

RCW 28A.300.440 Natural science, wildlife, and environmental education grant program. (1) The natural science, wildlife, and environmental education grant program is hereby created, subject to the availability of funds. The program is created to promote proven and innovative natural science, wildlife, and environmental education programs that are fully aligned with the state's essential academic learning requirements, and includes but is not limited to instruction about renewable resources, responsible use of resources, and conservation.

(2) The superintendent of public instruction shall establish and publish funding criteria for environmental, natural science, wildlife, forestry, and agricultural education grants. The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall involve a cross section of stakeholder groups to develop socially, economically, and environmentally balanced funding criteria. These criteria shall be based on compliance with the essential academic learning requirements and use methods that encourage critical thinking. The criteria must also include environmental, natural science, wildlife, forestry, and agricultural education programs with one or more of the following features:

(a) Interdisciplinary approaches to environmental, natural science, wildlife, forestry, and agricultural issues;

(b) Programs that target underserved, disadvantaged, and multicultural populations;

(c) Programs that reach out to schools across the state that would otherwise not have access to specialized environmental, natural science, wildlife, forestry, and agricultural education programs;

(d) Proven programs offered by innovative community partnerships designed to improve student learning and strengthen local communities.

(3) Eligible uses of grants include, but are not limited to:

(a) Continuing in-service and preservice training for educators with materials specifically developed to enable educators to teach essential academic learning requirements in a compelling and effective manner;

(b) Proven, innovative programs that align the basic subject areas of the common school curriculum in chapter 28A.230 RCW with the essential academic learning requirements; the basic subject areas should be integrated by using environmental education, natural science, wildlife, forestry, agricultural, and natural environment curricula to meet the needs of various learning styles; and

(c) Support and equipment needed for the implementation of the programs in this section.

(4) Grants may only be disbursed to nonprofit organizations exempt from income tax under section 501(c) of the federal internal revenue code that can provide matching funds or in-kind services.

(5) Grants may not be used for any partisan or political activities. [2012 c 198 § 5; 2003 c 22 § 3.]

Effective date—2012 c 198: See note following RCW 70A.15.5110.

Intent—2003 c 22: "(1) Effective, natural science, wildlife, and environmental education programs provide the foundation for the development of literate children and adults, setting the stage for lifelong learning. Furthermore, integrating the basic subject areas of the common school curriculum in chapter 28A.230 RCW through natural science, wildlife, and environmental education offers many

opportunities for achieving excellence in our schools. Well-designed programs, aligned with the state's essential academic learning requirements, contribute to the state's educational reform goals.

(2) Washington is fortunate to have institutions and programs that currently provide quality natural science, wildlife, and environmental education and teacher training that is already aligned with the state's essential academic learning requirements.

(3) The legislature intends to further the development of natural science, wildlife, and environmental education by establishing a competitive grant program, funded through state moneys to the extent those moneys are appropriated, or made available through other sources, for proven natural science, wildlife, and environmental education programs that are fully aligned with the state's essential academic learning requirements." [2003 c 22 § 1.]