

Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant - Sample Application Three

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 Three

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

The pollinator garden project has been researched and designed by the students in kindergarten through fourth grade. Our garden will be planted in late spring 2021 in a space next to our school building, in almost full sunlight. Example designs were created by fourth grade students.

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

This project will empower our students to sustainably care for our local environment. Students will learn characteristics of native plants, needs of local insects and how to promote a healthy ecosystem.

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

Success will be measured by student involvement as the pollinator garden is protected, maintained and observed. We will also measure success as we use the space for learning. Our students' knowledge and understanding of life cycles, weather and sustainability will reflect the success of the project.

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

Students were involved in the planning of this project with nature walks to observe and experience our current plants and weather, learning about the design process, designing the garden, writing argumentative essays, reading science materials about insect life cycles and tracking monarch migration.

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

Implementation activities include creating garden plans using math skills, learning about the recommended native plants, argumentative writing making claims for the need for a pollinator garden, debate position writing and speaking and analyzing data from a community survey. The culminating event will be the actual planting and maintenance of the garden.

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

Maintenance activities assigned to the students include watering, weeding and removing litter. Classes will have four students assigned each week for maintenance.

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

The pollinator garden will enhance the educational use of the area as it will draw attention to native plants, provide a location to observe and study pollinators and plants and will spark an interest in

sustainable gardening. Our students will be able to conduct experiments, long-term observations and scientific studies in our garden. The long-term benefits will be the development of nature-conscious children who grow into adults who care for our earth.

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

The pollinator garden will increase the food supply for pollinators to reverse the decline in pollinator populations. Our motivation lies directly with improving plant life and pollinator life in our community.

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.

February – We hope to have received the grant.

March – We will order the plants from our local nursery. We will reach out to the community through social media, the school Web site and the village Web site to solicit local experts to assist in planting.

April – We will develop a schedule with specific volunteers. We will purchase and pick up the plants.

Early May – We will hold a planting day on a Saturday to dig out the old grasses and plant the new plants. We will ask volunteers to bring tools to share.

Mid-May – We will begin volunteer signup for summer maintenance.

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?

The pollinator garden will be maintained through the school year by third and fourth grade students. We will rotate four student gardeners each week to be responsible for regular and ongoing maintenance, including watering, weeding and removing litter.

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

Summer maintenance will include additional responsibilities and require volunteer help from community members. In May, we will send out the summer volunteer sign-up through the village newsletter and school communications. We will also post to the pollinator garden Instagram account. Summer maintenance will include watering and weeding.

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

The summer months will require ongoing maintenance from volunteers. We will continue to have volunteers sign up to maintain during the fall, winter and spring to do additional tasks that may be above the students' abilities during the school day including dividing and replanting perennials, mulching for winter and training summer volunteers.

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.

We used local and national resources. The following online resources were used to guide the development of the garden plan. They helped us to become better educated on the need for a healthy

ecosystem fueled by pollinators. We learned logistical information regarding planting, maintaining and organizing the garden. Project Hero: Pollinator Quest; Illinois Conservation Foundation; National Wildlife Federation; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Our school principal was involved in planning the location and logistics of the project. The third-grade teachers were collaborating partners as we designed cross-curricular instructional opportunities for students to design and develop this garden.