

2022-2023 NPS-21st CCLC Greening STEM Grants Request for Applications (RFA)





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Supported by the US Department of Education

Issued by the National Park Service and the National Environmental Education Foundation

The National Park Service (NPS) is collaborating with the US Department of Education (ED) and the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) to build the capacity of NPS units and [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) (21st CCLC) to design and deliver STEM programming that partners formal and non-formal educators and engages youth from under-resourced and/or underrepresented communities in after-school time (AST) or out-of-school time (OST) place-based citizen science and environmental monitoring, preferably using components of NEEF's Greening STEM model (www.neefusa.org/education/greening-stem).

Through these NPS-21st CCLC Greening STEM grants, NPS and NEEF seek to advance mutual STEM education goals by providing 21st CCLC program participants with access to authentic STEM experiences that use the environment and NPS' unique mission—to preserve, unimpaired, the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations—as a context for engagement. Programming funded by these grants will utilize STEM-focused content, instructional strategies, training approaches, and collaboration and dissemination technologies to assist 21st CCLC center directors and staff in implementing and enhancing AST or OST STEM programs, with a primary focus on NPS-related subject matter. Following project completion, all resources and related content developed under these grants will be made available via ED's You4Youth professional learning portal. For examples of successful past projects check out our videos (www.neefusa.org/education/greening-stem/action).

Grant Program Priorities

NEEF, NPS, and ED aim to increase grantee teams' understanding of how to use STEM learning activities to address environmental challenges, engender stewardship, and forge lasting collaborations between NPS sites and 21st CCLC sites by:

- bringing Greening STEM programming that includes citizen science or environmental monitoring activities to 21st CCLC K-12 students during non-school hours,
- building the capacity of NPS and 21st CCLC staff to offer high quality programming in out-of-school settings that aligns with state education standards, and
- helping 21st CCLC sites build a culture that values using the environment as a context for improving student learning and achievement.

NEEF has funding available for AmeriCorps VISTA individual placements to help support program implementation. Costs associated with these placements do not need to be included in the grant applicant's budget. NPS sites interested in being considered for a VISTA individual



placement should indicate their interest and whether housing is available by checking the appropriate box(es) on the grant application.

NEEF anticipates funding a total of 20 or more NPS units partnering with a total of 20 or more 21st CCLC sites. Applications for Year 3 funding will be for programs proposed for September 2022 – May 2023. Recipients of previous funding, whose programs are in good standing, are encouraged to apply for this round of funding.

Timeline

Application Process

- March 15, 2022 – Online applications open
- April 30, 2022 – Grant applications are due
- May 2022 – Review and grantee selection completed
- June/July 2022 – Award announcement and distribution of funding

Grantee

- July 19-21, 2022 – Kick-off event at 21st CCLC Summer Symposium
- July 29, 2022-ongoing – Blended planning/training with individual sites
- August 17, 2022 – Final program plans due to NEEF
- September 30, 2022 – Signed release forms for students due to ED
- September 2022 - May 2023 – Program delivery and evaluation team site visits

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Application Process

The following sections outline what will be expected of applicants. All applications must be submitted using NEEF's [online grants portal](#). If you have applied for a NEEF grant previously, please use your existing account. If in doubt, existing accounts can be **searched for** using a tax ID number (EIN). First time applicants will need to create an account.

Grant applications are due on **April 30, 2022, by 11:59 PM PT.**



Eligibility

Previous NPS-21st CCLC Greening STEM grantees wanting to continue their programs are eligible, if in good standing. Previous grantees can also apply with a different project design.

First time and returning applicants

- Open to NPS units that are interested in partnering with local 21st CCLC programs. These NPS units include an NPS partner that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit (or working through a fiscal agent) whose mission is focused on serving an NPS unit in the United States and the improvement and responsible use of that site. The NPS unit must be within a 2-hour drive of a 21st CCLC program site(s).
 - Please note: the NPS unit is the official applicant responsible for the submission of their application, all required documents, and reports.
- Applicant must provide a current letter of commitment from the 21st CCLC program site(s). *The letter must be signed and on letterhead.* Funding for these grants comes from ED's 21st CCLC program, therefore partner schools must already receive 21st CCLC program funds in order to be eligible for this project. For a list of 21st CCLC programs by state please visit: <https://y4y.ed.gov/21st-community-learning-center-sites>.
 - NEEF and ED can assist NPS sites in identifying 21st CCLC state contacts and partner schools. Please contact Megan Willig at mwillig@neefusa.org with questions about identifying partner sites.

Funding

- First time applicants and returning applicants may apply for a total request of \$10,000-\$30,000 (with a \$15,000 maximum request for partnerships with a single 21st CCLC site). Higher funding requests should reach multiple sites and demonstrate greater participant engagement and/or an extended project duration. Funding requests should be appropriate for the number of sites and participants to be served with the proposed project. A justification for the scale of the program/project implementation should be included in the application.

Required Project Proposal Criterial

Strong applications will include the following:

- Description of the goal of the proposed project.
- Description of the target audience, including grade level(s) and demographics.
- Description of the park's history collaborating with the selected 21st CCLC program and plans for collaborating around the proposed project.
- Description about gaps in the park's existing STEM programs and how the park is



proposing to address these gaps.

- Description of the citizen science or environmental monitoring project, including what STEM skills students will learn as a result of participating in the project. Please be sure to include:
 - Description of a series of STEM learning activities that will take place during the AST/OST program.
 - Description of one or more of the pre-field activities that will prepare students for one or more field experiences to be followed by two or more post-field activities.
 - At least one pre-field activity must include a visit to the 21st CCLC program site from an NPS representative.
 - Field-based activities must include one or more visits to the NPS site to participate in data collection as part of a citizen science or environmental monitoring project.
 - One of the two or more post-field activities must involve data analysis.
 - Another activity needs to include some type of presentation of the project findings.
 - *Note: NPS-21st CCLC project teams will have the opportunity to update and refine their project plans during the virtual orientation and workshops during ED's 21st CCLC Summer Symposium.*

Training

Grantees will receive virtual training in program planning, citizen science/environmental monitoring, and evaluation at ED's 21st CCLC Summer Institute. Additionally, during the grant performance period, participating sites will be able to request technical support to assist them in implementing their program/project.

Grantee teams will be required to convene virtually as part of the 21st CCLC Summer Symposium on July 19-21, 2022 for a mandatory orientation and workshops. During that time, grantee teams will learn about the national project, key participants, and a detailed timeline. They will learn about designing and implementing successful citizen science/environmental monitoring projects. They will use the orientation and workshop(s) to refine their project plans using resources like [the Greening STEM model](#) and the Dimensions of Success [Program Planning Tool](#).

Site Visits

NEEF will conduct virtual or in-person site visits during the grant period. These visits will be used as part of the evaluation process.



Targeted Project Outcomes

NEEF will be evaluating projects based on the following educator/staff and student participant outcomes:

- Educators/staff and students demonstrate understanding of STEM concepts, the scientific inquiry and environmental monitoring processes, and their applications.
- Educators/staff demonstrate confidence in their ability to lead environmental monitoring and citizen science activities/discussions.
- Students demonstrate confidence in their ability to participate in environmental monitoring and citizen science activities/discussions.
- Students demonstrate interest in pursuing or participating in classes, activities or discussions related to general STEM and/or environmental science.
- Students demonstrate motivation to pursue additional STEM-related classes, activities and/or careers.

Application Assistance

Questions about the application should be sent to: grantsadmin@neefusa.org.

Please type "2022-2023 NPS-21st CCLC Greening STEM Grant" in the subject line of your email.