

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

California's Environmental Educator Certification Program (EECP) draws together stewards and educators of the environment into a structured and effective initiative. Certification is a public declaration that a certain individual meets a stringent level of requirements and has a specific set of skills. The EECP enhances the legitimacy of the EE profession by building a uniform foundation in effectively teaching about the environment. Additionally, through participation in the certification program, educators increase their knowledge and skills, expand their professional network, enhance their resume, and make important connections across the state.

How does EECP benefit you?

- Your employee gains membership in AEOE for one full year, giving them access to discounted PD & conference registration
- Your employee gains valuable skills, access to resources, and a strong network of colleagues across the state
- Upon completion of the program, certified educators' work sites are listed on AEOE's website

"While enrolled in AEOE's Environmental Educator Certification Program, our staff developed the skills, experience, and self-confidence needed to use their own voice and creative ideas to help us reach new audiences and bring fresh perspectives to our curriculum. As a small organization this has been an incredibly helpful and cost-effective way to train our staff in contemporary and relevant naturalist techniques and pedagogy."

– 2020-2021 EECP Participant Supervisor

Program Elements

- **Cohort Participation:** EECF candidates participate in monthly cohort meetings over zoom
- **Conference Attendance:** Candidates are encouraged to attend both the fall regional conference and spring statewide conference – at which final action projects are presented.
- **Engagement in Online Learning Community:** Candidates participate in group discussions, chat, and digital submission of assignments.
- **Completion of Independent & Group Assignments:** Candidates submit monthly assignments aligned to the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Guidelines for Excellence that demonstrate competency in environmental education.
- **Independent Professional Development:** Individually selected PD or training offered by AEOE (completed recently or over the program year).
- **Final Action Project:** The program culminates with a final action project that provides a summary of the skills and knowledge gained and positively impacts the candidate's community.
- **Mentorship:** Each participant is matched with a mentor in the field of EE with whom they will meet on a monthly basis virtually in small groups to set professional learning goals and discuss the culminating final project.

Content: The EECF content is based on NAAEE's Guidelines for Excellence, with supplementary components based on California's ecology and the diverse needs of our state.



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How Can I Help?

As the supervisor or colleague of an EECF participant, there are several ways you can support their participation in this program:

- Ensure they are able to participate in standing monthly cohort and small group meetings with their mentors. These are typically scheduled at a time that doesn't interfere with work responsibilities, however, any changes to their schedule should allow for their continued participation.
- Approve time off to attend the fall regional conference and spring statewide conference .
- Consider reimbursing their enrollment fee and the cost to attend conferences. It's a great investment for you; participation in this program and associated conference attendance will increase their skills and value as an employee.
- Support the development and implementation of their final action project (FAP). Many certification candidates select a FAP that directly benefits their employer or serves as an extension of their work. Plan to discuss their FAP in the fall to see if this might be a possibility and if so, dedicate staff time towards successful completion of the project.
- Consider becoming an AEOE member yourself (learn more at aeoe.org/membership).
- If requested, write a letter of recommendation outlining their skills and qualifications as an environmental educator.
- Provide opportunities for them to share insights gained and lessons learned regarding best practices in environmental education through their involvement in the program.

Learn more: www.aeoe.org/EECP. Please contact AEOE's Executive Director Estrella Risinger with any questions at director@aeoe.org.