funding for activities that expand the impact of the project and provide accessibility for widespread adoption of programs for implementation by others. The board may provide funding for tracking of project implementation and evaluation.

561--12.3 (455A) Conservation education board. A conservation education program board is created in the department. The board shall have five members appointed as follows:

1. One member appointed by the director of the department of education.
2. One member appointed by the director of the department of natural resources.
3. One member appointed by the president of the Iowa association of county conservation boards.
4. One member appointed by Iowa association of naturalists.
5. One member appointed by the Iowa conservation education council.

561--12.4 (455A) Definitions.

"Board" means REAP conservation education program board.

"Conservation education programs" means programs developed for formal (K-12 students), non-formal (preschool, adult and continuing education) and higher education (postsecondary and adult) programs, within the subject areas of natural resource conservation and environmental protection.

"Department" means the department of natural resources.

"Director" means the director of the department of natural resources.

"Educator" means any person who teaches environmental/conservation education. This may apply to certified teachers, governmental or private naturalists or education specialists, or others so determined by the Board.

"Environmental/conservation education materials" means materials that are developed or produced that provide knowledge, skills, processes and strategies that enhance Iowa citizens' understanding of natural resources conservation and environmental issues.

“Stipends for Iowa educators who participate in innovative conservation education programs” may include tuition cost, acceptable food and lodging costs, substitute teacher costs, mileage expenses or separate allowances when applicable for educators to attend board approved environmental/conservation education workshops, in-service programs and conferences, and other costs as approved by the board.

561--12.5 (455A) Eligibility for funds. In years in which funds are made available grant applications may be submitted by institutions of higher learning, government agencies, including local school districts, nonpublic schools, area education agencies, organizations, and individuals with an Iowa residence. Preference shall be given to Iowa participants.

561--12.6 (455A) Grant applications, general procedures.

12.6(1) Applications for all grant programs shall be made on forms provided by the department. The original and five copies shall be submitted by the deadlines specified in subsequent rules of this chapter or as otherwise published by the department.

12.6(2) Applications shall be made in sufficient detail as to clearly describe the scope of the project including the following:

- a. Applicant identification (applicant's name and address).
- b. Project summary and demonstration of need
- c. Program goals, objectives, time lines, and transferability, and who is responsible.
- d. Documentation of assurances and letters of community support, including cooperating agencies.
- e. Project budget (administrative/indirect costs not to exceed 10 percent of total award).
- f. Project management.
- g. A plan for evaluation.

Any application, which is not complete at the time of the specified submittal deadline, shall not be considered for funding. The proposals shall be submitted to the department.

12.6(3) Applications shall be postmarked on or before May 15 and November 1. Upon arrival, the proposals will be reviewed to determine whether all required materials have been included and whether the proposal falls within the department’s guidelines. Failure to meet these criteria will result in disqualification of the proposal.

12.6(4) Joint applications are permitted. One entity must serve as the primary applicant. Joint projects sponsored by entities competing for funds from different resource enhancement and protection (REAP) accounts, e.g. an organization or institution, area education agency, etc. are allowable. Applications must clearly spell out the respective shares of project costs to be derived from various REAP accounts if the project is approved for funding. Any cooperative agreement between joint applicants must be provided as a part of the application.

12.6(5) Similar development projects. An application for a conservation education program grant may serve more than one target population (e.g., scouting and K-6 classrooms).

561--12.7 (455A) Conflict of interest. If a project is submitted to the board by an agency, institution, conservation board, or private conservation interests, one of whose members or employees are on the board or the review and selection committee, that individual shall not participate in discussion on or ranking of that particular project.

561--12.8 (455A) Criteria. Preference will be given, in formal and informal education programs, to materials capable of being infused in multiple curricular areas. Also, preference will be given to projects that encourage conservation stewardship. Proposals shall include, but not be limited to, the following types of information that can be found in the REAP/conservation education program applications and procedures manual.

12.8(1) *Statement of need.* This part of the proposal identifies the target audience and describes how this audience will be served. The statement of need contains evidence or research that a need for such a project exists, explains how stated need relates to REAP/CEP priorities and guidelines, and shows interdisciplinary components.

12.8(2) *Goals, objectives, activities.* This part of the proposal describes how the project will address the environmental education goals identified by the writer, how workable or appropriate the project is to the audience, and activity timelines. This part also describes how the project incorporates collaboration and networking, the potential of the project to be implemented elsewhere, and how the project demonstrates innovative and creative ideas and strategies.

12.8(3) *Funding and budget considerations.* This part of the proposal describes a realistic and cost-effective budget, shows ratio of total budget to number of people directly served, and shows that the project budget meets expense eligibility stated in sub rule 12-9(6).

12.8(4) *Evaluation.* This part of the proposal describes evaluation tools that show how well the project's goals and objectives have been met and how well the audience meets objectives. This part identifies strategies, milestones, and tools that will be used to monitor the project, describes how monitoring will be used to strengthen the project, and how information will be disseminated.

561—12.9 (455A) Grantee Responsibilities.

12.9(1) *Timely completion of projects.* Grants are expected to be completed in a 12-month time period; however, up to 18 months will be considered for board approval for grants difficult to accomplish in 12 months. The board may consider extending the time period of a grant upon request.

12.9(2) *Record keeping and retention.* Grant recipients shall keep adequate records relating to the administration of a project, particularly all incurred expenses. These

records shall be available for audit by representatives of the department and the state auditor's office. All records shall be retained in accordance with state laws.

12.9(3) *Midterm and final reports.* Grantees shall provide midterm and final reports that include information detailing progress toward goals and objectives, expenditures and services on forms provided for those reports. The report shall clearly identify the status of fund-raising relevant to the approved projects and problems that may cause a delay in completing the project within the approved project period. Failure to submit reports by the due date shall result in suspension of financial payments to the grantee until the time that the report is received. Grants are considered active until the board notifies the grantee that the grant has been terminated or completed by the terms of the grant. At the completion of the project and prior to the final payment, a final written report shall be submitted by the grantee to the board. The final 10 percent payment shall be withheld pending this report, which shall include a 75- to 100-word summary of project results. This summary will be posted on the state environmental education web site. No new awards shall be made for continuation programs where there are delinquent reports from prior grants.

12.9(4) *Contract revisions.* The grantee shall immediately inform the board of any revisions in the project budget in excess of 10 percent of a line item. The board and the grantee may negotiate a revision to the contract to allow for expansion or modification of services, but shall not increase the total amount of the grant. The board retains the authority to approve or deny contract revisions.

12.9(5) *Non-application of copyright.* Program materials developed from resource enhancement and protection funds for conservation education materials shall bear the REAP logo. However, materials developed under this grant shall not be copyrighted by the grantee unless the board gives permission.

12.9(6) *Restrictions.* Funds allocated under this chapter shall not be used for out-of-state travel or equipment, such as typewriters, computers, and hardware or for construction, renovation, or remodeling costs unless specifically approved by the board.

561--12.10 (455A) Board review and approval. The board or its designee shall review and rank projects for funding, and funds shall be awarded on a competitive basis. If delegated, the reviewing, scoring and ranking of projects will be presented to the board as recommendations. The board may approve or deny funding for any project or part thereof.

12.10(1) In each year that funds are made available by the Iowa legislature, payments shall be as follows:

a. For grant periods in excess of 90 days, up to 50 percent shall be paid at the beginning of the grant period, up to 40 percent at the midpoint of the grant period, and the balance upon successful completion as determined by the board.

b. For grant periods of fewer than 90 days, 75 percent shall be paid at the beginning of the grant period and the balance at successful completion as determined by the board.

12.10(2) The board shall notify successful applicants and shall provide a contract for signature. This contract shall be signed by an official with authority to bind the applicant and shall be returned to the department prior to the award of any funds under this program.

561--12.11 (455A) Waivers of retroactivity. Normally, grant program developments completed prior to application scoring will not be approved. However, an applicant may make written request for a waiver of retroactivity to allow project elements to be considered for grant assistance. The board will grant waivers in writing. Receipt of a waiver does not assure funding, but only assures that the project will be considered for funding along with all other applications.

561--12.12 (455A) Penalties. Whenever any property, real or personal, acquired or developed with resource enhancement and protection funds passes from the control of the grantee or is used for purposes other than the approved project purpose, it will be considered an unlawful use of the funds. If a grantee desires to use the approved funds for a purpose other than the approved project purpose, the grantee shall seek an amendment to the project purpose by following the provisions of rule 12.9(4). The board shall notify the grantee of any apparent violation.

561--12.13 (455A) Remedy. Funds used unlawfully, without authorization, or for other than the approved project purpose shall be returned to the department within the period specified by the board or director. The remedies provided in this rule are in addition to others provided by law.

561--12.14 (455A) Termination for convenience. The contract may be terminated in whole or in part when both parties agree that the continuation of the project would not produce beneficial results commensurate with the future expenditure of funds. The parties shall agree upon the termination conditions, including the effective date, and -- in the case of partial terminations -- the portion to be terminated. The grantee shall not incur new obligations for the terminated portion after the effective date and shall cancel as many outstanding obligations as possible.

561--12.15 (455A) Termination for cause. The contract may be terminated in whole or in part at any time before the date of completion, whenever it is determined by the board that the grantee has failed to comply substantially with the conditions of the contract. The grantee shall be notified in writing by the department of the reasons for the termination and the effective date. The department shall administer the conservation education grants contingent upon their availability. If there is a lack of funds necessary to fulfill the fiscal responsibility of the conservation education grants, the contracts shall be terminated or renegotiated. The board may terminate or renegotiate a contract upon 30 days notice when there is a reduction of funds by executive order. The grantee shall not incur new

obligations for the terminated portion after the effective date and shall cancel as many outstanding obligations as possible.

12.15(1) *Failure to initiate or complete project.* Failure to initiate or complete the project in a timely manner shall be cause for termination of the project by the board. The grantee shall return unused grant funds at the time of termination.

12.15(2) *Ineligibility.* Whenever the board determines that a grantee is in violation of these rules, that grantee shall be ineligible for further assistance until the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the board.

561--12.16 (455A) Responsibility of grantee at termination. Within 45 days of the termination, the grantee shall supply the department with a financial statement detailing all costs up to the effective date of the termination. If the grantee expends money for other than specified budget items approved by the board, the grantee shall return monies for unapproved expenditures.

561--12.17 (455A) Appeals. Appeals to the decisions on grant awards shall be filed with the director of the department. The letter of appeal shall be filed within ten working days of receipt of notice of decision and shall be based on a contention that the process was arbitrary; conducted outside of statutory authority; violated state or federal law, policy, or rule; did not provide adequate public notice or was altered without adequate public notice; or involved conflict of interest by staff or board members. The director of the department shall notify the board of the appeal. The board may submit evidence in support of its decision within ten days of notice from the director. The director shall issue a decision within a reasonable time following receipt of the appeal.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 455A.19 and 455A.21.