



May 30, 2014

Traci Price, Board Member  
Rick Reynolds, Board Chair  
The Environmental Education Association of Oregon  
PO Box 66014  
Portland, OR 97290

**Re: Contracting feedback**

Congratulations again on your proposal's recommendation for the grant award! The review committee has recommended *Building a Comprehensive Regional Leadership Model for Conservation Education* for a Nature in Neighborhoods 2014 Conservation Education grant award.

The Metro Council makes all final grant decisions and is scheduled to review and approve grant awards on July 10, 2014. Please email me a promotional high quality photo to include in the Council presentation by June 6, 2014. Please plan to attend this meeting and, so that we may invite your project partners directly, please send me their email contacts. More details to follow.

Please plan on a **"contracting basics" course 9 – 11 a.m., Tuesday, June 17, 2014**, at Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland. This 2-hour **required** course will explain the terms, conditions and reimbursement procedures for your grant award.

For your reference in preparing your contract, please find below the summary of the review committee discussion and specific comments and questions about your proposal.

**Nature in Neighborhoods conservation education grants review committee summary**

Metro received many strong proposals. Of the **25 full applications**, the review committee selected **15 of the most compelling programs** to recommend for funding to the Metro Council. The review committee included local experts in program management, philanthropy, grant management, fundraising, community partnership development and volunteer management. The review committee decision was based on the information submitted, the stated evaluation criteria and the review committee's professional and collective judgment.

Committee members considered the quality of individual proposals and how the proposals fit together as a whole package of grants. They reflected on a balance between supporting strong, proven programs that deliver innovative approaches and important new entrants to the field to attract people to conservation education in new ways. They contemplated how to build capacity for the sector as a whole, provide 'connective tissues' between organizations and create systemic change.

On one hand, the grant review committee found particularly compelling those programs which had the potential for longer term impacts in this first cycle of levy-funded conservation education grants. Transformational projects create a sustainable foundation for the future such as training on

diversity, equity and inclusion in the environmental field, building capacity to train the trainers, and creating replicable models.

On the other hand, the grant review committee also found existing solid programming provides needed youth, work force training and leadership development and acts as replicable models to add value to the conservation education sector. Proven culturally competent or culturally specific organizations help to build diversity in the environmental education sector.

All of the compelling proposals demonstrated well organized narratives, well-constructed budgets, clear goals and outcomes, strong partnerships, program delivery depth, and ties to a larger framework, such as the Next Generation Science standards. Proposals that focused on providing underserved communities access to nature and environmental education were most compelling if applicants or active partners were community based organizations.

### **Review committee comments**

Please address the review committee's comments below when preparing your contract.

The committee thought this proposal could have region wide impacts by creating inclusive, diverse and equitable frameworks for work toward shared values. It proposes a much needed coordination effort for the region and capacity building of regional conservation education organizations. It has potential as a leadership model suited to scale and demonstrates good coalition partners.

The committee wondered who would be hired to do the work. Will it be a competitive process? Will the Association seek someone with experience working with diverse communities? The committee noted that this is important work that organizations have been trying to do collectively for twenty years and hope a dedicated staff person could accomplish a lot in two years. They noted that there is a risk associated with this project that full support by frontline environmental education providers and school districts is not in place yet. Would those providers make a commitment to realign their programs with the plan?

They also noted that there is funding for a Center for Diversity and the Environment (CDE) consultant in this budget. Is the funding in this budget duplicative of funding requested in the CDE proposal? Does CDE have the capacity for all of the projects that are recommended for funding?

In developing the contract and grant agreement with Metro, please clarify any redundancies in budgets with CDE, Friends of Trees, and Coalition of Communities of Color about their programs being recommended for Nature in Neighborhoods conservation education grant funding. Consider how to gain buy-in and commitment from environmental education providers and school districts. Consider providing more detail and strengthening the evaluation reporting.

Thanks for all you do to support and create partnerships in local communities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature. Thanks for making this a great place!

Feel free to contact me at [crista.gardner@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:crista.gardner@oregonmetro.gov) or 503-797-1627 if I can answer questions.

Best regards,

Crista Gardner  
Grants Coordinator, Natural Areas Program