

## ***Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant - Sample Application Two***

The following text illustrates responses to some of the narrative questions on the *Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant* application form. These responses were provided by teachers whose application scored highly with all the reviewers. Please do not copy the responses into your own application form. Read them to see examples of some complete, high-quality responses to the questions. Please note that the application form is revised annually, and the narrative questions in the current application form may not match the narrative questions from the older application form that these responses represent.

### **Application Two**

1a. In 50 words or less describe the proposed project (who, what, where, when, how).

Students in third and sixth grades will transform a 55' by 2.5' raised planter on school grounds into a natural pollinator garden, with support from the student body and larger community, in May or September.

1b. What are your goals for this project (why do you want to implement the project)?

Our goals for this project are: 1) foster a greater connection with nature by exposing the student body and surrounding community to the evolution of a natural habitat and the benefits of environmental stewardship; and 2) increase biodiversity in the area (i.e., birds, bees, insects in soil).

1c. How will you measure the success of the project?

The success will be measured by: 1) increased diversity of wildlife, as observed and recorded by third and sixth grade students; and 2) the number and frequency of other students and community members experiencing the garden through participation in its implementation and maintenance.

2a. What planning activities did the students perform for the project? Be specific.

As part of their botany units, students researched the characteristics of a diverse habitat and which native plants will best support that diversity. Because we have been learning remotely this year, we have taken the interim step of planning the garden in order to create a budget and meet the deadline of the grant. Upon their return, students will refine the list within the allocated budget, research planting methods and plan site preparation and planting days.

2b. What implementation activities will students perform for the project? Be specific.

Students will perform the following implementation activities: 1) assemble the nursery order and plan storage area; 2) schedule site prep and planting day(s); 3) create a schedule and work plan, including demonstrating planting techniques; 4) prepare area for planting and install any necessary soil amendments; 5) plant and water seedlings on planting days; 6) post plant identification and "Keep Off" signage; and 7) clean area, recycling/repurposing/composting waste.

2c. What maintenance activities will students perform for the project? Be specific.

Classes, Green Team nature ambassadors and school-adjacent groups, comprising students from kindergarten through eighth grade, will participate in cleaning, weeding, watering (as needed) and replanting (as necessary).

3a. Describe how the project will enhance the educational use of the area. Please do not list learning standards.

Students will be able to use the area to monitor plant and animal diversity in their natural learning environment and engage in hands-on experiential learning, such as identifying pollinators and their plant hosts, supplementing and complementing our occasional field trips, which are restricted due to cost and logistics.

4. Describe how the proposed project will positively affect wildlife, improve wildlife habitat and demonstrate relevant ecological concepts.

The pollinator garden's impact will be swift and notable in our urban schoolyard. It will display the mutualistic relationship between wildlife and plants and how they depend on each other to thrive. Specific concepts demonstrated will include pollination, soil health, water conservation and the life cycles of pollinators.

6. What is your time line for this project? List the major activities associated with development of the project and when you expect to perform them.

We will create a planting and procurement calendar in March with site prep and planting tentatively scheduled for early June. If we are unable to return to school until the fall, we will schedule prep and planting for October.

7. A long-term care/maintenance plan for the project is imperative.

7a. How will the area be maintained during the school year? Who will do the work?

Students from third and sixth grade classes, Green Team nature ambassadors and Girl Scout troops will be responsible for cleaning litter, weeding, watering and replacing plants, as needed. The Green Team will establish a stewardship group of students, families and community volunteers for support during school breaks.

7b. How will the area be maintained during the summer? Who will do the work?

Our summer camp for rising kindergarten through fifth graders will maintain the garden and collaborate with the Green Team's stewardship group for support.

7c. How will the area be maintained in subsequent years? Who will do the work?

Though we expect long-term maintenance needs to be minimal, by involving students, staff and community members we will ensure the long-term health of the garden does not fall on a small group of people. Through ongoing support of the administration, we will maintain the garden through: 1) inclusion in the third and sixth grade curricula; 2) expansion of the Green Team student ambassador program to include nature ambassadors; 3) summer camp; and 4) community stewardship.

8. Tell us about the resources that you utilized in preparing for this project and discuss how you will involve other people (teachers, community members, etc.) in the project.

This project is not a new idea for us – the planting area was built as part of the school annex in 2015, and small groups of individual classes have attempted to cultivate a garden since then with little success. Recently, interest has grown internally, among students and teachers, and externally from parents and

community members, and we have leveraged it from the outset. As a result, this project has the level of engagement and involvement that will ensure its ongoing success. We have utilized the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's *Schoolyard Habitat Project Guide* for planning, a local park Advisory Council for advice on planting and maintenance from their experience creating a nature play area in our neighborhood park and our parent organization for financial management and support.