

NOAA Office of Education *Environmental Literacy Grants Program*



Students observe the underwater environment at the Tennessee Aquarium. With the help of a 2009 ELG award, the Aquarium staff has reached over 55,000 underrepresented students through outreach programs and Experiential Learning Centers.

Overview

The Environmental Literacy Grants (ELG) program provides support to increase understanding and use of environmental information to promote stewardship and increase informed decision-making by a diverse pool of educators, students, and the public. ELG funds a broad range of education projects implemented on regional to national scales, with a focus that includes both informal and formal education. The program aligns with NOAA's mission goals and Education Strategic Plan and promotes the integration of NOAA resources into education programs. ELG competitions also require robust project evaluation; promote best practices; complement other federal granting programs; emphasize partnerships; and promote ocean, climate, and atmospheric literacy.

Examples of Funded Projects

- The Science Museum of Minnesota's Planet Earth Decision Theater, supported by a 2010 ELG award, uses NOAA's Science On a Sphere (SOS) to engage visitors in exploring the role of humans as the dominant agents of global change. Docent-led SOS programs utilize iClickers to solicit real-time feedback from audience members, and interactive visualization platforms give visitors access to cutting-edge scientific data.
- NatureBridge's Environmental Literacy for All project, funded through a 2012 ELG award, engages a diverse group of K-12 students in service-learning and stewardship activities in their home communities. Through partnerships with NOAA facilities, the program also provides professional development for K-12 teachers to integrate NOAA science and data into service-learning projects.
- The Earth System Science Education Alliance (ESSEA), funded through a 2008 ELG award and implemented by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), is designed to improve the quality of geosciences instruction for pre-service and in-service K-12 teachers. ESSEA's extensive network of participating institutions offer a series of inquiry-based courses that provide teachers with the content knowledge and tools they need to incorporate Earth systems science into their curricula.
- The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow citizen science network (CoCoRaHS) engages volunteers in precipitation monitoring in all fifty states. Originally supported by a 2006 ELG award, CoCoRaHS began expanding its activities in 2010 to increase climate literacy and promote the use of interactive advanced technologies in order to reach a broader, younger and more diverse audience.
- The Environmental Scientist-In-Residence program, funded through a 2010 ELG award, embeds NOAA scientists in a public education laboratory at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, CA. Scientists work closely with youth Explainers, exhibit developers, and web and interactive media producers to share their research with a variety of public audiences. In the process, the scientists also gain valuable skills in communicating scientific research to the public.

Accomplishments

Since 2005, ELG has awarded 80 competitive grants totaling \$36.8M. Demand for these awards is very high, and NOAA has been able to fund only 13% of the full applications received. In FY 2011-12, 216 pre-proposals and 104 full applications were reviewed and 8 new awards were made totaling over \$2.6 million. The new awards, which support aquariums, non-profit organizations, universities, and science centers all over the United States, focus on service-learning activities for K-12 students and professional development programs for K-12 and informal educators. For more information about ELG, please visit www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/elig.html.

