

Item 23 - 1: Elimination of Environmental Education State Supplemental Grant**Initiative Type:** Constrained – Elimination**Initiative Owner-Finance:** Clara F. O’Brien – DEQ CFO**Initiative Owner-Program:** Paula McConnell – DEQ Environmental Education Program Manager**Initiative Priority Ranking:** 1**Initiative Financing Details****Budget Impact Details—Change to Current Services Level of Financing**

	Agency Request – Constrained	Agency Request – Unconstrained
General Revenue:	-\$200,000	
Federal Funds:		
All Funds:	-\$200,000	

Revenue Impact Details—Change to Revenue Estimate

	Agency Request - Constrained	Agency Request – Unconstrained
Revenues		

Bottom Line Impact

	Agency Request – Total
All Funds:	-\$200,000

Proposal Background**Proposal Overview:** 

Please provide a 3-5 sentence “elevator pitch” about this initiative. Include the initiative name, the funding requested (by fund source), and the top three most important things to know about the initiative and the problem to which it is responsive. You can choose whether to format this as a list or a paragraph.

In FY 2023, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) proposes a reduction of \$200,000 from the Environmental Education grant program to meet the constrained budget target. The state supplement Environmental Education (EE) grant has not been proven to meet its goals of (1)

increasing locally focused environmental education projects, (2) increasing the number of staff trained in environmental education, or (3) increasing public awareness of local conservation efforts.

The purpose of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Education Grants Program is to provide money to support environmental education projects that increase the public's awareness of environmental issues and provide them with the skills necessary to take responsible actions to protect the environment.

This grant program funds environmental education (EE) projects. Environmental information and outreach are important elements of EE projects, but these activities by themselves do not characterize effective environmental education. By itself, provision of environmental information only addresses public awareness and knowledge, usually about a particular environmental issue. Environmental outreach involves information dissemination and requests or suggestions for action on a particular issue (often without the critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making steps in between). EE covers the range of steps and activities from awareness to action with an ultimate goal of strong environmental stewardship.

To assist with reaching the goals of the federal EE program described above, Indiana created a state supplemental EE grant in FY 2017. When this state supplement was developed, program staff began tracking progress toward outcome metrics for which outcome evaluation is required by the federal government, as well as measuring and reporting on specific benchmarks designed to evaluate the activities of the state supplement. The state-specific benchmarks set in FY 2017 have never been met by the program. Therefore, the program can be eliminated.

Opportunity Statement: 

In this section, clearly explain the problem that exists today and the opportunity that your request aims to capitalize on. The best opportunity statements thoroughly explain, with as much detail as possible: (1) where we are today; (2) where we want to be in the future; and (3) why there is the gap between where we are and where we want to be. The best opportunity statements also quantify key variables wherever possible.

To assist with reaching the goals of the federal EE grant program described above, Indiana created a state supplemental EE grant in FY 2017. When this state supplement was developed, program staff began tracking progress toward outcome metrics for which outcome evaluation is required by the federal government, as well as measuring and reporting on specific benchmarks designed to evaluate the activities of the state supplement. The state-specific benchmarks set in FY 2017 have never been met by the program.

In practice, DEQ has not seen any progress toward these goals over the five fiscal years that the program has been operational. Locally-focused environmental education projects are tracked by program staff, and communities are required to notify DEQ of progress on their projects annually. The number of projects being undertaken in local communities has not increased since FY 2017. Similarly, the percent of local personnel taking advantage of web tutorials on the EPA website

related to environmental education has remained approximately constant. Public awareness of EE projects has also remained statistically unchanged.

Due to the lack of progress towards these goals, we believe this proposal meets the evidence-based policymaking threshold adopted by the Department and is a good candidate for inclusion in the agency's required reduction package in order to meet budgetary constraints.

Proposal Details 

Provide a detailed description of the initiative you are proposing to respond to the above-described problem and capitalize on the above-described opportunity. Your narrative here should clearly describe how your intervention, if funded, could close the gap described above and achieve the desired future state. It should not restate your narrative in the "Proposal Overview" section; rather, it should expand upon that narrative with additional details, quantifying key variables wherever possible. For constrained proposals, your narrative should clearly explain why your agency has chosen to propose this cut over other potential reduction items and detail the expected impact of the reduction on agency mission, goals, and operations.

In FY 2022, the \$200,000 state supplemental EE grant provided matching funds to three local environmental education funds and funded a marketing and communications campaign focused on raising awareness of EE projects, as well as the development of a training website for local personnel. It wasn't successful at reaching its goals, so the grant can be eliminated.

FTE Details & Requirements:

For initiatives proposing expansion or contraction of current programs, provide details here about how many FTEs currently work on the program and the total cost of salaries and benefits for those FTEs.

For all initiative types, if the proposal would require the elimination of existing FTE positions or the hiring of new FTEs, provide a detailed overview of how the initiative would impact FTE levels. Be sure to include the titles or anticipated titles and total salary and benefits costs for impacted staff or proposed new staff in your narrative here.

If this proposal would not impact agency FTE levels and/or does not involve an existing program, simply include the following narrative: This proposal would not have an impact on FTE levels.

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Timeline for Implementation: 

Describe how long the initiative will take to implement and by what date it will be fully implemented. If the initiative will not be shovel-ready on July 1, make sure you explain how you have adjusted the budget estimates to reflect the requisite ramp-up period for the initiative.

The grant can be eliminated in FY 2022.

Future Expected Costs:

In this section, provide a brief overview of how initiative costs are expected to increase or decrease in future years and fill out the below table detailing projected costs for the next five fiscal years. If costs are expected to change over time, be sure to explain why that is expected to occur. If the initiative is time-limited or has a defined sunset date, note that here and explain why.

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
General Revenue:	-\$200,000	-\$200,000	-\$200,000	-\$200,000	-\$200,000
Federal Funds:					
All Funds:	-\$200,000	-\$200,000	-\$200,000	-\$200,000	-\$200,000

Evidence Base

Evidence Scale Ranking: [5]

Please rank the proposed initiative’s current level of evidentiary support on a scale from 0-5, based on the RI Evidence Scale, with one being the least evidentiary support and five being the most evidentiary support.

You can use tools like the [Pew Results First Clearinghouse](#) and the [Social Programs That Work](#) database to determine whether the type of initiative that you are proposing has been rigorously evaluated in other jurisdictions. The Office of Management & Budget understands that the majority of agency requests will likely not be in the top evidence tiers at the point of submission, and you should certainly feel free to submit requests that are “theory-based” on the scale rather than “promising” or “proven effective.” Please note that “theory-based” submissions should include a robust and compelling measurement and evaluation plan in the Performance Measurement section.

Description of Evidence Base: 

Describe the justification for your evidence scale ranking. What evidence exists that makes you think that the proposed initiative will work? Where is there uncertainty of effectiveness? It is helpful to include citations, links, or attachments of the evidence source(s) that you draw on in making this assessment.

The federal EPA EE grant program has been rigorously evaluated and has a robust base of evidence to support its efficacy. The grants have been shown to, in the long run, establish sustainable

environmental literacy, increase stewardship leads to civic responsibility for environmental protection, habitat preservation, and prevention of environmentally induced human health problems. Outcome data from other states participating in the program supports the connection between programs funded by the grant and achievement of its stated outcomes.

Evaluation & Performance Measurement

Existing Performance Data:

For Unconstrained – Expansion, Constrained – Adjustment, and Constrained – Elimination

Initiatives: Describe the data that currently exists for this initiative and your agency’s approach to performance measurement and evaluation of the initiative. If you don’t collect any performance data on this initiative, you should explain why data is not available. If you do collect performance data, your narrative should include details about the types of data collected and the sources of that data, note the specific metrics that are tracked for the initiative, and, wherever possible, report the metrics for the last three fiscal years. If you’ve used the data to make programmatic changes in the past, you should include details about that. Your narrative should make clear whether or not the available data indicates that this initiative has been successful in reaching its goals.

For Unconstrained – New Initiatives: *Simply include the following narrative: This is a request for a new initiative about which the agency does not currently collect any data.*

For the state supplement program specifically, we collect data to meet federal reporting requirements (in the above ‘Evidence Base’ section), as well as state-specific metrics that state decisionmakers chose to measure whether or not the additional state investment was working. As detailed above, these metrics are linked to specific outcome metrics developed by the federal grant program. These metrics have remained relatively constant for the last three years and have not met their targets.

Forward-Looking Evaluation Opportunities:

For Unconstrained – New, Unconstrained – Expansion, and Constrained – Adjustment Initiatives:

Describe your agency’s plans to evaluate this initiative in the future if your request is approved. Your narrative should include the specific metrics that you plan to track, the methods you plan to use to evaluate the initiative, and the types of data that you will collect. You should explain why and how you’ve arrived at this evaluation plan. You should also quantify what success looks like for this initiative, based on the metrics that you plan to track. If this initiative is ranked as a 3 or lower on the Rhode Island Evidence Scale, your narrative here should explain how the data that you will collect will enable you to build the base of evidentiary support for this initiative.

For Constrained – Elimination Initiatives: *Simply include the following narrative:* This is a constrained request for elimination of a program; future performance measurement and program evaluation will not be required.

Timeline for Outcomes: 

Describe when, following implementation, you expect to see meaningful change resulting from the initiative (example: completion of a proposed training initiative, return on capital investment, attainment of program targets, etc.)? If you expect long-term savings to result from this initiative, make a note of total savings that you expect on an annual basis and when you expect these to begin.

N/A, the program is being eliminated.

Additional Proposal Information

Statutory Implications:

Note whether this initiative will require a budget article in order to be implemented. If an article will be required, identify the impacted statute and include an attachment with proposed new statutory language to accompany this Decision Package form, and a Budget Article Memo, which describes the technical changes to the law as well as the budget and policy implications of those changes. If an article will not be required, simply include the following narrative: This initiative will not require a budget article.

Interagency Impact:

If this initiative would impact another agency, name the affected agency(ies) and note how the proposal would impact them here. Note whether the other agency has been made aware of this proposal and whether the impact on the other agency will be included in their analysis. If the proposal is likely to have an impact on another agency but that impact is not quantifiable, you should also note that here. If this initiative will not have an interagency impact, simply include the following narrative: This initiative will not impact any other agencies.

Federal Funds Impact:

If this initiative will impact federal funds (example: reduce the amount of federal match an agency receives or require the agency to solicit new federal funding), note that here and describe the expected impact. Describe the source of federal funds (ARPA FRF, CAA, etc.) impacted by this initiative. If this initiative will not impact federal funds, simply include the following narrative: This initiative will not impact federal funds.

Information Technology Implications:

If the initiative is expected to impact information technology, include details here about the specific IT impact of the initiative, including if and how you expect it to impact the DoIT ISF. If this initiative

will not impact information technology, simply include the following narrative: This initiative will not impact information technology.

Additional

Details:

If you would like to include any other information about this proposal that does not fit into one of the above-detailed categories, please feel free to use this space to add that information to your submission.