

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 in general revenue 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; therefore, the Department believes that elimination of the state supplement is an appropriate reduction in context of the realities of resource scarcity in FY 2023.

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.

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 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. These metrics were developed by DEQ based on analysis of the impacts of federal EE programs in other states and jurisdictions and are linked with specific outcomes that DEQ is required to track for federal reporting. For example, the state metric "number of trained personnel" is linked to the federal outcome "increased stewardship leads to civic responsibility for environmental protection." The three-specific metrics on which DEQ opted to base the continued provision of the state supplemental grant are as follows:

1. Increase the number of locally focused environmental education projects from 100 in FY 2017 to 115 by FY 2022

2. Increase the percent of local personnel trained in environmental education through EPA web tutorials from 34% of project staff in FY 2017 to 50% of project staff in FY 2022
3. Increase public awareness of DEQ projects, measured via the annual survey conducted with residents of specifically identified communities across Indiana which have EE projects underway, from 54% in FY 2017 to 90% in FY 2022

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, and in fact, has decreased slightly from 100 in FY 2017 to 98 in FY 2021. Similarly, the percent of local personnel taking advantage of web tutorials on the EPA website related to environmental education has remained approximately constant, increasing only slightly from 34% in FY 2017 to 37% in FY 2022. Public awareness of EE projects has also remained statistically unchanged over this period, at 54%, and the percentage of residents who are aware of how they can help with these projects has decreased slightly, from 39% to 34%.

In order to meet the program's goals in the future, despite the elimination of state general revenue supplemental funding, DEQ plans to undertake a review of activities conducted with federal grant monies in Indiana and reallocate resources in order to optimize allocation of federal funds. This review will be conducted by DEQ staff from July 1, 2023 – January 1, 2024, and a report with recommendations for reallocation will be provided to the Governor's Office and DEQ leadership on January 1, 2024.

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 funded the following activities and projects:

- A marketing and communications campaign focused around outreach to residents of small communities to inform them about EE projects in their area and explain how they can get involved (\$50,000).

- The development of a training website aimed at providing environmental education to personnel involved in the administration of local projects, through existing EPA trainings and the design of new, Indiana-specific trainings (\$15,000).
- Three locally-focused environmental education projects via matching funds equal to the allocations for each project from the EPA grant (\$135,000).

As a general rule, the three projects that received matching funds were focused on providing environmental information to population groups that are under-resourced or might lack access to environmental education. For context, an example of one of the grant awardees is as follows:

Green and Sustainable Science Summer Program at Marian University

Marian College conducts two identical, intensive seven-week summer programs targeting a socioeconomically diverse group of both undergraduate students and high school teachers, including groups historically underrepresented in the sciences. The program contains a curricular component, a research or project component within the field of environmental sustainability, and a community outreach symposium where participants give poster and oral presentations about their projects. Each summer, 10 undergraduate students and 10 high school teachers receive five college credits. The program can be tailored to the resources of other colleges and universities. Materials from the symposium will be shared and the lead faculty member plans to be a mentor for other colleges or universities that start their own program. (Marian University -- \$30,000 federal, \$30,000 state supplement. Mary Johnson, 3200 Leslie Knope Road, Indianapolis, IN.)

While this particular program has been largely successful, the fact that it was able to leverage supplemental state funding to expand from offering one summer program to two has not encouraged other jurisdictions to develop their own programs and apply for state match dollars. Indeed, the state match grant program has received the same number of applications since FY 2017 and has funded the same programs for all five years of its operation. It is clear that the state match is not achieving its state goal of encouraging greater participation in the grant program.

If the state supplemental grant funding is eliminated, DEQ will not be able to support the services listed above, and the three local projects that the grant currently funds will lose their match funding. In order to mitigate this disruption in funding and services, and work to achieve the state goals of the state supplemental grant program despite its elimination, DEQ plans to conduct a review of federal fund allocation (as described in the Problem Statement section above). While it is not ideal to eliminate the state supplemental grant program, DEQ runs much higher-priority programs that are better able to consistently achieve their stated goals and outcomes; therefore, this initiative is unlikely to have as adverse an impact on DEQ operations than other potential reduction items might.

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.

This proposal would not have an impact on FTE levels.

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 at the state of the fiscal year, on July 1st. Contracts with the vendors will need to be renegotiated for the new fiscal year, and the Department will notify the providers that the state supplement to the federal EE program has been eliminated.

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

If the state supplemental grant funding is eliminated, DEQ will not be able to support the services and programs for future years.

Evidence Base

Evidence Scale Ranking: [1]

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.

In FY 2022, the \$200,000 state supplemental EE grant funded the following activities and projects:

- A marketing and communications campaign focused around outreach to residents of small communities to inform them about EE projects in their area and explain how they can get involved (\$50,000).
- The development of a training website aimed at providing environmental education to personnel involved in the administration of local projects, through existing EPA trainings and the design of new, Indiana-specific trainings (\$15,000).
- Three locally-focused environmental education projects via matching funds equal to the allocation for each project from the EPA grant (\$135,000).

As a general rule, the three projects that received matching fund were focused on providing environmental information to population groups that are under-resourced or might lack access to environmental education. For context, an example of one of the grant awardees is as follows:

Green and Sustainable Science Summer Program at Marian University

Marian College conducts two identical, intensive seven-week summer programs targeting a socioeconomically diverse group of both undergraduate students and high school teachers, including groups historically underrepresented in the sciences. The program contains a curricular component, a research or project component within the field of environmental sustainability, and a

community outreach symposium where participants give poster and oral presentations about their projects. Each summer, 10 undergraduate students and 10 high school teachers receive five college credits. The program can be tailored to the resources of other colleges and universities. Materials from the symposium will be shared and the lead faculty member plans to be a mentor for other colleges or universities that start their own program. (Marian University --\$30,000 federal, \$30,000 state supplement. Mary Johnson, 3200 Leslie Knope Road, Indianapolis. IN.)

While this particular program has been largely successful, the fact that it was able to leverage supplemental state funding to expand from offering one summer program to two has not encourage other jurisdictions to develop their own programs and apply for state match dollars. Indeed, the state match grant program has received the same number of applications since FY 2017 and has funded the same programs for all five years of its operation. It is clear that the state match is not achieving its stated goal of encouraging greater participation in the grant program.

If the state supplemental grant funding is eliminated, DEQ will not be able to support the services listed above, and the three local projects that the grant currently funds will lose their match funding. In order to mitigate this disruption in funding and services, and work to achieve the stated goals of the state supplemental grant program despite its elimination, DEQ plans to conduct a review of federal fund allocation (as described in the Problem State section above). While it is not ideal to eliminate the state supplemental grant program, DEQ runs much higher-priority programs that are better able to consistently achieve their state goals and outcomes; therefore, this initiative is unlikely to have as adverse an impact on DEQ operations than other potential reduction items might.

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. The state supplement grant metrics are:

1. Increase the number of locally focused environmental education projects from 100 in FY 2017 to 115 by FY 2023.
2. Increase the percent of local personnel trained in environmental education through EPA web tutorials from 34% of project staff in FY 2017 to 50% of project staff in FY 2021.
3. Increase public awareness of DEQ projects, measured via the annual survey conducted with residents of specifically identified communities across Indiana which have EE projects underway, from 54% in FY 2017 to 90% in FY 2021.

As detailed above, these metrics are linked to specific outcome metrics developed by the federal grant program. Actual performance data for the last three fiscal years is as follows:

Number of Local EE Projects:

FY 2018 Actual/Goal: 100/105

FY 2019 Actual/Goal: 100/110

FY 2020 Actual/Goal: 98/115

% of Local Personnel with EE Training:

FY 2018 Actual/Goal: 34%/40%

FY 2019 Actual/Goal: 35%/45%

FY 2020 Actual/Goal: 37%/50%

Public Awareness of EE Projects:

FY 2018 Actual/Goal: 54%/70%

FY 2019 Actual/Goal: 53%/80%

FY 2020 Actual/Goal: 55%/90%

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.

DEQ staff will undertake to study the projects being funded with federal monies and produce a report with recommendations for reallocation of federal funds, as necessary, to prioritize support for projects and initiatives with robust evidentiary support. This report will be made available on or before January 1, 2023; the report will include recommendations for updated metrics/benchmarks to track and quantify key goals for the next five years of grant funding, through FY 2026. A timeline for outcomes will be able to be generated based on that report.

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.

If the grant is eliminated at the start of the fiscal year, this will require changes to RIGL 500-500-500 to have the EE program terminated.

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.

This 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.

If the grant is eliminated, the federal EPA grants (\$135,000) would not be awarded as matching state dollars are required.

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.

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.