ARKANSAS INC

RURAL SERVICES

APPLICATION PACKET

FISCAL YEAR 2021

GAME AND FISH WILDLIFE CONSERVATION EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

Deadline:
October 8, 2020

For Questions Contact:

Becca Caldwell, Rural Services Director
1 Commerce Way, Suite 601
Little Rock, AR 72202
(501) 682.3292 | 1-888-RURAL-AR
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www.ArkansasEDC.com/Rural-Services

Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Division of Rural Services and the Arkansas Rural Development Commission

The Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), Division of Rural Services (DRS), is charged with assisting rural communities with a population of 20,000 and under. Established under Act 302 of 1991, and merged with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission under Act 8 of the 2015 First Extraordinary Session, DRS assists local agencies in rural areas with information and technical assistance. Currently, more than 80% of Arkansans live in rural areas.

The Board of Directors of the Arkansas Rural Development Commission (hereafter Arkansas Rural Development Commission or ARDC) is a group of citizens from rural Arkansas. Seven of its members are appointed by the Governor, two are appointed by the Senate President Pro-Tem, and two are appointed by the Speaker of the House. Commissioners serve multiple-year terms and meet throughout the year to discuss rural issues that affect Arkansans.

The mission of these two groups is to *"Enhance the quality of life in rural Arkansas."*

One focus of the Division of Rural Services is to be a source of information for rural citizens and provide support services to rural communities. DRS publishes a quarterly newsletter that covers rural policies and topics. The Division also hosts an annual conference and local forums around the state throughout the course of the year.

In 2015, the Arkansas General Assembly passed Act 371 which amended the laws for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Education Grant program (hereafter known as the Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program). This legislation transferred the administration of the program under the control of the Division of Rural Services. The Game and Fish Conservation Education Grant Program is a partnership between DRS and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) that converts portions of county fine money into grant funds for school conservation education programs.

General Information and Eligibility

Through the Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program, the Arkansas Rural Development Commission and the Division of Rural Services, and in consultation with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, strive to enhance the level conservation education in the state by providing incentive grants. The Game and Fish Conservation Education Grant will assist school and conservation districts in the creation and maintenance of conservation education programs.

With this grant program, all school district and conservation districts are eligible to apply for assistance regardless of district size or population. The funding availability will vary by district as the funds collected are county specific. This means that only fine money collected in a certain county can be used as grants funds for that county.

Funding Availability

As funding availably is county specific, grant allocations are separate for each county. The Division of Rural Services strives to fund as many projects as possible.

What Type of Projects are Eligible

Eligible Projects Include:
Starting or continuing AGFC-sanctioned shooting sports programs.
Includes the Arkansas National Archery in the Schools Program (ANASP) and Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program (AYSSP). Funds can be used for: shooting-related supplies and equipment except firearms; uniform items, up to $35 per participant; shooting vests and safety gear; and travel expenses to local and state tournaments.

AGFC-sponsored educator training workshops.
Includes Fishing in the Natural State (FINS), Project WILD, and educator courses offered at AGFC Nature or Education Centers.

Improvements to your outdoor space at school.
Includes school yard wildlife habitat improvements, butterfly gardens, and outdoor classroom spaces.

Field trip expenses.
For your trip to any AGFC Nature or Conservation Education Center.

Classroom and field equipment unique to the study of wildlife biology, wildlife recreation, or conservation education.
For example, aquatic dip nets, waders, wildlife artifacts, bat detectors, field guides, game cameras, bird calls, rubber tracks and scat, or owl pellets.

What Type of Projects are Ineligible

Employee salaries or compensation for any staff member or volunteer; operating costs; food purchases (except water and light snacks are allowed); expenses already incurred; trailers; computers; supplies or equipment used for other subjects or everyday lessons; website development, design, or maintenance; consultant fees; out-of-state events; construction or maintenance of any permanent building or structure; or any project outside of the intended scope of this program.

Note: If you are not positive that your project is eligible, please call and speak to a Grants Manager at 1-888-RURAL-AR or AGFC Education Division at 1-501-223-6331.

Application Process

The program operates on an annual basis. Fiscal Year 2021 applications will be accepted beginning June 8, 2020 and ending October 8, 2020. 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.

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:

- Certification letter
- Application
- Applicants must submit an original application with original signatures.

Application Review and Awards Presentation

Applications are numbered and reviewed for completeness and eligibility in the order received by the Division of Rural Services. Individual proposal consultations can be arranged with staff by appointment. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications well before the deadline to allow DRS staff time to thoroughly review the application and assist applicants in correcting any deficiencies prior to the deadline.

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

After staff review for completeness and eligibility, applications undergo a review process by the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission Education Department. DRS and AGFC submit funding recommendations, in the following order, to the Arkansas Rural Development Commission and the Governor's Office. Following final review and approval, the grants are awarded by mail.

Reporting Requirements and Responsibilities

In compliance with Act 1009 of 1991, project funds will be expended through a fund established on the books of the district. 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 years or until audited, whichever is later.

All project expenditures must be expended within one year after the date of the award. 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 DRS and subsequently to the Chief Fiscal Officer of the state. This must be done no more than 60 days following the project's completion or within the one year period of the grant award, whichever comes first.

Checklist for a Complete Game & Fish Conservation Education Grant

In addition to the grant application, communities must include the following, in order, for the application to be complete. 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. Please use this sheet to double check that all required information is submitted such as:

- ☐ A signed Certification Letter enclosed with application from the principal or conservationist complete with signature and correct date and calendar year.
- ☐ Backup documentation for all items listed in the project cost estimate.
- ☐ The original grant is mailed PLUS one copy of the entire application packet.

Game & Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program

School/Conservation District

County

Principal/Conservation Official

Grant Requested Amount

Total Project Cost

Contact Information

Please provide the information below with persons who are knowledgeable about the application.

Principal/Conservation Official

Title

Mailing Address

City **Zip**

Phone Number **E-mail**

Contact Person
(application prepared by)

Title

Mailing Address

City **Zip**

Phone Number **E-mail**

State Senator **District #**

State Representative **District #**

Game & Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program

Project Description

What is the project for which you are applying?
(briefly describe)

List the learning objectives associated with this project.

Have you previously received any AGFC fine money in the past? If yes, please explain.

Are any other funding sources associated with this project?

Additional Documentation

1. Complete Attachment A "Certification Letter." This form must be signed by the school principal or conservation official with correct date and calendar year.

2. Include backup documentation for all items listed on Attachment B "Cost Estimate Breakdown." This includes quotes of all items applied for with grant funding.

Game & Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program

With my signature below, I do hereby certify that I have read, understand and support the above application for grant funds through the Game & Fish Wildlife Grant Program. I further certify that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the rules and regulations governing the grant program.

Principal/Conservation Official Printed Name

Principal/Conservation Official Signature

Arkansas Economic Development Commission
Division of Rural Services
Attn: Becca Caldwell,
Rural Services Director
1 Commerce Way, Suite 601
Little Rock, AR 72202

1-888-RURAL-AR | 1-501-682-3292
bcaldwell@ArkansasEDC.com

Game & Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program

Attachment A

Certification Letter

Arkansas Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program
c/o Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Division of Rural Services
1 Commerce Way, Suite 601
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202

Dear Members of the Arkansas Rural Development Commission:

On behalf of the conservation/school district of _____,

I am writing to request your assistance in securing a state grant under the Arkansas Game and Fish Wildlife Conservation Education Grant Program. Proceeds from the $_____, if awarded will be used for the following project, as outlined in the enclosed application:

_____

_____.

I designate myself, District Official/Principal of _____ as the person ultimately responsible for the administration of the state grant, if awarded. Project funds for all sources will be expended through a fund established on the books of the district of _____ and all project expenditures with invoices and cancelled checks attached, in addition to copies of all application materials, will remain on file in the district/school office for three years of until audited (whichever is later), to assure that funds were used for the purposes for which they were made available. If additional information is needed concerning this project, please feel free to contact me or the project's primary contact person (name) _____ at (phone number) _____.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Principal/District Official: _____Date:_____

School/District: _____

Phone Number: _____

Attachment B

Cost Estimate Breakdown

Please itemize the cost estimate for the project below as much as possible. You may add extra sheets if necessary. **Backup documentation for each line is required (professional estimates, catalog/ website pages, letters of intent to donate, etc.)**

Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Cost $
		Total $	