

Title 6. Education

Chapter XI. Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Department of Commerce

Subchapter A. Generally

Part 446. Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program

Subpart 1. Generally

6 CAR § 446-101. Rural Services Division of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and the Arkansas Rural Development Commission.

(a)(1) The Rural Services Division of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission is charged with assisting rural communities with a population of twenty thousand (20,000) and under.

(2) Established under Acts 1991, No. 302, and merged with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission under Acts 2015 (1st Ex. Sess.), No. 8, the division assists local agencies in rural areas with information and technical assistance.

(3) Currently, more than eighty percent (80%) of Arkansans live in rural areas.

(b)(1) The Arkansas Rural Development Commission is a group of citizens from rural Arkansas.

(2) Seven (7) of its members are appointed by the Governor, two (2) are appointed by the Senate President Pro Tempore, and two (2) are appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(3) Commissioners serve multiple-year terms and meet throughout the year to discuss rural issues that affect Arkansans.

(c) The mission of these two (2) groups is to "Enhance the quality of life in rural Arkansas".

(d)(1) One focus of the division is to be a source of information for rural citizens and provide support services to rural communities.

(2) The division publishes a quarterly newsletter that covers rural policies and topics.

(3) The division also hosts an annual conference and local forums around the state throughout the course of the year.

(e)(1) In 2015, the General Assembly passed Acts 2015, No. 371, which amended the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Education Grant program, hereafter known as the Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program.

(2) This legislation transferred the administration of the program to the division.

(3) The program is a partnership between the division and the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission that converts portions of county fine money into grant funds for school conservation education programs.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.

6 CAR § 446-102. General information and eligibility.

(a)(1) Through the Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program, the Arkansas Rural Development Commission and the Rural Services Division of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and in consultation with the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission, strive to enhance the level of conservation education in the state by providing incentive grants.

(2) The Game and Fish Conservation Education Grant will assist school and conservation districts in the creation and maintenance of conservation education programs.

(b)(1) With this grant program, all school district and conservation districts are eligible to apply for assistance regardless of district size or population.

(2)(A) The funding availability will vary by district as the funds collected are county specific.

(B) This means that only fine money collected in a certain county can be used as grant funds for that county.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.

6 CAR § 446-103. Funding availability.

(a) As funding availability is county specific, grant allocations are separate for each county.

(b) The Rural Services Division of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission strives to fund as many projects as possible.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.

6 CAR § 446-104. Eligible projects.

Programs eligible for funding consideration under the Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program;
- (2) Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program;
- (3) Uniforms for teams listed above;
- (4) Arkansas Stream Team;
- (5) Hotel, travel, and registration for all programs listed above;
- (6) Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs;
- (7) Fishing in the Natural State;
- (8) Study of general fish and wildlife conservation issues;
- (9) Project WILD workshops;
- (10) Project WET workshops;
- (11) Implementation/operation of a butterfly garden;
- (12) Implementation/operation of an outdoor classroom;
- (13) Schoolyard Habitat site development;
- (14) Specialized Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission conservation education/educator training workshops focused on above programs; and
- (15) Funds also may be used by educators to take students on field trips, including bus fuel, to Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission:
 - (A) Nature centers;

- (B) Conservation education centers; and
- (C) Wildlife management areas.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.

6 CAR § 446-105. Ineligible projects.

(a) Projects not eligible for funding consideration under the Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Any competitive shooting or archery teams not associated with the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission;
- (2) Costs associated with hunters/boaters education courses;
- (3) No food purchases, such as meals, other than bottled water or light snacks;
- (4) No T-shirts, caps, or other clothing purchases allowed with the exception of uniforms for Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program or Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program as listed above;
- (5) Salaries or any other compensation, including bus drivers or substitute teachers;
- (6) Day-to-day maintenance; and
- (7) Building of permanent structures.

(b) **Note.** If you are not positive that your project is eligible, please call and speak to a Grants Analyst at 1-888-RURAL-AR or Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission Education Division at 1-501-223-6331.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.

6 CAR § 446-106. Application process.

- (a) The program operates on an annual basis.
- (b) Fiscal Year 2018 applications will be accepted beginning July 1, 2017, and ending August 25, 2017.

(c) Applicants must gain the approval of their local school principal or conservation district official who will be ultimately responsible for the grant should it be received.

(d)(1) The local school principal or conservation district official must affix his or her signature to the following documents for the application to be considered complete:

(A) Certification letter; and

(B) Application.

(2) Applicants must submit an original application with original signatures.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.

6 CAR § 446-107. Application review and awards presentation.

(a) Applications are numbered and reviewed for completeness and eligibility in the order received by the Rural Services Division of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

(b) Individual proposal consultations can be arranged with staff by appointment.

(c)(1) Applicants are encouraged to submit applications well before the deadline to allow Rural Services Division staff time to thoroughly review the application and assist applicants in correcting any deficiencies prior to the deadline.

(2) Applications received postmarked after the deadline date will not be eligible for consideration.

(d)(1) After staff review for completeness and eligibility, applications undergo a review process by the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission Education Division.

(2) Rural Services Division and Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission submit funding recommendations, in the following order, to the Arkansas Rural Development Commission and the Governor's office.

(3) Following final review and approval, the grants are awarded by mail.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.

6 CAR § 446-108. Reporting requirements and responsibilities.

(a) In compliance with Acts 1991, No. 1009, project funds will be expended through a fund established on the books of the district.

(b) All project expenditures, with invoices attached, shall be approved by the school principal or conservation district conservationist and remain on file in the office of the district for three (3) years or until audited, whichever is later.

(c) All project expenditures must be expended within one (1) year after the date of the award.

(d)(1) A final report, including cancelled checks and receipts of all funds expended, along with the state's portion of any unspent funds, must be submitted by the school principal or conservation district conservationist to the Rural Services Division of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and subsequently to the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

(2) This must be done no more than sixty (60) days following the project's completion or within the one-year period of the grant award, whichever comes first.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.

6 CAR § 446-109. Checklist for a complete Game and Fish Conservation Education Grant.

(a)(1) In addition to the grant application, communities must include the following, in order, for the application to be complete.

(2) Failure to submit any of the required documents by the cycle deadline will result in an incomplete application and will not be reviewed by the Arkansas Rural Development Commission for grant consideration.

(b) Please use this list to double check that all required information is submitted such as:

(1) A signed Certification Letter enclosed with application from the principal or conservationist complete with signature and correct date and calendar year;

(2) Backup documentation for all items listed in the project cost estimate; and

(3) The original grant is mailed plus one (1) copy of the entire application packet.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1101.