



GRANT APPLICATION & COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT



Discover Nature Schools
Nature Unfolds
2024–2025

GRANT GUIDELINES—These guidelines are specific to the *Nature Unfolds* program. You must contact your local [Conservation Educator](#) to receive certification training or access the grant application [here](#) once certified.

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

The purpose of the Discover Nature Schools program is to promote conservation education through instructional units that meet grade-level or course-level expectations and encourage hands-on outdoor learning experiences. Each unit is designed to increase student understanding and appreciation of our natural resources and our role in conserving them.

In an effort to assist as many teachers/schools as possible with funding towards implementing this unit (hereinafter referred to as *Nature Unfolds*):

1. **A one-time only \$500 grant for approved instructional and outdoor classroom materials will be awarded per school.**
2. ***Nature Unfolds* must be taught (as set forth below) to twenty (20) or more students.**
3. **Homeschool groups may receive training and materials but are not eligible for funding for equipment/supplies or field experiences.**
4. **Schools in summer school sessions may receive funding for field experiences but are not eligible for funding for equipment/supplies.**

AGREEMENT DURATION

1. **Applications may be submitted from June 1, 2024, through June 1, 2025. The grant period begins on date of approval letter.**
2. **The following must be submitted and postmarked by Sept. 1, 2025:**
 - **Grant narrative report**
 - **Dated detailed receipts clearly showing proof of payment for approved grant expenditures**

MEASURABLE DELIVERABLES

MDC agrees to:

1. Furnish *Nature Unfolds*, an instructional K–2 science unit. The *Nature Unfolds* unit consists of a student book, student science notebook, and a teacher guide. The teacher guide features activities suitable for classroom and outdoor learning and meets specified science grade-level expectations for grades K–2.
2. Provide required training (minimum of 6 hours) for all teachers using the *Nature Unfolds* unit.
3. Provide grant funding for approved instructional and outdoor classroom materials as listed in “Materials Funded by Grant.”
4. Provide grant funding for reimbursement of bus transportation costs for field experiences directly related to *Nature Unfolds*. (See “*Nature Unfolds* Field Experience Guidelines.”)
5. Provide a primary local MDC Conservation Educator contact.



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Discover Nature School agrees to:

1. Designate a lead contact/teacher to make decisions and direct implementation of the program. **This person is responsible for submitting dated detailed receipts clearly showing proof of payment along with a completed grant narrative report postmarked no later than Sept. 1, 2025.**
2. Require **all participating teachers** to complete training (minimum of 6 hours) **prior to initial delivery of *Nature Unfolds* in the classroom.**
3. Teach lessons from *Nature Unfolds*, choosing learning experiences that best meet the needs of their students. (**Note:** Standards listed in the teacher guide would be met only if all activities are taught.)
4. If the field experience reimbursement option is chosen, require all students to participate in field experiences directly related to *Nature Unfolds* as set forth in the *Nature Unfolds* Guidelines.
5. After completion of *Nature Unfolds*, submit dated detailed receipts (clearly showing proof of payment and dated after date of approval letter) and a grant narrative report postmarked no later than Sept. 1, 2025.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

All students will complete *Nature Unfolds* learning experiences as specified and experience related instructional activities in the outdoors in interaction with the natural environment.

FUNDING AND PAYMENT PROCESS

1. The Discover Nature School will submit a signed Agreement and will initially receive 50 percent of the grant award for approved instructional and outdoor classroom supplies upon approval of the Agreement.
2. **The school will be notified with an approval letter accompanied with the initial payment. The grant period begins on date of approval letter. Costs incurred prior to grant period are ineligible for reimbursement.**
3. Reimbursement to the Discover Nature School will be the actual costs as documented, with dated detailed receipts clearly showing proof of payment, up to the maximum amounts stated herein.
4. All funds from MDC **must** be deposited in a timely manner.
5. The Discover Nature School shall provide dated detailed receipts clearly showing proof of payment for all costs (including bus transportation) associated with the approved Agreement along with a grant narrative report postmarked no later than Sept. 1, 2025 before final reimbursement will be made.
6. The Discover Nature School will be reimbursed for bus transportation costs for field experiences after submission of dated transportation receipts. Transportation documentation must be an official bus company receipt or detailed receipt on school letterhead signed by a school administrator.
7. Final reimbursement will be made upon completion of the program and submission and review of required grant narrative report and dated detailed receipts clearly showing proof of payment.

APPROPRIATION

Funds for this program must be appropriated for each fiscal year, and the Discover Nature School and MDC's obligations hereunder shall not be binding upon MDC for any period in which funds have not been appropriated.



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REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. The Discover Nature School shall contact the local MDC Conservation Educator or Curriculum Coordinator if any changes in the program arise. All changes must be approved prior to implementation. Failure to do so may result in denial of reimbursement.
2. If, for any reason, the Discover Nature School cannot complete *Nature Unfolds* and related field experiences during the duration of the Agreement, further funds will not be provided, and any unused funds must be returned.

OWNERSHIP

1. Any equipment purchased with funds under this Agreement becomes the property of the Discover Nature School.
2. MDC reserves the rights to the copyright of all materials it produces and provides.

MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

1. **MDC's local Conservation Educator shall monitor *Nature Unfolds* through ongoing informal monitoring by phone calls, on-site visits, and email.** The Curriculum Coordinator or representative will monitor financial information and reports.
2. After completion of *Nature Unfolds* is verified and final reports are approved, MDC shall process final reimbursement.
3. The Discover Nature School shall allow MDC access to all financial records and/or audited financial statements related to this agreement.

TERMINATION

MDC retains the right to terminate this Agreement at any time, without penalty or recourse, by giving written notice at least thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of termination. All unused grant funds must be returned to MDC.

The Discover Nature School may terminate this Agreement with thirty (30) days of notice if agreed by MDC but must return all unused funds.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE, SAFETY & HOLD HARMLESS

The Discover Nature School hereby agrees to comply with all laws and regulations applicable to it, and to take all reasonable and lawfully required steps to ensure the safety of the public during the performance of this cooperative agreement and the provision of all public programs and activities furthered by it, and the Discover Nature School agrees to indemnify and hold harmless MDC, and its agents and employees, from any claim or suit arising out of, or in connection with, this cooperative agreement and the provision of all public programs and activities furthered by it.

OTHER PROVISIONS

MDC shall be given appropriate credit in all publications, educational materials and in any media contacts related to *Nature Unfolds* and grant. Appropriate wording may include "The Missouri Department of Conservation provides the Discover Nature Schools program and grants so Missouri students learn to connect with nature and conserve it, too."



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GRANT ELIGIBILITY CHART

FIRST YEAR OF PARTICIPATION

☞ A field experience reimbursement grant to cover actual bus transportation costs for field experiences up to \$7 per student (maximum of \$3,500) for *Nature Unfolds*.

AND

* A one-time only *Nature Unfolds* grant per school up to \$500 to purchase approved instructional and outdoor classroom supplies. **(See “Materials Funded by Grant.”)**

* Grant funds disbursed as follows: 50 percent of approved amount for purchase of approved materials **upon notification of approval of Agreement**; balance reimbursed upon completion of *Nature Unfolds* and submission of required documentation. (See ☞ NOTE below.)

SUBSEQUENT YEARS OF PARTICIPATION (or schools adopting *Nature Unfolds* in formal summer school)

☞ A field experience reimbursement grant to cover actual bus transportation costs for field experiences up to \$7 per student (maximum of \$3,500) for *Nature Unfolds*.

(See ☞ NOTE below.)

After 3 years of participation in the *Nature Unfolds* program, the school is eligible for an additional \$250 for equipment/supplies listed on page 5 of this agreement.

☞ **NOTE:** Bus transportation costs and the balance for instructional material costs shall be reimbursed after receipt of required documentation postmarked by Sept. 1, 2025. Documentation shall include a grant narrative report and ***dated detailed receipts clearly showing proof of payment (no packing slips or purchase orders)*** for all one-time only *Nature Unfolds* approved materials and for actual bus transportation costs.



MATERIALS FUNDED BY GRANT

- This grant allows for a **one-time only** amount of \$500 for approved items. These items may be purchased in any combination or number based on a school's need. All purchases must be reflected on clear and legible original OR clear and legible copies of dated detailed receipts showing proof of payment.
- **Only items on this list are eligible for reimbursement.* No substitutions. Keep all dated detailed receipts clearly showing proof of payment.**

Equipment/Supplies

- Air thermometers
- Animal track replicas or molds (positive and/or negative)
- Balance scales
- Bleach
- Books from Children's Literature or Bibliography section of *Nature Unfolds* teacher guide (maximum of 10)
- Butterfly/insect nets
- Camouflage and hunter-orange clothing
- Cardstock and index cards
- Clipboards
- Cloth (muslin, white sheets, or pillowcases)
- Dowel rods
- Dry erase markers and eraser (**IF** dry erase board is purchased)
- Duct tape
- Easel and flip chart paper or dry erase board (up to 27" x 30")
- Electric tape
- Eye droppers
- Feathers
- Felt and felt board
- Field guides relevant to the *Nature Unfolds* unit
- Foil
- Googly eye stickers
- Ground blind
- Ink pad (large enough to accommodate thermometer stamp)
- Insect nets
- Jars, vials, or other containers for field observation
- Kitchen spices or extracts
- Magnets (or magnetic sheet or tape)
- Magnifiers, hand lenses, or loupes
- Materials for outdoor observation areas — seed packets, potted plants, shrubs, or trees native to Missouri (or annual plants known to attract specific Missouri wildlife and approved by your local Conservation Educator); soil; garden hand tools; plastic liner or plastic pond form; pond plants native to Missouri; pond pump
- Pipe cleaners
- Plastic containers (1–2, 18 gal. or smaller)
- Plastic cups and spoons
- Plastic eggs
- Pliers
- Pom poms
- Rain gauge (non-electronic)
- Ribbon, crepe paper, or string
- Rubber thermometer stamp
- Sandwich/snack bags
- Seeds (grass, lettuce, marigold, radish, zinnia, or other flower seeds)
- Slotted spoon
- Small tongs
- Straws
- Styrofoam balls
- Thermometers
- Turkey calls or sound recordings
- Turkey decoys
- Turkey feet or other turkey replica parts
- Tweezers
- Velcro
- Wire (heavy)
- Yarn

*** NOTE:** Not all materials required to complete *Nature Unfolds* activities are funded by this grant.



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NATURE UNFOLDS FIELD EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

REQUIREMENTS

In order to qualify for reimbursement of transportation costs for field experiences taken in conjunction with the *Nature Unfolds* unit, field experiences:

- Must have a connection to the *Nature Unfolds* unit
- Must occur at an outdoor area with natural features
- Must provide students with opportunities to explore and investigate using science notebooks and science tools as referenced in the introductory section of the Teacher Guide (i.e. magnifying glasses, insect nets, field guides, collection jars, thermometers, garden tools, etc.)

Meaningful opportunities for students to apply the knowledge and skills fully to the field experience include:

- Pre-trip discussion for students to learn more about the field experience destination and develop questions that relate to curriculum themes covered in the *Nature Unfolds* unit.
- Outdoor investigations to collect and record observations.
- Ample post-trip time for students to:
 - Organize their data
 - Prepare and present short class presentations on their field investigations and findings/conclusions

Examples of destinations include:

- Demonstration or interpretive farm
- Working farm
- Animal petting zoo
- Fish hatchery
- Poultry hatchery
- Conservation area or state park
- National forest
- City or county park
- Orchard