# California Regional Environmental Education Community Network Grant Request for Applications



**California Department of Education**

**Funded through the Environmental License Plate Fund**

**California *Public Resources Code* Chapter 1105 Section 21190(c)**

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply:

**Tuesday, January 9, 2024, by 5 p.m.**

Deadline for Applications[[1]](#footnote-2):

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024, by 3 p.m.**

Administered by the

Professional Learning Support and Monitoring Office

Professional Learning Support Division

California Department of Education

1430 N Street, Suite 4309

Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

plsmo@cde.ca.gov

Phone: 916-323-5847

FAX: 916-323-2833

## Table of Contents

[Introduction 1](#_Toc153358236)

[State Statute and Authority 1](#_Toc153358237)

[Goals and Purpose of the Program 2](#_Toc153358238)

[Eligible Project Partnerships 5](#_Toc153358239)

[Application Information 6](#_Toc153358240)

[Application Timeline 6](#_Toc153358241)

[Assurances, Certifications, Terms, and Conditions 6](#_Toc153358242)

[Assurances and Certifications 6](#_Toc153358243)

[Terms and Conditions 7](#_Toc153358244)

[Allowable Activities and Costs 7](#_Toc153358245)

[Non-Allowable Activities and Costs 8](#_Toc153358246)

[Administrative Indirect Cost Rate 8](#_Toc153358247)

[Accountability and Reporting Requirements 9](#_Toc153358248)

[Application Procedures 10](#_Toc153358249)

[A. Notice of Intent to Apply 10](#_Toc153358250)

[B. Application Submission 10](#_Toc153358251)

[Application Review 16](#_Toc153358252)

[Technical Assistance 16](#_Toc153358253)

[Appeals Process 16](#_Toc153358254)

[Appendix 1. Project Description Template 17](#_Toc153358255)

[Appendix 2. Rubric for Evaluating the Application 19](#_Toc153358256)

[A. Rubric for Bonus Points 19](#_Toc153358257)

[B. Rubric for Evaluation of the Proposed Partnership 20](#_Toc153358258)

[C. Rubric for Evaluating the Project Activities 25](#_Toc153358259)

[D. Rubric for Evaluating the Budget 30](#_Toc153358260)

## Introduction

The California Department of Education (CDE) invites county offices of education (COEs) with expertise in providing professional learning to apply to be a Lead COE for the 2024–27 California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) Network Grant. The CREEC Network Grant will assist kindergarten through grade twelve educators with integrating academic content areas with environmental literacy. Proposed projects must meet the goals and requirements outlined in this Request for Applications (RFA) and provide services to educators in regions of California to help connect them to local environmentally focused resources, initiatives, education programs and sites with the goal of increasing students' environmental literacy levels. Awardees will collaborate to support a statewide network known as the CREEC Network.

The CDE will fund up to three grants to carry out activities from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2027. Each Lead COE will receive $120,000 each year of the grant cycle and will be contingent upon state funding and project performance.

Each grantee's performance will be reviewed annually to determine eligibility for Year Two and Year Three funding. The review will be based on the grantee's proven ability to fulfill reporting requirements and accomplish the goals, outcomes, and deliverables of the project.

If opportunities for additional funding become available, invitations to augment existing grant awards may be offered. Augmentations of existing grant awards may require specific deliverables and additional specific reporting requirements. Augmentations of existing grant awards will be optional and not required as part of this RFA.

## State Statute and Authority

The CREEC Network Grant will:

* Be funded through the Environmental License Plate Fund California *Public Resources Code* (*PRC*) Chapter 1105 Section 21190(c).
* Achieve the directives outlined in the following California *Education Code* (*EC*):
* Title 1 General *EC* Provisions, Chapter 4. Environmental Education sections 8700–8707 (<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=EDC&division=1.&title=1.&part=6.&chapter=4.&article=>).
* Title 2 Elementary and Secondary Education Provisions, Chapter 1010, Article 2. Course of Study, Grades One to Six, Section 51210 (<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=51210.&lawCode=EDC>); and Article 3. Courses of Study, Grades Seven to Twelve, Section 51220 (<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=51220.&lawCode=EDC>).
* Implement the Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&Cs) produced by *PRC* Section 71301 (<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=71301.&lawCode=PRC>).

## Goals and Purpose of the Program

The CREEC Network Grant applicants will propose to provide services to a specific CREEC Hub in California. For the purposes of this RFA, three CREEC Hubs are based on the CREEC Network Regions listed on the CDE CREEC Network web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/sc/creecnetwork.asp> and will be the following:

1. CREEC Northern Hub includes the CREEC Network Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4. This includes the counties of Alameda, Alpine, Butte, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Mateo, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Yolo, and Yuba.
2. CREEC Central Hub includes the CREEC Network Regions 5, 6, 7, and 8. This includes the counties of Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Tuolumne, San Benito, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Stanislaus, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Monterey, Tulare, and Ventura.
3. CREEC Southern Hub includes the CREEC Network Regions 9, 10, and 11. This includes the counties of Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego.

Applications must propose to provide services to target audiences in a specific CREEC Hub. Target audiences will be made up of formal educators and community-based partner educators (CBP educators). Target audiences will include at least 50 percent formal educators. For the purposes of this grant initiative, a formal educator is a teacher, paraprofessional, teacher on special assignment, principal, or other staff employed by a local educational agency (LEA) as defined by California *EC* Section 60603 or Institute of Higher Education (IHE), and a CBP educator is an educator employed by other entities such as a nonprofit organization, local municipality, state agency, or federal education program.

Planned activities will assist with building capacity of the target audience at the CREEC Region level by strengthening knowledge of content, pedagogical and instructional leadership skills.

The application must propose to have COE staff provide services to target audiences throughout a CREEC Hub and accomplish the following tasks:

1. Work together as a grant team to maintain a list of educators by county, CREEC Region and CREEC Hub for the purposes of inviting appropriate participants to the CREEC Network activities and identifying county and regional leaders. This list will be shared with the CDE but will not be shared with partners.
2. Host and facilitate at least two annual CREEC Hub meetings. These meetings will build capacity of educators in the CREEC Hub and include professional learning activities, sharing of lesson resources, networking, and announcements about professional learning opportunities or events hosted by other environmental literacy focused programs, initiatives, or networks.
3. Host and facilitate at least one annual meeting with each CREEC Region within the Hub. These meetings will build capacity of educators in each CREEC Region and include professional learning activities, sharing of lesson resources, networking, and announcements about professional learning opportunities or events hosted by other environmental literacy focused programs, initiatives, or networks.
4. Work with the CDE to collaborate with other grantees to host and facilitate an annual CREEC Network Statewide Meeting.
5. Ensure formal educators employed by a formal education agency in the region will participate in the CDE CREEC Network Program CREEC Contacts to ensure there is at least one CREEC Contact listed on each CREEC Region web page. The Project Coordinator will be listed as a the CREEC Contact on a CREEC Region web page if no one else is identified.
6. Submit edits and enter new posts into the CREEC Network website portal for each CREEC Region web page that is in their CREEC Hub to ensure each CREEC Region web page is maintained with current regional information. Each CREEC Region web page is available to the public at [www.creec.org](http://www.creec.org/).
7. The Lead COE will ensure all activities will consider the needs and unique aspects of each county in each CREEC Region of California when the activities are developed, planned, and implemented.

Professional learning activities should be proposed to happen in conjunction with other required meetings. Additional professional learning activities can be proposed to occur outside of the required meetings. All professional learning activities will help educators implement current California State Board of Education (SBE)-adopted content standards and frameworks (state standards and frameworks), and the EP&Cs. The application must propose to provide the following services throughout a CREEC Hub and non-COE partners may be included to help accomplish the following tasks:

1. Provide opportunities for the target audience to learn about a variety of lesson materials available that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks, and not promote one supplementary curriculum material over others.
2. Assist the target audience with learning about the variety of lesson resources and tools available including but not limited to online maps and real time data so they can insert the resources and tools into their own lessons with students.
3. Allow CBP educators and formal educators from outdoor education programs operated in partnership with LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators.
4. Assist formal educators with utilizing school grounds, nearby parks and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks as well as the students’ classroom lessons.
5. Assist the target audience with developing lessons for students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks as well as the students’ classroom lessons.

Due to the amount of available funds and large area of each CREEC Hub, all meetings, events, and workshops will need to use online resources and include virtual or hybrid delivery strategies for including virtual participants.

Successful applications will:

* Reflect the required components in this RFA.
* Demonstrate proposed project plans that are based on regional needs, inform subsequent project year plans, are technically feasible, and have sustainable components beyond the scope of the grant.
* Consider costs and educators’ time when proposing activities. Multi-day in-person events without virtual participation opportunities will not be considered cost effective events that consider educators’ time.

Proposed professional learning activities will be conducted by educators with experience working in the California education system who have the following experiences:

1. Helping classroom teachers learn about the variety of supplemental curriculum lesson materials available that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks.
2. Providing CBP educators and educators from outdoor education programs operated by LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators.
3. Providing classroom teachers and CBP educators opportunities to learn about the variety of lesson resources and tools available including but not limited to online maps and real time data so they can insert the resources and tools into their own lessons with students.
4. Assisting formal educators and CBP educators with utilizing school grounds, nearby parks and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks and the students’ classroom lessons.

## Eligible Project Partnerships

Only COEs or County Superintendents of Schools are eligible to apply as the Lead COE. The project partnership should be a consortium made up of partners contributing services to implement project tasks and activities. If more than one COE is applying, a single COE must be identified as the Lead COE and Fiscal Agent. Partners (LEAs and non-LEAs) are eligible to receive funds by participating in the consortium and collaborating fully with the Lead COE.

The Lead COE must certify that it will be responsible for:

1. Receiving and administering the grant funds and submitting the required reports to the CDE to account for the use of grant funds.
2. Certifying that no single partner, other than the Lead COE, will benefit from more than 30 percent of the total grant award.
3. Ensuring the performance of any services provided by partners is high quality and consistent with the requirements of this RFA.
4. Making sure that any new course materials, including curriculum, developed as a result of this grant, are available as open, accessible educational resources.

Successful partnerships must demonstrate expertise in the following areas:

1. Providing professional learning opportunities for educators in the integration of environmental content and SBE-adopted content standards and frameworks (state standards and frameworks), and the EP&Cs.
2. Working with other existing statewide education networks and grant projects that are providing high-quality resources and professional learning opportunities to educators.
3. Assisting the region's LEAs and schools with providing outdoor learning experiences for students using lessons that are integrating environmental content and SBE-adopted state standards and framework, and the EP&Cs.
4. Experience in developing environmental education or environmental literacy resources and outdoor learning experiences.
5. Evaluating curriculum resources and activities for students using requirements set forth in SBE-adopted state standards and frameworks, and the EP&Cs.

## Application Information

### Application Timeline

| **Activity** | **Date** |
| --- | --- |
| RFA Release  | December 14, 2023 |
| Notice of Intent to Apply | January 9, 2024, by 5 p.m. |
| Application Workshop Webinar | January 11, 2024 |
| Application due to the CDE | February 13, 2024, by 3 p.m. |
| Intent to Award posted | April 12, 2024 |
| Last day for Appeals to be received by the CDE | April 29, 2024 |
| Final Awards posted | May 10, 2024 |
| Program Start Date | July 1, 2024 |

\*Timeline subject to change. Refer to the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp> for the most up-to-date timeline.

## Assurances, Certifications, Terms, and Conditions

Assurances, certifications, terms, and conditions are requirements of the grantee as a condition of receiving funds. The signed grant application submitted to the CDE is a commitment to comply with the assurances, certifications, terms, and conditions associated with the grant.

### Assurances and Certifications

The Lead COE, acting as the Fiscal Agent, must agree to assurances. Applicants do not need to sign and return the general assurances and certifications with the application. Instead, applicants must download assurances and certifications and keep them on file and available for compliance reviews, complaint investigations, or audits.

General assurances and certifications are available on the CDE Funding Forms web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/fm/ff.asp>.

### Terms and Conditions

The Lead COE selected for funding will be the Fiscal Agent and receive a Grant Award Notification (AO-400), the official CDE document that awards funds to local projects. The grantee must sign and return the AO-400 to the CDE before project work may begin and disbursement of funds can be made. The grantee and the Fiscal Agent must be the same entity.

The grant award will be processed upon receipt of the signed AO-400. The AO-400 must be signed by the authorized agent and returned to the CDE within 10 working days of receipt.

All funds must be expended or legally obligated by June 30, 2027, and for not more than the maximum amount indicated on the AO-400. Encumbrances may be made at any time after the beginning date of the grant stated on the AO-400. No extensions of this grant will be allowed.

Before the release of Year One funds, the CDE will approve a Year One project plan and budget plan for the funds that is provided by the Lead COE.

A budget revision is required if expenditures for any budget category exceed 10 percent of the authorized budget item total in the approved budget. The budget revision must be approved by the CDE before expenditures are made.

### Allowable Activities and Costs

Applicant budgets for the use of grant funds will be reviewed and any items that are deemed non-allowable, excessive, or inappropriate will be eliminated. Generally, all expenditures must contribute to the goals and objectives outlined in this RFA.

The grantee may enter into subcontracts with one or more COE, LEA, IHE, or nonprofit educational service providers to assist in fulfilling the responsibilities to implement the goals and objectives outlined in this RFA. As a term of agreeing to participate in this grant project, subcontractors will only be allowed to charge indirect costs at the CDE’s approved indirect cost rate (ICR). If a subcontractor does not have a CDE-approved ICR, they may only charge indirect costs up to the CDE’s approved ICR of the Lead COE.

Travel costs will be approved using the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) travel rates for state government employees, which can be found at <https://www.calhr.ca.gov/employees/Pages/travel-reimbursements.aspx>.

### Non-Allowable Activities and Costs

Funds may not be used for the items listed below unless the expense is approved by the CDE as necessary, reasonable, and contributing to the goals and objectives outlined in this RFA. Applications should consider this when proposing expenses.

* Travel and costs related to statewide conferences, symposia, or other similar events not organized exclusively by the grantee.
* Rental of a venue to provide professional learning.
* Speaker and Facilitator Fees
* Food services, refreshments, banquets, meals.
* Purchases in Capital Outlay, Budget Category 6000.

Funds provided under this grant may not be used for the following purposes:

* Supplanting of existing funding and efforts.
* Acquisition of equipment for administrative or personal use.
* Acquisition of furniture (e.g., bookcases, chairs, desks, file cabinets, tables), unless an integral part of an equipment workstation or to provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities.
* Purchase of space.
* Payment for memberships in professional organizations.
* Purchase of promotional favors, such as bumper stickers, pencils, pens, or t-shirts.
* Subscriptions to journals or magazines.
* Travel outside California and the United States.

### Administrative Indirect Cost Rate

Indirect costs reflect general administration and overhead that cannot easily be charged as direct program costs of the programs or activities they benefit, and that are borne by a primary party as a result of activities it charges as direct costs. Funds used to pay indirect costs are best attributable to the partner that “uses” the corresponding funds as direct costs.

The grantees must limit administrative indirect costs to the CDE’s approved ICR, which may be found on the CDE ICR web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/ac/ic/index.asp>.

Certain types of costs (activities) require relatively minimal administrative support compared to the amount of dollars spent. These costs would distort the indirect cost process and are excluded from the calculation of indirect costs. Following are the most common costs excluded from the calculation:

* Subagreements for Services (Object Code 5100)
* Capital Outlay (Object Codes 6000–6999)
* Other Outgo (Object Codes 7000–7499) and Other Financing Uses (Object Codes 7600–7699)

Since these costs are excluded from the determination of indirect costs, it is not appropriate to include them in the pool of eligible program expenditures on which to charge indirect costs. (See the *California School Accounting Manual* [*CSAM*] [<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/ac/sa/index.asp>] Procedures 330 and 915 for further details on these categories of expenditures.)

Unlike other costs in Object Codes 5000–5999, Object Code 5100 costs are excluded from the calculation of indirect costs and from eligible program expenditures on which indirect costs are charged (see Procedure 915). However, in recognition that some general administration is necessary to process a subagreement, indirect cost guidelines allow that up to $25,000 of each individual subagreement may be coded to Object Code 5800, Professional/Consulting Services and Operating Expenditures, with the remainder charged to Object Code 5100. The amount charged to Object Code 5800 is included in the calculation of indirect costs and in eligible program expenditures on which indirect costs are charged. The $25,000 limit per subagreement applies each year throughout the duration of the subagreement.

Per CSAM, a modified total direct cost base consists of total direct costs minus the following:

* The amount of each sub-award in excess of $25,000
* Tuition and related fees
* Equipment, as defined in the *Code of Federal Regulations,* Title 2, Section 200.33

### Accountability and Reporting Requirements

An integral part of the reporting requirements is ongoing communication with the CDE. The grantee will participate in regular meetings with the CDE. Additionally, regular reports will be completed and submitted to the CDE.

If the CDE does not receive the required reports, program activities are not completed, there is a lack of participation in meetings, or there is a negative trend in the dissemination of technical assistance, funding may be halted.

## Application Procedures

The costs of preparing and delivering the application are the sole responsibility of the Lead COE. The CDE will not provide reimbursement for any costs incurred or related to the Lead COE’s involvement or participation in the RFA process.

### A. Notice of Intent to Apply

The Lead COE should submit a letter of the intent to apply via email to PLSMO@cde.ca.gov by the date listed on the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp> in order to be added to an email list for the purposes of receiving information regarding the online application system, answers to questions, clarifications, or updates. The email should be titled “CREEC Grant Intent to Apply” and include, the name of the grant, a statement of the intent to submit an application, the name of a contact person for the Lead COE, and the person’s email address and phone number.

### B. Application Submission

The files described below will need to be uploaded to make an application complete. Refer to the scoring rubric in Appendix B to understand how each of the items will be evaluated by application reviewers. No additional information included will be reviewed. Application submission directions are provided below.

#### 1. Project Description

Submit a description of the proposed project as a portable document format (PDF) file. Applicants are encouraged to use the template provided in Appendix 1 to ensure all requested information is included in the submitted Project Description. Appendix 1 illustrates the acceptable format. The formatting of the document must be Arial font, 12-point font size, black text on a white background. Bold, underline, and bullets may be used. Lines may not be spaced less than single space (12 point). Do not use colors other than black and do not insert pictures.

The Project Description will answer the following questions and adhere to maximum character limits for each response (see Appendix 1 for character limits):

1. How will the partnership address the requirements provided in the section titled Eligible Project Partnerships? Align the description to the application’s tables titled Project Staff and Project Plan.
2. How will the project accomplish the goals listed in the section of this RFA titled Goals and Purpose of the Program? Align the description to the application’s tables titled Project Staff and Project Plan.
3. How has the proposed partnership previously collaborated as partners in providing the required tasks described in the RFA including networking and professional learning opportunities for the target audience?

#### 2. Project Staff Table

The application must include an uploaded file that is titled Project Staff and includes a table with the project year and name of the Lead COE in the title (see sample table below). The first column must include the name of the staff person and title for the role they will have in the project. If a person’s name is not known at the time, use Name Unknown as the person’s name. The second column must include the name of the project staff person’s current employer and bullets indicating previous experience implementing state environmental literacy education grants and experience that is relevant to implementing the project. The third column must include the responsibilities the person will have in implementing the grant project. Include information to help align the Project Staff table to the Project Plan table.

The sample table below illustrates the acceptable format. The formatting of the table must be Arial font, 12-point font size, black text on a white background. Bold, underline, and bullets may be used. Lines may not be spaced less than single space (12 point). Do not use colors other than black and do not insert pictures.

**Sample Project Staff Table**

**Sample County Office of Education**

**Year One**

| **Name of Staff Person and Title** | **Employer and Previous Experience** | **Responsibilities** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Jane Doe, Project Coordinator | Sample County Office of Education* Served as CREEC North grant lead from 2021–24.
* Ten years of experience providing professional learning to formal educators and CBP educators in the integration of environmental literacy into lessons with students that were aligned to California state guidance, standards, and frameworks.
 | * Coordinate the project including fiscal management, convening the consortium, reporting to the CDE.
* Facilitate professional learning sessions.
 |

#### 3. Project Plan

The application must include an uploaded file that is titled Project Plan and includes a table with the project year and name of the Lead COE in the title (see sample table below). The table must include three project years of project goals and activities and contain three columns as described below.

The first column must include the project month and year. The second column must include the major goals, activities, and measurable outcomes that will demonstrate project success. The third column must include names of specific people responsible for achieving each of the outcomes mentioned. If a person’s name is not known at the time, use Name Unknown as the person’s name. Include each person's project title when they are mentioned for the first time or use the person’s project title if the person’s name is unknown.

This table will show how the project leadership will monitor the overall success of the project and partnership. A separate row should be created for each goal or measurable outcome expected to be achieved, and a separate row should be created for each activity if there are multiple activities conducted within a one-month period.

For each project year, the table should include:

1. All proposed activities and the goals of each activity that will be implemented each project year.
2. Indications when data will be collected, analyzed, or used for project improvement purposes.

The sample table below illustrates the acceptable format. The formatting of the table must be Arial font, 12-point font size, black text on a white background. Bold, underline, and bullets may be used. Lines may not be spaced less than single space (12 point). Do not use colors other than black and do not insert pictures.

**Sample Project Plan Table**

**Sample County Office of Education**

**Year One**

| **Month/Year** | **Goals, Activities, and Outcomes** | **Responsible Person(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 11/2018 | Goal: Convene partnersOutcomes:* Reviewed meeting/workshop calendar.
* Assembled professional learning teams.
* Identified sample lesson materials for professional learning sessions.
* Reviewed when data will be collected, analyzed, and used for project improvement purposes.
 | Jane Doe, Project Coordinator |
| 12/2018 | Goal: Workshop #1 preparationOutcomes:* Recruited workshop participants.
* Session materials developed.
* Facility and materials secured.
 | * Jane Doe, Project Coordinator
* John Smith, Calvert Foothills Education Center
* Emily Baker, California Center for Mathematics
 |

#### 4. Proposed Budget Spreadsheet

A three-year Proposed Budget Spreadsheet is required in the application. Project expenses will be identified using grant funds beginning July 1, 2024, for fiscal years 2024–25, 2025–26, and 2026–27 ending on June 30, 2027. The proposed budget should not exceed the amount of $120,000 for each fiscal year. A blank copy of the Proposed Budget Spreadsheet can be downloaded from the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp>.

The budget must demonstrate an appropriate use of state funds and include staffing costs, costs to develop educator resources and professional learning, and costs for an independent evaluation of the program. The applicant must provide a thorough and detailed justification for each identified cost associated with implementing the proposed activities. Costs must align with the allowable expenditures described in this RFA and be reasonable and necessary to support the application’s goals and activities.

The budget will be reviewed and scored. The expenditure information alone does not provide sufficient information, and additional explanations should be included to make a strong proposed budget.

Provide details and calculations for expenditure amounts for the following areas:

* Staff compensation including identifying costs that are for administrative services
* Compensation for educators or substitute costs associated with participation at professional learning events
* Supplies required to support the project’s activities
* Services provided by the applicant and external entities
* Costs to host meetings and professional learning workshops
* Travel costs based on CalHR travel rates
* Indirect charges

Applicants must use the Proposed Budget Spreadsheet template available on the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp>.

Expenditure categories and object codes must be consistent with the Standard Accounting Code Structure—the relevant expenditure categories and object codes can be found in Procedure 330, Object Classification, in the *CSAM* on the CDE Definitions, Instructions, and Procedures web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/ac/sa>.

The Proposed Budget Narrative tab of the Proposed Budget spreadsheet must include a thorough and detailed budget justification (narrative description) for each line item included in the grant period, per year. Provide sufficient detail and a breakdown/calculation that justifies each line item. Group line items by the Object Code series and provide lines for Object Code totals. The Proposed Budget Summary tab should provide totals for each Object Code and should align with the Proposed Budget Narrative tab in the Proposed Budget Spreadsheet.

The Proposed Budget Spreadsheet must be uploaded as an Excel file through the online application portal.

#### 5. Letters of Commitment and Letters of Support

The application should include Letters of Commitment or Letters of Support from each partner in the consortium signed by a person who can commit the partner to the work assigned to them in the Project Plan.

#### 6. Application Signature Form

The application must include a signed copy of the Application Signature Form. A blank copy of the Application Signature Form can be downloaded from the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp>.

#### Application Submission Instructions

The complete application, including all required components, **must be uploaded to a folder in Box.com provided to the Lead COE via email in advance for receipt of the application. The application must be uploaded** by the date listed in the timeline on the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp>.

Incomplete, late, or incorrectly formatted applications will not be scored or considered for funding.

Transmission by U.S. Mail, email, or fax will not be accepted.

Questions regarding submission of an application should be directed via email to PLSMO@cde.ca.gov.

An application may be rejected if it is incomplete, or if it contains any alterations of forms, or other irregularities of any kind. The CDE may reject an application that is not responsive, does not meet the technical standards, is not from a designated COE, or may choose to reject all applications. The CDE may also waive any immaterial deviations in an application. The CDE’s waiver of immaterial defect shall in no way modify the RFA document or excuse the Lead COE from full compliance with all requirements if the Lead COE is awarded the grant.

## Application Review

Complete applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a team of reviewers. Each application will receive a single score. Application reviewers will be instructed to take a holistic approach in the review of the application and evaluate the application according to Appendix 2 Application Evaluation Rubric.

Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts with the applicants. Interviews with potential grantees may be conducted. All costs associated with the interviews will be the responsibility of the applicant.

Although scores from the review of the applications are important, they are not the sole determiners for funding. The CDE reserves the right to not award the grant and may choose to reopen the grant competition at any time.

## Technical Assistance

The CDE will conduct one application information session to provide an overview of the RFA and offer potential applicants an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The date and time of the Application Technical Assistance Webinar is listed on the Application Timeline and on the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp>.

## Appeals Process

The application review process and appeals process will be based on written record alone. No hearings will be allowed. The CDE must receive the written request for appeal by the date and time listed on the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp>.

Only the Lead COE may electronically submit an appeal. Appeals must be submitted via email to PLSMO@cde.ca.gov by the date provided in the timeline on the CREEC Network Grant Program web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r12/ee24rfa.asp>. Appeals submitted via means other than an email to PLSMO@cde.ca.gov will **not** be accepted. Appeals shall be limited to the grounds that **the CDE failed to** **correctly apply the standards for reviewing the application** as specified in this RFA. The appellant must file a full and complete written appeal, include the issue(s) in dispute, the legal authority or other basis for the appeal position, and the remedy sought. The CDE will not consider incomplete or late appeals. The appellant may not supply any new information that was not originally contained in the original application. A final decision will be provided in writing within 10 business days from the date that appeals are due to the CDE for this specific RFA.

## Appendix 1. Project Description Template

Bold text can remain in the applicant’s Project Description and directions can be deleted.

**Lead COE Name:** Please provide the name of the Lead COE applying for the grant.

List all members of the consortium (include non-LEA partners):

**Lead COE Street Address:** Please provide the street address of the applying entity.

**City:** Please provide the city where the applying entity is located.

**State:** (Ex: CA): Please provide the state where the applying entity is located.

**Zip Code (5-digit: 00000):** Please provide the zip code where the applying entity is located.

**Project Director’s Full Name:** Please provide the name of the person who will serve as the Project Director of the grant. This person will be the main point of contact between the CDE and the grantee.

**Project Director’s Title:** Please provide the title of the Project Director.

**Project Director’s Office:** Please provide the name of the Project Director’s office.

**Project Director’s Telephone:** Please provide the Project Director’s telephone number as 10 digits (000-000-0000). This number will be used to contact the Project Director, if needed.

**Project Director’s Telephone Extension:** Please provide the Project Director’s telephone extension number, if applicable.

**Project Director’s Email Address:** Please provide the Project Director’s email address (ex. STEM@cde.ca.gov). Most communication with the grantee will be through email, so please ensure the email address is input correctly.

**List the names of partner entities that are applying as a consortium and make up the proposed partnership:** Please provide the names of the entities separated by commas.

**1. Description of the Partnership:** Briefly describe the partnership and address the requirements provided in the section titled Eligible Project Partnerships including a description of the roles and responsibilities of the Lead COE and each partner. Align the description to the application’s tables titled Project Staff and Project Plan and refer to these tables as applicable (maximum characters with spaces allowed is 7,000).

**2. Description of the Project:** Describe how the project will accomplish the goals listed in the section of this RFA titled Goals and Purpose of the Program. Align the description to the application’s tables titled Project Staff and Project Plan and refer to these tables as applicable (maximum characters with spaces allowed is 7,000).

**3. Description of Previous Collaboration:** Describe how the proposed partnership has previously collaborated as partners in providing the required tasks described in the RFA including networking and professional learning opportunities for the target audience. Make references to the project staff named in Project Staff table as applicable (maximum characters with spaces allowed is 7,000).

## Appendix 2. Rubric for Evaluating the Application

### A. Rubric for Bonus Points

| **Item Being Reviewed** | **Bonus Points** |
| --- | --- |
| The members in the proposed partnership | Award three points if the proposed partnership includes three California COEs. |
| The members in the proposed partnership | Award an additional five points if the proposed partnership includes more than three California COEs. |

### B. Rubric for Evaluation of the Proposed Partnership

#### B1. Evaluating Project Staff Responsibilities

| **Item** | **Item Being Reviewed** | **Excellent** **(award 3 points)** | **Moderate** **(award 2 points)** | **Minimal or Missing** **(award 1 or 0 points)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | The application must include a table labeled Project Staff that matches with respect to names of the partners described in the Project Description and the people assigned tasks in the table labeled Project Plan. The proposed partnership assists with meeting the goals of partnership set forth in this RFA. | The proposed partnership clearly assists the project with meeting the goals of partnership set forth in this RFA by involving more than three COEs who are contributing services or resources to the project. | The proposed partnership assists the project with meeting the goals of partnership set forth in this RFA by involving more than two COEs who are contributing services or resources to the project. | The proposed partnership does not adequately assist the project with meeting the goals of partnership set forth in this RFA. |

#### B2. Evaluating Project Staff Experience

| **Item** | **Item Being Reviewed** | **Excellent** **(award 6 points)** | **Moderate** **(award 3 points)** | **Minimal or Missing** **(award 1 or 0 points)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | The Lead COE and partner project staff should demonstrate a high level of experience providing networking and professional learning opportunities for the target audience (including both formal educators and CBP educators) as described as required tasks in this RFA. | There is strong evidence that multiple project staff named in the application have a history of experience providing multiple networking and professional learning opportunities for the target audience and they represent different members of the proposed partnership. | There is evidence that multiple project staff named in the application have a history of experience providing multiple professional learning opportunities for the target audience, but they do not represent different members of the proposed partnership. | The application provides minimal evidence that project staff has a history of experience providing multiple professional learning opportunities for the target audience. Award zero points if evidence is missing. |
| 2 | The Lead COE and partner project staff should demonstrate previous collaboration in providing networking and professional learning opportunities for the target audience (including both formal educators and CBP educators) as described as required tasks in this RFA. | There is strong evidence that project staff named in the application have a history of collaborating to provide multiple networking and professional learning opportunities for the target audience, and they represent different members of the proposed partnership. There is also evidence of previous collaboration between the Lead COE and project staffs’ employers. | There is evidence that project staff named in the application have a history of collaborating to provide multiple networking and professional learning opportunities for the target audience. While they represent different members of the partnership, evidence of previous collaboration between the Lead COE and project staffs’ employers is not provided. | There is minimal evidence that project staff named in the application have a history of collaborating to provide multiple networking and professional learning opportunities for the target audience. Award zero points if evidence is missing. |
| 3 | The Lead COE and partner project staff demonstrate experience providing professional learning opportunities for educators in the integration of environmental content using a variety of lesson resources and tools available including but not limited to online maps and real time data, SBE-adopted state standards and frameworks, and the EP&Cs. | There is strong evidence that the Lead COE and multiple partner project staff named in the application have a history of experience providing these opportunities for educators. | There is some evidence that the Lead COE and multiple partner project staff named in the application have a history of experience providing these opportunities for educators. | There is very minimal or no evidence that the Lead COE and/or multiple partner project staff named in the application have a history of experience providing these opportunities for educators. Award zero points if evidence is missing. |
| 4 | The Lead COE and partners demonstrate experience providing CBP educators and educators from outdoor education programs operated by LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators.  | There is strong evidence that the Lead COE and multiple partner project staff have experience providing CBP educators and educators from outdoor education programs operated by LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators. | There is some evidence that the Lead COE and partner project staff have experience providing CBP educators and educators from outdoor education programs operated by LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators. | There is very minimal or no evidence that project staff have experience providing CBP educators and educators from outdoor education programs operated by LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators. Award zero points if evidence is missing. |
| 5 | The Lead COE and partners demonstrate experience assisting formal educators and CBP educators with developing lessons and utilizing school grounds, nearby parks, and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks. | There is strong evidence that the Lead COE and multiple partner staff have experience assisting formal educators and CBP educators with developing lessons and utilizing school grounds, nearby parks, and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks. | There is some evidence that the Lead COE and multiple partners and project staff named in the application have experience assisting formal educators and CBP educators with developing lessons and utilizing school grounds, nearby parks, and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks. | There is very minimal or no evidence that project staff named in the application have experience assisting formal educators and CBP educators with developing lessons and utilizing school grounds, nearby parks, and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks. Award zero points if evidence is missing. |

### C. Rubric for Evaluating the Project Activities

Per this RFA, successful applications will:

* Reflect the required components in this RFA.
* Demonstrate proposed project plans that are based on regional needs, inform subsequent project year plans, are technically feasible, and have sustainable components beyond the scope of the grant.
* Consider costs and educators’ time when proposing activities. Multi-day in-person events without virtual participation opportunities will not be considered cost effective events that consider educators’ time.

The rubrics below will be used to evaluate the parts of the application labeled Project Description, Project Staff Table, and Project Plan Table. The application should contain evidence to accomplish the required activities listed below. Items that are satisfactorily met receive one point each, items that are not satisfactorily met receive zero points each.

#### C1. Evidence to Accomplish the Required Activities

| **Item** | **Item Being Reviewed** | **Satisfactorily Met** **(award 1 point)** | **Not Met** **(award 0 points)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | There is evidence COE staff will work with the CDE to maintain a list of educators by county, CREEC Region, and CREEC Hub. | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | There is evidence COE staff will host and facilitate two annual CREEC Hub meetings. | 1 | 0 |
| 3 | There is evidence COE staff will host and facilitate one annual meeting for each CREEC Region within their CREEC Hub. | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | There is evidence COE staff will work with the CDE and collaborate with the other grantees to host and facilitate an annual CREEC Network Statewide Meeting. | 1 | 0 |
| 5 | There is evidence COE staff will ensure themselves or a formal educator employed by a formal education agency in the region will participate in the CDE CREEC Network Program as a CREEC Contact to ensure there is at least one CREEC Contact listed on each CREEC Region web page. | 1 | 0 |
| 6 | There is evidence the Project Coordinator will ensure themselves or project staff employed by a formal education agency in the region will be listed as CREEC Contacts on the CREEC Network website. | 1 | 0 |
| 7 | There is evidence project staff will submit edits and enter new posts into the CREEC Network website portal for each CREEC Region web page that is in their CREEC Hub. | 1 | 0 |
| 8 | There is evidence the Lead COE will ensure all activities will consider the needs and unique aspects of each county in each CREEC Region of California when the activities are developed, planned, and implemented. | 1 | 0 |

#### C2. Evaluation of Proposed Activities.

| **Item** | **Item Being Reviewed** | **Excellent** **(award 3 points)** | **Moderate** **(award 2 points)** | **Minimal** **(award 1 or 0 points)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | The Project Plan includes three project years, all required tasks, proposed professional learning activities, the goals of each activity, and the name of the project staff member responsible.The Project Plan also indicates when data will be collected, analyzed, and used for project improvement purposes. | The Project Plan includes three project years, all required tasks, proposed professional learning activities, the goals of each activity, and the name of the project staff member responsible.The Project Plan also indicates when data will be collected, analyzed, and used for project improvement purposes. | The Project Plan is missing some details. | The Project Plan is missing many details. Award zero points if the Project Plan was not included in the application. |
| 2 | The activities consider costs and educators’ time, and there are not multi-day in-person events without virtual participation opportunities. | The activities consider costs and educators’ time, and there are not multi-day in-person events without virtual participation opportunities. | Do not award 2 points for this item. | Award zero points if there are multi-day in-person events without virtual participation opportunities. |
| 3 | There are activities helping classroom teachers to learn about the variety of supplemental curriculum lesson materials available that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks, and one supplemental curriculum is not being favored over others.  | There is evidence that there are activities helping classroom teachers to learn about the variety of supplemental curriculum lesson materials available that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks, and one supplemental curriculum is not being favored over others. | Do not award 2 points for this item. | Award zero points if there are not activities helping classroom teachers to learn about the variety of supplemental curriculum lesson materials available that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks, or if one supplemental curriculum is being favored over others. |
| 4 | There are activities providing CBP educators and educators from outdoor education programs operated by LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators. | There are activities providing CBP educators and educators from outdoor education programs operated by LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators. | Do not award 2 points for this item. | Award zero points if there are not activities providing CBP educators and educators from outdoor education programs operated by LEAs the opportunity to share their expertise in teaching students in outdoor settings with formal educators. |
| 5 | There are activities providing classroom teachers and CBP educators opportunities to learn about the variety of lesson resources and tools available including but not limited to online maps and real time data so they can insert the resources and tools into their own lessons with students. | There are activities providing classroom teachers and CBP educators opportunities to learn about the variety of lesson resources and tools available including but not limited to online maps and real time data so they can insert the resources and tools into their own lessons with students. | Do not award 2 points for this item. | Award zero points if there are not activities providing classroom teachers and CBP educators opportunities to learn about the variety of lesson resources and tools available including but not limited to online maps and real time data so they can insert the resources and tools into their own lessons with students. |
| 6 | There are activities assisting formal educators and CBP educators with utilizing school grounds, nearby parks, and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks and the students’ classroom lessons. | There are activities assisting formal educators and CBP educators with utilizing school grounds, nearby parks, and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks and the students’ classroom lessons. | Do not award 2 points for this item. | Award zero points if there are not activities assisting formal educators and CBP educators with utilizing school grounds, nearby parks, and field trip sites in lessons with students that are aligned with current state standards and frameworks. |

### D. Rubric for Evaluating the Budget

The rubric below will be used to evaluate sections of the proposal labeled as the Proposed Budget.

| **Item** | **Item Being Reviewed** | **Good** **(award 2 points)** | **Minimal** **(award 1 point)** | **Very Minimal or Inappropriate** **(award 0 points)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | In the proposal, there is a detailed budget and no single partner, other than the Lead COE, will benefit from more than 30 percent of the total grant award and budget information provided includes allowable and appropriate expenditures. | There is evidence in the budget table(s) that no single partner, other than the Lead COE, will benefit from more than 30 percent of the total grant award. Budgets are detailed and include allowable and appropriate expenditures. | The budgets need more detail or include some expenditures that are non-allowable, excessive, or inappropriate. | If the budgets are very minimal or show partners other than the Lead COE are receiving more than 30 percent of the annual grant fund allocation, award zero points. |
| 2 | The Budget Narrative explains calculations that led to the budget figures in the Proposed Budget Summary, and generally, all expenditures contribute to accomplishing the project’s goals and activities as described in the narrative. | The Budget Narrative explains calculations that led to the budget figures in the Proposed Budget Summary, and generally, all expenditures contribute to accomplishing the project’s goals and activities as described in the narrative. | The Budget Narrative needs more detail to show how expenditures contribute to figures in the Proposed Budget Summary or to accomplishing the project’s goals and activities as described in the narrative. | The Budget Narrative detail is too minimal to show how expenditures contribute to figures in the Proposed Budget Summary or to accomplishing the project’s goals and activities as described in the narrative. |

1. . Timeline subject to change. Refer to the California Regional Environmental Education Community Network Grant Program web page for the most up-to-date timeline. Multiple links to this web page are provided throughout this document. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)