



Application Instructions for the 2021 Environmental Educator of the Year Award

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OVERVIEW

The following instructions are to help you complete an application for the Texas Environmental Educator of the Year Award — a new initiative of the Texas Environmental Excellence Awards program. The purpose of the award is to recognize one environmental educator in the state of Texas each year for their efforts in encouraging environmental stewardship, protection, and conservation.

Before completing an application, go to TEEA.org and click on the How to Apply button to see if we are currently accepting applications (generally, we accept them during the summer) and to obtain the current application.

RECOGNITION OF AWARD WINNER

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality will celebrate the Environmental Educator of the Year Award winner, along with the Excellence Awards winners, at a banquet held in May. The award sponsor, Waste Management of Texas, Inc. (WMTX), will provide a \$2,500 cash donation directly to the school or organization where the winning educator works or volunteers to further their environmental efforts. Thank you to WMTX for providing the donation.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

You may submit your application in one of two ways: using our [online form](#), or filling out and submitting an application in [Word](#).

The Word version of the application contains an embedded macro that checks for spelling/grammatical errors; to use this macro, you must enable it when you open the document. When you are ready to submit, **SAVE AS A .DOCX FILE** and send it to awards@tceq.texas.gov.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Enter the contact information and mailing address for the environmental educator (that is, the “applicant”) in the “Educator Information” section. Next, enter the contact for this application (including phone number(s) and an email address) in the “Contact Information” section, if different from the environmental educator. The contact person should be a person who can help answer questions we might have during our review of the application.



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In the “School/Organization Information” section, enter the name and physical address of the school or organization where the environmental educator works or volunteers. Next, enter any web or Facebook addresses (URLs) that contain information about the environmental educator or school/organization. If you have multiple addresses that pertain to the educator and his/her work or school/organization, enter those into the application. Web and Facebook addresses may be used as support material during our review of the application.

APPLICATION SECTION

When answering questions in this section, respond to each one without exceeding the word limit. If a question does not pertain to the environmental educator or his/her work, explain why (instead of leaving the question blank).

1. Describe the educator’s experience in teaching environmental education, including who they taught, the number taught, and the number of years the educator taught them. (200 words or less)

Describe the applicant’s work or volunteer experience in teaching environmental education and provide details on his/her work environment. Provide information about the educator’s audience. For help answering this question, consider, among other things, the following:

- Where does the educator work or volunteer (school, outdoor education center, non-profit organization, etc.)?
- How long has the educator been teaching environmental education? In Texas?
- If the educator is a volunteer, how long has he/she been volunteering and how often?
- What type of audience does the educator teach? Volunteers, students, and/or adults?
- How big is the educator’s audience and how long has the educator taught them?

2. What environmental topics does the educator cover, and how does the environment benefit because of this educator? (300 words or less)

Provide information about the educator’s environmental curriculum or program, including specific topics covered. Explain how the educator and his/her work benefits the environment. Here are some ideas for the details you could mention:

- How does the educator help integrate environmental education into the broader curriculum?
- How does the educator’s curriculum contribute to improving the environment? Make sure to explain how the educator’s environmental topics specifically achieve the improvements.
- Does the educator’s curriculum address environmental issues?



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3. How does the educator make learning about the environment unique, fun, and exciting? Provide examples of specific ideas, techniques, and/or collaborations. (200 words or less)

Briefly describe the educator's teaching methods, techniques, and/or curriculum in environmental education. For ideas of what to mention, consider the following:

- How does the educator convey environmental education through his/her work? Please give some examples of specific ideas, lesson plans, teaching styles and techniques, activities, projects, and/or collaborations.
- Is the educator's work original and creative? Explain.
- Do the educator's teaching methods stimulate his/her audience? How so?
- How does the educator engage his/her audience in learning about the environment?
- Is the educator innovative in his/her use of resources? Please explain.

4. How does the educator inspire their audience to be environmental stewards beyond the classroom? How does the educator inspire others in the community to be stewards of the environment? (200 words or less)

Explain how the educator promotes environmental stewardship to his/her audience and others in the community. When answering this question, consider the following:

- How does the educator extend environmental education beyond the classroom?
- In general, how does the educator inspire environmental stewardship? Please explain.
- If the educator is a volunteer, what does he/she do to promote voluntary participation in environmental-related activities, programs, projects, etc.?
- Are the educator's students demonstrating environmental stewardship beyond the classroom? Provide some examples.
- Does the educator teach environmental education in an environmentally impacted, underserved, or economically disadvantaged community? Please describe the community that the educator teaches in.
- How does the educator inspire members in the community, including parents/guardians, to be stewards of the environment?

5. What does the educator do to share their knowledge/lesson/techniques/etc. with other educators? Is the educator a mentor for other educators? (200 words or less)

Please describe how the educator shares their knowledge/curriculum/techniques/etc. with colleagues, students, partners, and/or the greater environmental education community. If other educators are following his/her teaching methods, explain how the educator helps them become better educators.



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6. Describe the educator's commitment to advancing their environmental education curriculum. (200 words or less)

Please describe how the educator shows commitment to providing opportunities that enhance his/her audiences' understanding of the environment. Explain how the educator demonstrates dedication to continuing and expanding his/her environmental education curriculum.

7. Describe a project or initiative that the educator has been involved with that demonstrates how they go above and beyond standard teaching practices. How does this project/initiative connect the educator's audience to the environment? What positive changes has the educator seen in his/her audiences' behavior towards protecting the environment? (300 words or less)

Describe an environmental project or initiative that the educator has been involved with or is responsible for. When answering this question, consider the following:

- Are the educator's teaching practices exceptional? Do they go above and beyond standard teaching practices? How does his/her project or initiative demonstrate this? Explain.
- What does the educator do to connect his/her audience to the environment? For example, does the educator conduct outdoor lessons, hands-on activities, programs, etc. that engage the audience?
- How does the educator's project or initiative promote the protection and preservation of the environment?
- How does the educator measure the impact of their work on his/her audience?
- How does the educator ensure that environmental education transcends the classroom?
- What positive changes has the educator seen in his/her audiences' actions towards protecting the environment? How is this measured? Please provide examples.

Describe how the educator's project or initiative improves the environment and how the educator helps others improve the environment through his/her work. Explain how this project or initiative goes above and beyond in demonstrating environmental excellence.

8. How does the educator fund resources for environmental education? Is the educator's work limited by funding opportunities? (200 words or less)

- What resources are available to the educator for environmental education? Please describe.
- Does the educator receive funding for educational resources? If so, from where or who?
- How does the availability of resources impact the educator's ability to teach environmental education? Explain.

9. How did you hear about the Environmental Educator of the Year Award? (15 words or less)



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CONTACT US

If you have questions that are not covered in these instructions, please send them to awards@tceq.texas.gov, or call us at (512) 239-3143 and ask to speak to someone with the Texas Environmental Excellence Awards.