



2018 Hands on the Land Mini-Grants Program Request for Proposals

I. BACKGROUND

The National Environmental Education Foundation ([NEEF](#)) was created by Congress in 1990 through the National Environmental Education Act to advance environmental literacy nationwide and to facilitate public-private partnerships in support of environmental education. Through its collaboration with Partners in Resource Education (PRE)¹, NEEF manages Hands on the Land ([HOL](#)), a national network of partnerships between schools and public land/water management agency field sites which expose students to the environment, provide students with opportunities to engage in place-based learning and citizen science activities, and equip educators with tools needed to better align their teaching with education standards.

In addition to working with K-12 educators to provide programming that is aligned with Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards, HOL is helping to prepare students for an increasingly technical workforce. Connecting youth to the environment can peak their interests in pursuing coursework and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and environmental science.

Through this request for proposals (RFP), NEEF, in partnership with PRE will award a total of \$65,000 to HOL partnerships to support their efforts to deliver high-quality placed-based environmental education and STEM programming that is aligned with national K-12 education standards. Funding support for these grants comes from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and NEEF.

II. HOL PROGRAM GOALS

The Hands on the Land (HOL) network of public land/water management agency field site and school partnerships was designed to expand students' understanding of environmental processes and to enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills through field-based investigations and experiences. Through this RFP, NEEF intends to support programs that reflect one or more of the following funding priorities:

- Use public lands and waters as living laboratories to conduct environmental education, stewardship, environmental monitoring, or citizen science.
- Enhance curriculum-based student learning in natural, historical, and archaeological settings.
- Expand student understanding of basic environmental processes and help students to develop and apply STEM skills for investigating, evaluating, and making decisions about the environment.

¹ Partners in Resource Education is an alliance of five federal agencies and a non-profit foundation including: the Bureau of Land Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, and NEEF. The US Environmental Protection Agency provides funding support for HOL and technical assistance and advice.

- Expand collaborative efforts among public lands and waterways agencies, schools, and communities.

III. AMOUNT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE

A total of \$65,000 will be awarded through this RFP. Grant amounts may range from \$500 - \$5,000 and will vary based on the scope, strategies used to make this program sustainable beyond the grant, and cost of work proposed by each applicant, quality of the submissions, and the review and selection process. Please note that NEEF reserves the right to provide full or partial funding or may decline an applicant's request for a grant.

IV. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

1. Only HOL partnerships involving federal public land or waterway field sites can apply.
2. Each entity of the HOL partnership must [register with the HOL network](#) and complete the appropriate membership application located on the HOL website to be eligible for this grant. Each type of HOL application requires two representatives to be registered.

For a public land or waterway, the site manager and a HOL program person each need to register (create HOL user accounts) and then complete a single [Field Site Application](#). For each school, a HOL coordinator (usually a teacher) and an administrative contact each need to register (create HOL user accounts) and then complete a single [School Application](#). (Please note: We are requiring each school that participates, even if from the same district, to complete a separate application.) When a non-school organization is to have a role in the HOL program, a program person and the executive director each need to register (create HOL user accounts) and then complete a single [Partner Application](#).

HOL applications are reviewed/approved by PRE representatives. If you have questions about the HOL network or about your status as a HOL member, please email RSendrey@neefusa.org.

V. GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Required program criteria:

- provides K-12 place-based learning experiences on public lands/waters.

Priority for grant requests will be given to programs that:

- use public lands/waters as living laboratories to conduct environmental education, stewardship, environmental monitoring, or citizen science;
- enhance curriculum-based student learning (i.e., meeting [Next Generation Science Standards](#), [Common Core Standards](#), etc.) in natural, historical, & archaeological settings;
- expand student understanding of basic environmental processes and help students to develop and apply STEM skills for investigating, evaluating, and making decisions about the environment;
- expand program participation to include new and diverse audiences, especially underserved audiences.
- expand collaborative efforts among public land and waterway agencies, schools, and communities.

Additional suggested grant program components:

- provide beneficial health-based participant activities;
- provide opportunities for exploration of a broad range of natural resource career opportunities;
- mentor other sites in the network with their school partnership needs;
- incorporate Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics [guidelines](#);
- participate in [National Public Lands Day](#) and/or [Environmental Education Week](#).

VI. **FUNDING GUIDELINES AND RESTRICTIONS**

Allowable Expenses:

- Grant funds can be used to cover costs associated with delivering programs (i.e., curriculum/materials development, non-federal staff time (up to 20% of proposed grant budget), field trips, program supplies, transportation, etc.).
- Funds can also be used to fulfill [Every Kid in a Park](#) requirements.

Funds awarded through this RFP cannot be used for:

- Conducting lobbying, carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation
- Influencing the outcome of any specific election through any means
- Federal staff time
- Purposes other than charitable, scientific, or educational
- Budget shortfalls, general support, or endowment funds
- Land acquisition or real estate purchases
- Individual scholarships or fellowships
- Reimbursement purposes (i.e., to cover costs associated with events or activities that have already occurred)
- Any costs not directly related to the funds requested in the proposal

VII. **APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS**

The application period for the 2018 HOL Mini-Grants will open on **Thursday, February 1, 2018 and will only be accepted through NEEF's [online grants system](#)**. Please note that late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Follow these steps to apply:

1. Log in or create an account in our [online system](#).
2. To start your application, click **Apply** on the top of the screen. A grant titled "2018 Hands on the Land Mini Grants" will appear. Click **Apply** to begin your application.
3. Once you have completed the application, click Submit Form. If you do not click Submit Form, you will not have applied. You will be directed to a confirmation screen upon submitting.

Applications are due **by 11:59 EST pm on Thursday, March 1, 2018**. If you have any questions or problems, don't hesitate to contact us at grantsadmin@neefusa.org.

Please note the following when completing your application:

- The information in both the user information and organization information sections should be that of the representative from the federal public land or waterway field site.

- Although the grantee will be the federal public land or waterway site, since federal land sites cannot receive funds directly, a registered HOL partner is required to act as the fiscal agent for grant funds, should they be awarded. This can be either the school or nonprofit partner.

 **Applications will be reviewed and scored based upon the following criteria:**

- Description of the proposed hands-on education program which includes who the participants benefitting from the program will be, and the intended purposes and expected results of the learning activities.
- Detailed timeline of the proposed programming activities.
- Explanation of how the grant would help to advance the federal agency's priorities
- Anticipated outcomes and impact.
- Ability of the site to sustain the program after funding ends.
- Reasonableness of budget and the degree to which it aligns with the proposed activity
- Overall quality of the application.

VIII. TIMELINE

Applications Open	Thursday, February 1, 2018
Applications Due	Thursday, March 1, 2018
Grantees Announced	April 2018
Grant Period	April 23, 2018 – April 19, 2016