

President's Environmental Youth Award

Today's Youth Protecting Tomorrow's Environment



2025 PEYA Application Guide

Section 1: Program History

The President's Environmental Youth Awards (PEYA) recognizes outstanding environmental stewardship projects developed by K-12 youth. PEYA promotes awareness of our nation's natural resources and encourages positive community involvement. Each year the PEYA program honors a wide variety of projects created by young students, school classes and clubs, youth camps, and youth organizations to promote environmental awareness.

Past projects have achieved demonstrated impact in schools and communities - including building nature trails, starting recycling programs, restoring native habitats, and installing renewable energy projects. To read about past award-winning projects, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/education/presidents-environmental-youth-award-peya-winners>

Section 2: How the Program Works

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has 10 regional offices across the country. The PEYA awards panel may select up to one winner in each age group, based on the evaluation criteria in Section 6. Applicants are welcome to include youth across multiple grade levels; however, the application will be categorized based on the applicant with the highest-grade level. For example, if one applicant group consists of two 4th graders, one 3rd grader and one 6th grader, the application will be evaluated in the Grade 6-12 category.

Each award-winning project will receive a Presidential plaque. The sponsors of all qualified, non-winning applicants will receive EPA acknowledgement of the applicant's efforts to protect human health and the environment.

Frequently Asked Questions

A list of frequently asked questions and answers is available at:

<https://www.epa.gov/education/presidents-environmental-youth-award#questions>.

Section 3: Project Eligibility

The eligibility requirements of applicants include:

- Project is completed while the applicant(s) is in kindergarten through 12th grade.

- Applicant(s) is a citizen of the United States or its territories or has been lawfully admitted for permanent residency. Applicant also resides in a U.S. state, territory, or Tribal land.
- Project is sponsored by at least one adult 21 years of age or older.
- Project started during the 2024 calendar year and had activity during the 2024 calendar year. A project initiated prior to 2024 is also eligible for consideration as long as the project had activity during the 2024 calendar year.
- Project includes an environmental stewardship component as defined in Section

Section 4: Project Sponsors

Each applicant or group of applicants applying for PEYA must be represented by at least one sponsor who is a teacher or other education professional. An applicant may also have a co-sponsor, who is typically another teacher or education professional or someone in the community or a subject matter expert who has provided guidance on the project. For home-schooled applicants with no interaction with formal educators or youth development clubs, the teacher sponsor can be a parent. All sponsors/co-sponsors must be adults at least 21 years of age.

Typically, sponsors/co-sponsors are individuals who have offered advice and guidance throughout the project to:

- Support the student(s) in developing a well-thought-out project.
- Aid the student(s) in project implementation.
- Foster work between other groups and individuals in the community and the student(s), sponsors/co-sponsors.
- Certify that the project was completed by all student(s) by signing and dating the PEYA Application Form.
- Gather forms and other application materials and submit the application to EPA.
- Serve as the primary point of contact for EPA correspondence regarding the application.

For K-5 applicants, sponsors/co-sponsors also typically complete the application form and assist in preparing the project detailed description and any supporting information. Questions about the roles of teacher(s) or sponsor/co-sponsor(s) should be directed to PEYA@epa.gov.

Please note: Sponsors/co-sponsors are responsible for managing all correspondence with EPA including application submission, submitting questions, and all other communication. To protect the online privacy of student applicants, **EPA will not respond to inquiries submitted by student applicants. All communications must be sent by the adult sponsors/co-sponsors.**

Section 5: How to Apply

Each applicant or team of applicants applying for PEYA must be represented by at least one sponsor (See Section 4: Project Sponsors) who submits the application to EPA and serves as

EPA's point of contact for the application. The PEYA Application Form and all application materials should be typed. There are no defined font or spacing requirements although EPA recommends a font size no smaller than 10 point.

All application contents are required to be submitted in English. If you wish to submit an application in a language other than English, please contact the PEYA program manager, Chelsea McClure, by email at PEYA@epa.gov.

The PEYA Application Form, which includes Consent for PEYA Student Works Form and the PEYA Permissions Form can be viewed or downloaded at:

<https://www.epa.gov/education/presidents-environmental-youth-award-peya-application>

Sponsor Responsibilities and Steps to Complete Application

1. **CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY:** Applicant sponsor/co-sponsor confirms that applicants meet all eligibility requirements defined by completing the Eligibility Self-Screen Checklist. The completed checklist is not required to be submitted in the application materials.
2. **PREPARE APPLICATION FORM:** Applicant sponsor/co-sponsor completes pages 1-4 of the PEYA Application Form.

Excess pages submitted beyond the limits stated below will not be considered. Carefully consider inclusion of web links that clearly support the project description and/or supplementary information in conveying how the project achieved applicable review criteria as reviewers will not click on more than 5-6 web links per application. Note also that we cannot accept links to file share drives or social media accounts.

- a) **PROJECT TITLE:** Identify the name of the project title on page 1 of the Application Form. Please ensure that the project title is accurate as the project title will be used in program materials, including plaques, certificates, and letters of acknowledgement. The project title cannot be changed after application submission.
- b) **APPLICANTS BY NAME AND GRADE LEVEL:** The sponsor/co-sponsor(s) are responsible for identifying the name and grade level of each applicant. It is very important that the applicant names are accurate as the names provided on the application form will be inscribed on all materials, including certificates, letters of acknowledgement award plaques, and in program materials. Applicant names cannot be changed after application submission.
- c) **PROJECT SUMMARY:** The Project Summary, up to 300 words, is intended to describe the project's purpose and goals and identify the results achieved. Space for the Project Summary is provided on page 4 of the Application Form.
- d) **DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Grade 6-12 applicants are required to provide a more detailed description of the project preferably organized by each of the evaluation criteria in Section 6: How Applicants are Judged. Grade K-5 applicants are encouraged to have written, with the assistance of the sponsor/co-sponsor(s), a description of the project. The Project Description must be no more than 5 pages or 5 slides.

- e) **SUPPORTING MATERIALS:** Applicants may submit up to 5 additional pages of optional supporting materials; for example, photographs, newspaper articles, or other information to provide a more comprehensive view of the project. Accompanying videos may be submitted, although applicants must provide a web link to where the videos can be viewed online. Please **DO NOT** send video files by email; video files sent by email will not be reviewed.
3. **SIGN AND DATE APPLICATION:** Sponsor/co-sponsor must sign and date page 4 of the PEYA Application Form. Signatures must be electronic; typing in the sponsor's name does not fulfill the application requirements. Page 4 of the PEYA Application Form can be submitted as a separate file if needed.
4. **COLLECT PARENT-SIGNED FORMS:** Sponsor/co-sponsor collects signed and dated Consent for PEYA Student Works Forms and the PEYA Permission Form from each applicant's parent/guardian. Please review the forms carefully to ensure that signatures by the parent/adult are electronic. Typing in the parent/adult's name does not fulfill the application requirements.
5. **COMPLETE THE PRE-SUBMISSION CHECKLIST:** Sponsor/co-sponsor completes the pre-submission checklist. The completed checklist is for self-assessment before application submission and is not required to be submitted in the application materials.
6. **SUBMIT THE APPLICATION BY THE DEADLINE:** Sponsor/co-sponsor sends a complete application package with all application materials so that they are received at EPA by **11:59 PM ET on January 15, 2025**. See instructions below for how to submit an application.

How to Submit the Application

- To protect the online privacy of student applicants, application materials must be submitted by applicant sponsors/co-sponsors. Materials submitted by student applicants will not be considered.
- All application materials must be submitted electronically (email) by applicant sponsors/co-sponsors.
- Email completed application materials to PEYA@epa.gov by **11:59 PM ET on January 15, 2025**. Applicants are encouraged to provide application materials via a single email, with attachments in PDF, MS Word or PowerPoint, or JPEG. Please contact us if trying to send ZIP files or file attachments over 20MB. Note also that we cannot accept links to file share drives or social media accounts.
- A confirmation email is sent upon receipt of the application. Ongoing correspondence regarding the application is with the sponsor/co-sponsor(s) named in the application. Please note that a secondary email address is requested on the Application Form as correspondence with applicants selected for award typically occur outside the academic calendar.

Consent for PEYA Student Works form and PEYA Permission Form

- The PEYA Application Form includes two forms, Consent for PEYA Student Works and PEYA Permission, that must be signed by the parents or legal guardian of each applicant under the age of 18 at the time of the application submission.
- Student applicants aged 18 years or older at the time of application submission are permitted to sign the Consent for PEYA Student Works Form and PEYA Permission Form on their own behalf. The student applicant is advised to include a statement in the application package confirming that they are 18 year of age or older and providing consent to participate in the program.
- Please see the sample Consent for PEYA Student Works Form as a guide for the information to be provided on the form.
- Before signing the PEYA Permission Form, parents and guardians should review EPA's privacy policy found at: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-11/documents/2182g.pdf>

SAMPLE Consent for PEYA Student Works Form

THE PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN

Jane Smith

Printed Full Name (hereinafter referred to as "the Parent and/or Legal Guardian")

THE CHILD

John Smith

Printed Full Name (hereinafter referred to as "my Child")

As the Parent and/or Legal Guardian of the above-named child, or as a student applicant above the age of 18 at the time of application submission, I hereby grant a non-exclusive, no-cost, worldwide, transferable, irrevocable license in all media and languages now or hereafter known to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authorizing EPA and others acting on its behalf to publish, use, duplicate, disclose, exhibit, display, modify or edit the following work or works, as listed below by title and/or description, which have been created by my Child, including all application materials such as related PowerPoints, photos, websites, audio recordings, videos, transcriptions, and presentation materials ("the Work" or "Works"):

1. "Community Stewardship Project" project PowerPoint

2. "Community Stewardship Project" photos

3. "Community Stewardship Project" webpage

I understand and agree that the Work or Works may be edited and used in whole or in part for EPA's purposes and/or the purposes of those acting on EPA's behalf, including for broadcast, publication, promotion, and publicity, as well as posting online and for inclusion within the public access file created for EPA's President's Environmental Education Youth Award (PEYA) program.

I represent and warrant that I am authorized to provide the license or licenses granted herein, and that (1) the Work or Works are original to the above-named Child, and do not contain any material that would violate the copyrights, trademarks, or any other property rights of others, or (2) that I have obtained sufficient rights with respect to any third party materials included in the Work or Works to provide the license or licenses herein.

Jane Smith

Signature (Parent / Guardian)

January 15, 2025

Date

Section 6: How Applications Are Judged

Applications determined eligible and complete are evaluated by a PEYA awards panel. The PEYA awards panel will conduct an evaluation of the applications based on the evaluation criteria. There are separate evaluation criteria for K-5 and 6-12 applications. A maximum of 100 points can be awarded to each application.

Evaluation Criteria K-5 (100 points)

1, Youth-Driven Initiative (15 points)

- How did the applicant(s) come up with the idea for the project?
- How did the K-5 youth applicants take ownership of the project from the creation and support implementation of the project?

2. Environmental Stewardship* and Impact (30 points)

- How did the project demonstrate and address environmental stewardship?
- How did the applicant(s) identify the environmental need for this project?
- What were the short- or long-term environmental benefits or outcomes of the project?
- What is the status of this project; is it completed or in-progress? If in-progress, please share completed components and ongoing efforts.

3. Achieving Competition Goals (15 points)

- Winning projects may address environmental stewardship* through a variety of areas. How did the project specifically address environmental stewardship in one or more of the focus areas of the competition, which are:
 - Agricultural practices
 - Climate change
 - Environmental justice
 - Food waste
 - Lead in drinking water
 - Recycling
 - School gardens
 - Sustainability
 - Using STEM in environmental education
 - Water infrastructure
 - Water quality and/or litter within waterways
- If the project did not address one or more of the competition focus areas, how did the project address environmental stewardship relate to one or more other focus areas?
- Is evidence provided to demonstrate that the project achieved the goals in relation to the environmental stewardship* focus area indicated (example: descriptions, images, videos, student work, etc.)?

4. Community Involvement (15 points)

- To what extent did the project involve others in the school or community? Please describe how others were engaged in the project initiative(s).

5. Project Creativity and/or Innovation (15 points)

- How did the applicant(s) use creativity and/or innovative approaches for the project?

6. Project Approach (10 points)

- To what extent does the application tell a complete and detailed story about the project?
- Did the applicant(s) show evidence of having a thought-out approach to solving the problem based on research, observations and/or discussion with the school/community?

***Definition:** “Environmental Stewardship” is voluntary commitment, behavior, and action that results in environmental protection or improvement, or conservation of our natural resources. Stewardship refers to an acceptance of personal responsibility for actions to improve environmental quality and to achieve conservation outcomes. Stewardship involves lifestyles and business practices, initiatives and actions that enhance the state of the environment and natural resources. Some examples are: living or conducting business in such a way as to minimize or eliminate pollution at its source; using natural resources efficiently; decreasing the use of hazardous chemicals; recycling wastes effectively; and conserving or restoring soil, forests, prairies, wetlands, rivers, and parks. Stewardship can be practiced by individuals, groups, schools, organizations, companies, communities, and state and local governments.

Evaluation Criteria 6-12 (100 points)

1. Youth-Driven Initiative (15 points)

- How did the applicant support and give justification behind why they developed their project? To what extent did the project demonstrate a direct connection to the applicant's initiative(s)?
- How did the 6-12 youth applicants take ownership in the project from creation, leading, and driving implementation of the project? *The driving force for the project must be the applicant(s), not the sponsor/co-sponsor.*

2. Environmental Need and Appropriateness (20 points)

- How did the applicant(s) identify the environmental need for this project?
- How did the project demonstrate and address a clear environmental need?
- Did the project demonstrate appropriateness and thoughtful consideration for the community in which it was performed?

3. Environmental Stewardship* and Impact (15 points)

- How did the project demonstrate and address environmental stewardship?
- What were the short- or long-term environmental benefits or outcomes of the project?

- What is the status of this project; is it completed or in-progress? If in-progress, please share completed components and ongoing efforts.

4. Achieving Competition Goals (15 points)

- Winning projects may address environmental stewardship in a variety of areas. How did the project specifically address environmental stewardship in one or more of the focus areas of the competition, which are:
 - Agricultural practices
 - Climate change
 - Environmental justice
 - Food waste
 - Lead in drinking water
 - Recycling
 - School gardens
 - Sustainability
 - Using STEM in environmental education
 - Water infrastructure
 - Water quality and/or litter within waterways
- If the project did not address one or more of the competition focus areas, how did the project address environmental stewardship relate to one or more other areas?
- Is evidence provided to demonstrate that the project achieved the goals in relation to the environmental stewardship focus area indicated (example: descriptions, images, videos, student work, etc.)?

5. Community Involvement (15 points)

- To what extent did the project positively involve others in the community? Please describe how others were engaged in the project initiative(s).
- What community resources, expertise, leadership, or publicity did the applicant(s) use?

6. Project Creativity and Innovation (10 points)

- How did the applicant(s) use creativity and/or innovative approaches for the project?

7. Soundness of Approach, Rationale, and Scientific Design (10 points)

- Does the project application demonstrate a clear problem, sound justification for selected initiative, and approach for addressing environmental topic? If so, please describe.
- Did the applicant(s) show evidence of having a thought-out approach to solving the problem based on research, observations and/or discussion with the school/community?

Please note that project activities should highlight environmental stewardship* and community involvement. Individual research projects that do not include a focus on environmental stewardship nor involvement of others are not likely to meet the evaluation criteria.

***Definition:** “Environmental Stewardship” is voluntary commitment, behavior, and action that results in environmental protection or improvement, or conservation of our natural resources. Stewardship refers to an acceptance of personal responsibility for actions to improve environmental quality and to achieve conservation outcomes. Stewardship involves lifestyles and business practices, initiatives and actions that enhance the state of the environment and natural resources. Some examples are: living or conducting business in such a way as to minimize or eliminate pollution at its source; using natural resources efficiently; decreasing the use of hazardous chemicals; recycling wastes effectively; and conserving or restoring soil, forests, prairies, wetlands, rivers, and parks. Stewardship can be practiced by individuals, groups, schools, organizations, companies, communities, and state and local governments.

Eligibility Self-Screen Checklist

*Sponsors/Co-Sponsors: Before starting the PEYA Application Form, complete the checklist below to confirm that the applicant(s) and project meet the eligibility requirements of the PEYA program as defined in **Section 3: Project Eligibility**. The completed checklist does not need to be submitted in the application materials.*

	Yes	No
Project was completed while the applicant(s) was in kindergarten through 12th grade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applicant(s) is a citizen of the United States or its territories or has been lawfully admitted for permanent residency. Applicant(s) also resides in a U.S. state, territory, or Tribal land. ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project is sponsored by at least one adult 21 years of age or older.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project started during the 2024 calendar year and had activity during the 2024 calendar year. As long as a project had activity during the 2024 calendar year, a project initiated prior to 2024 is also eligible for consideration.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project includes an environmental stewardship component as defined in Section 6: How Applications are Judged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered yes to all of the questions, please move on to the application. If you responded no to any of the questions, your project may not meet one or more of the requirements of the PEYA awards program.

¹The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services defines lawful permanent residency as any person not a citizen of the United States who is residing in the United States under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant, also known as “Permanent Resident Alien,” “Resident Alien Permit Holder,” and “Green Card Holder.”

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The public reporting and record-keeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 5.6 hours per response. Send comments on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates, and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden, included through the use of automated collection techniques to the Director, Collection Strategies Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2822T), 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20460. Include the OMB control number in any correspondence. Do not send the completed PEYA Application Forms to this address.

Pre-Submission Checklist

Sponsors/Co-Sponsor(s): **Please carefully review the pre-submission checklist below to ensure that all requirements have been met and to confirm that the application package is complete.**

Please note that application materials submitted after the competition close date of January 15, 2025, at 11:59 PM ET will not be considered.

	Yes	No	N/A
Eligibility Self-Screen Checklist was completed by sponsor or co-sponsor and applicant was deemed eligible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application form and attachments are typed, not handwritten. Please contact PEYA@epa.gov if assistance is needed with the application materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The full name of each student applicant is listed along with respective grade level(s). The name(s) reflect how the student prefers to be referred to on a certificate, plaque, and/or at a program ceremony. Names are accurate and do not omit any team members to be acknowledged. Please note that the applicants' names as provided on the application form will be the name inscribed on the award plaques; names cannot be changed after submission of the application.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At least one sponsor is a teacher or education professional. For home-schooled applicants who have no interaction with formal educators or youth development clubs, the sponsor can be a parent. Please see Section 4: Project Sponsors for more details regarding the role of project sponsors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applicant(s) have identified the current competition environmental focus area(s) addressed by their project. Note: Projects that do not clearly identify how their project addressed a current environmental focus area of the competition will generally receive fewer points for the evaluation criterion, <i>Achieving Competition Goals</i> , defined in Section 6: How Applications are Judged .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade 6-12 applicants have written a detailed description of the project. The detailed description does not exceed 5 pages or 5 slides. Applicants are strongly recommended to organize the detailed description by the application review criteria defined in Section 6: How Applications are Judged .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade K-5 applicants have written, with the assistance of the sponsor/co-sponsor(s), a description of the project. The detailed description does not exceed 5 pages or 5 slides. Applicants are strongly recommended to organize the detailed description by the application review criteria defined in Section 6: How Applications are Judged .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The detailed project description and supplementary information combined, including photographs, newspaper articles, videos, or other information about the project, does not exceed 10 pages in length.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All acronyms (for clubs, organizations, and school names) are spelled out at least once in the application.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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The primary sponsor has signed and dated the Application Form and provided a valid mailing address and a secondary email address for correspondence that typically takes place in the summer months.

For students under the age of 18 at the time of application: Parent or guardian has signed and dated both the Consent for PEYA Student Works Form and PEYA Permission Form.

For students aged 18 years or older at the time of application: Student has signed and dated both the Consent for PEYA Student Works Form and PEYA Permission Form. Doing so provides documentation that the student applicant is aged 18 or older and is providing their consent to participate in the program.

For applications: All file names indicate the content of the file (for example, PEYA Application Form, supporting materials, detailed project description, PEYA Consent for Student Works form, PEYA Permission form) and project name. Parent-signed forms may include student first names or student initials in file name. The files must be saved as a PDF, MS Word, MS PowerPoint, or JPEG. File and supplemental materials may not be transmitted using private share drives (for example, Google Drive) or social media links.