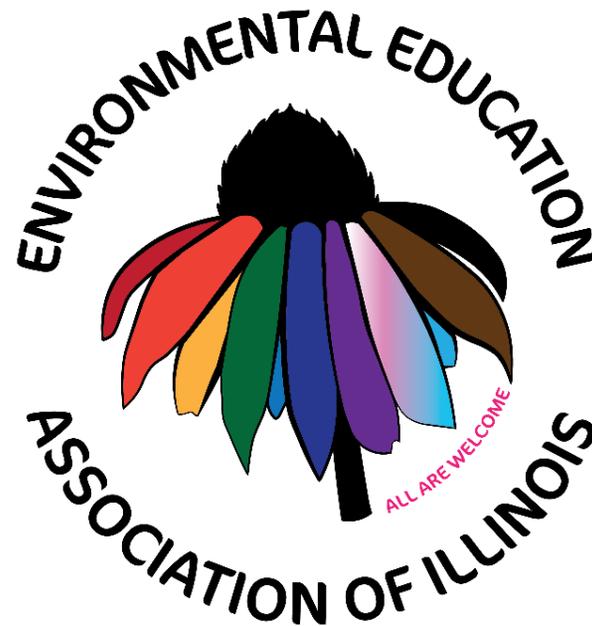


Environmental Education Association of Illinois (EEAI) Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Adopted July 2023



EEAI Vision

Our vision is a collaboration of diverse voices advocating for equitable access to nature and for the sustainable health and well-being of all living things and the environment through civic and community engagement.

EEAI Mission

EEAI nurtures and sustains a diverse network of environmental educators in Illinois. We foster connections, improve environmental literacy, and amplify underrepresented voices in the environmental education sphere. With a team of dedicated staff, engaged board, active facilitators, members and partners, EEAI offers support to a wide range of Illinois educators through professional development, grants, resources, and community.

What is EEAI?

The Environmental Education Association of Illinois (EEAI) is a group of concerned citizens who believe in the importance of all people understanding and protecting natural environments—including urban nature and agricultural lands—that sustain life on Earth.

EEAI seeks to support both formal educators (teachers in K-12 classrooms and higher education) and nonformal educators (teachers in nature centers, museums, parks/preserves, zoos, etc.) throughout Illinois.

Since its inception, EEAI has provided leadership in environmental education at the local, state, and national levels through professional development services for formal and nonformal educators. As host to national, state-based, and independent professional development curriculums and events such as Project WILD, Project Learning Tree (PLT), the Earth Force RISE Challenge, and the Midwest Environmental Education Conference (MEEC), EEAI sets the professional standard that Illinois educators depend on.

A volunteer Board of Directors governs EEAI. The Board of Directors is composed of the offices of President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and Immediate Past President (collectively called the Executive Board), as well as two Regional Directors from each of the regions—except the northeast region, which is served by three representatives due to the size of that region's population. Officers are nominated from among EEAI's membership to serve two-year terms. Members provide nominations for Regional Directors, who must live and/or work in their region. Elections take place annually 60 days prior to the annual meeting, which usually takes place in March.



How Does EEAI Lead?

- Serves at the Illinois affiliate of the [North American Association for Environmental Education \(NAAEE\)](#)—the world’s largest association of environmental educators, with members in North America and 55 countries worldwide
- Partners with Midwest, national, and international organizations to advance environmental education in Illinois and beyond
 - Reviews and makes recommendations regarding environmental education materials
 - Locates funding sources to implement high-quality programs and events
- Hosts periodic regional and statewide networking and professional development events, including offering Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDUs) to formal educators
 - Offers annual environmental education conferences in conjunction with EEAI’s spring membership meeting; the [EEAI Annual Meeting and Conference](#) rotates regionally throughout the state of Illinois
 - Coordinates the [Midwest Environmental Education Conference \(MEEC\)](#) once every eight years, which draws participants from throughout the nation
 - Sponsors [Project Learning Tree®](#) and [Project WILD™](#) as well as other curricula in the state of Illinois
- Trains professional development workshop facilitators and maintains a [facilitator network](#)
- Engages with individuals and organizations throughout Illinois in developing a foundational guide to advancing equitable environmental literacy in Illinois called the [EL4IL: Environmental Literacy for Illinois](#)
- Offers [mini-grants](#) for EEAI members of up to \$350 per proposal
- Administers a statewide [awards program](#) recognizing environmental educators for their outstanding work
- Creates and distributes to members the “Update” quarterly e-newsletter—the only periodical in Illinois devoted to current information and events in environmental education

Strategic Planning Process

EEAI has been providing environmental education professional development and networking services to formal and nonformal educators in Illinois since 1972. A lot has changed in the last 50 years, and EEAI has worked hard to adapt. However, the rate of change and the impact on education has accelerated in recent years due to the COVID19 pandemic and the increased focus on social justice and environmental justice issues. EEAI must continue to evolve as an organization in order to remain relevant in a changing world.

In early 2022, EEAI was awarded a grant through the Pisces Foundation to fund the development of a new strategic plan. To ensure that EEAI provides equitable access to



programming, training and networking opportunities—and continues to advance environmental literacy in Illinois—feedback and conversations with diverse stakeholders are vital. An essential part of the 2022-2023 strategic planning process was to learn from formal educators about their current challenges in environmental education, the needs of their communities, and what leaders in environmental education can do to better support their work.



To understand the challenges and needs of the formal education community in terms of implementing environmental education, EEAI worked with two distinct yet equally important groups: 1) formal educators including but not limited to PreK-12 teachers, administrators, superintendents, support staff and after-school program leaders; and 2) higher education faculty who train and certify future formal educators. Both groups are key to ensuring that environmental education takes place in every school and classroom throughout Illinois.

In partnership with the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAE), EEAI has established the Illinois Higher Education EE Network. This online network and communication tool includes an extensive list of higher education faculty throughout Illinois that have an interest in environmental education and/or provide direct instruction to undergraduate students who will be heading into an educational field.

Additionally, EEAI conducted focus group sessions to offer formal educators opportunities to share their challenges, needs and visions for environmental education within their specific fields. Free memberships and monetary stipends were provided to encourage participation. EEAI was intentional about inviting Illinois educators with diverse perspectives, including but not limited to educators of color; urban and rural educators; public and private educators; and all grade levels, subject matters, and levels of affluence. These sessions were crucial for understanding how the EEAI can better serve these educators in the invaluable work they do. Through ongoing communication, EEAI will continue to build partnerships and long-term connections with these participants.

Finally, in partnership with the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, EEAI disseminated a survey to non-formal environmental education facilities statewide to better understand these organizations in terms of their staffing, program

delivery, program format, and community outreach following the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collected from this effort has assisted in the strategic planning process for advancing environmental literacy statewide and determining what these non-formal education centers may be able to provide partnerships or assistance to meet the needs and challenges of formal educators.

Through the iterative process of collecting, analyzing, and integrating feedback the EEAI board has developed this strategic plan to lead the organization over the next three years. The intent is that it will not only guide the way, but also provide the flexibility to react appropriately to changing community needs, financial challenges and opportunities, and the long-term viability of EEAI.

Strategic Planning Timeline 2022-2023

Ongoing	Meetings with Strategic Planning Consultant Dave Chase of DRC Consulting
July 2022	EEAI awarded Pisces grant to fund strategic planning process
July - Aug 2022	Focus group sessions with K-12 teachers and higher education faculty
November 2022	Strategic planning at EEAI Board Retreat; seven plan pillars identified and initial goals drafted
Jan – Feb 2023	“Growing EE Services in IL” needs assessment survey administered to members and nonmembers
April 2023	Strategic planning session during EEAI Annual Conference; refining goals and drafting objectives; new Mission Statement and first-ever Vision Statement adopted by EEAI
May 2023	Focus Group Sessions
June 2023	Final Strategic Plan revisions
July 2023	EEAI Strategic Plan 2023-2026 adopted by EEAI



Strategic Plan Pillars (Overarching Themes):

1. **Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility (JEDIA)** highlights EEAI's commitment to a future where all voices are participating and feel welcome.
2. **Finance** highlights EEAI's commitment to a sustainable funding model that works to maintain the long-term efficacy of the organization.
3. **Board & Committee Development** highlights EEAI's commitment to strengthen and reinforce the work of all volunteer board and committee members.
4. **Staffing** highlights EEAI's commitment to fair and equitable staffing that meets the needs of employees and the organization.
5. **Public Relations (PR)** highlights EEAI's commitment to public communication that elevates our profile throughout the state and nationwide.
6. **Membership** highlights EEAI's commitment to building a diverse and engaged membership, and providing quality benefits for those members.
7. **Programming** highlights EEAI's commitment to increasing the quantity and diversity of educational programs that meet member and community needs.

Goals (End-of-Plan Outcomes):

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility (JEDIA):

Goal 1: Increase the number of organizational memberships in order to connect with organizations that are already working with diverse audiences reflective of their communities (students, schools, community partners, etc.).

Goal 2: Develop an easily-accessed JEDIA page on the EEAI website to share resources and internal efforts as well as amplify (organizational) member inclusion efforts within their communities, and create a hub of JEDIA resources that members can easily access.

Goal 3: EEAI has a diversity statement, set goals, and diversity strategies.

Finance:

Goal 1: EEAI has enough sustainable and diversified funding sources to maintain unrestricted funds (money on-hand, in liquid assets) to cover at least one year of annual operating expenses.

Board & Committee Development:

Goal 1: EEAI develops a schedule of board retreats and team building for each term to foster strong board relationships.

Goal 2: EEAI regularly provides updated job descriptions, responsibilities, and benefits for all EEAI board positions.

Goal 3: EEAI has a succession plan for maintaining a full board of directors and executive committee.

Staffing:

Goal 1: EEAI has strong employee retention, keeping the current Executive Director and Program Coordinator in place through May 2026.

Goal 2: Hire a staff, intern or contractor to create content and manage social media and PR for roughly 15-20 hours per month (3-5 hours per week).

Public Relations (PR):

Goal 1: EEAI promotes opportunities from “partner” organizations; and at least 5 partner organizations promote EEAI programs/events annually.

Goal 2: All members have easy access to and utilize a PR toolkit to promote EEAI. Members know about EEAI programs and events in time to register/attend or help promote.

Goal 3: EEAI has an active PR committee and appropriate staff support, where everyone has a defined role and tasks.

Membership:

Goal 1: EEAI has a growing membership with more diversity and more formal educators (teachers in higher-education, rural and urban teachers, and pre-service educators still attending college).

Goal 2: Offer free memberships to reach educators who may feel the cost is prohibitive (especially in low-income or rural areas) and to new schools and organizations with limited budgets.

Goal 3: Create and distribute a needs assessment survey to members once per year.

Programming:

Goal 1: EEAI has social and networking programs in each region of the state that members and the public are engaging with and excited about.

Goal 2: The EEAI conference is well-known throughout the state as a source of PD and networking. It has diverse attendees that include formal educators, non-formal educators, and students.

Goal 3: EEAI has a strong relationship with ISBE & ISTA as **the** source for EE information and professional development.

Goal 4: EEAI has a plan in place to support a robust online eeCourse program for Illinois educators in collaboration with NAAEE. These eeCourses are combined into at least one eeCredential (certificate) by the end of plan.

Objectives (Action Steps / Strategies):

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility (JEDIA) highlights EEAI’s commitment to a future where all voices are participating and feel welcome.

Goal 1: Increase the number of organizational memberships in order to connect with organizations that are already working with diverse audiences reflective of their communities (students, schools, community partners, etc.).			
Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Identify 5 or more potential community partners in each region. Regional Directors should connect with at least 2 organizations that are already working with diverse audiences.	JEDIA Committee/RDs	High	
JEDIA interest survey assessment	JEDIA Committee	Medium	

Goal 2: Develop an easily-accessed JEDIA page on the EEAI website to share resources and internal efforts as well as amplify (organizational) member inclusion efforts within their communities, and create a hub of JEDIA resources that members can easily access.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Design and create webpage as described in the goal. Include more photos that better represent the diverse people of IL.	JEDIA Committee/PR Team	High	
Launching the webpage and informing members of this new resource.	JEDIA Committee/PR Team	High	
Evaluate webpage's effectiveness via the page's analytics and through a question on a bi-annual survey.	JEDIA Committee	High	
JEDIA interest survey assessment	JEDIA Committee	Medium	

Goal 3: EEAI has a diversity statement, set goals, and diversity strategies.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Develop a diversity statement.	JEDIA Committee	High	
Conduct annual progress reports for Strategic Plan goals.	JEDIA Committee	High	
<p>All EEAI documents, forms, auto-messages and other written text will use inclusive and consistent language, logos & images (to foster a welcoming atmosphere where everyone feels valued and seen).</p> <p>Send test communications to a few people to proofread/vet.</p>	JEDIA Committee	High	
Hire a consultant to help guide inclusive practices, and budget accordingly.	JEDIA Committee/Exec Board	Medium	
JEDIA interest survey assessment	JEDIA Committee	Medium	

Finance highlights EEAI’s commitment to a sustainable funding model that works to maintain the long-term efficacy of the organization.

Goal 1: EEAI has enough sustainable and diversified funding sources to maintain unrestricted funds (money on-hand, in liquid assets) to cover at least one year of annual operating expenses.			
Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
<p>Create and market a year-round sponsorship package to offer a consistent structure of benefits for different levels of sponsorship.</p> <p>Use this package to solicit corporate sponsors.</p>	ED, Fund Development Committee, Executive Committee	High	
<p>Identify and build relationships with at least 5 individuals or organizations willing to donate \$3,000 or more annually.</p>	ED, Fund Development Committee, entire Board of Directors	High	
<p>Grow existing professional development opportunities/certifications and build online programming content (such as the eeCourses) which meet the needs of IL educators and bring in \$15,000 in program revenue annually.</p>	Executive Director, Program Coordinator	High	

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
The EEAI board approves a net positive budget.	Treasurer, Board of Directors	High	
<p>Create a structure for a robust grant-search and application routine.</p> <p>Explore possible funding through the various “Community Foundations” and “family foundations” (e.g. Walton, Stranahan) in IL.</p>	ED, Fund Development Committee	High	
Research possible investment opportunities.	Treasurer, Executive Board	Medium	
<p>Annually assess board capacity and interest around fundraising. Explore (fun!) options that solicit funds from people who are not current EEAI members, and that keep the board engaged and participating.</p> <p>This new campaign reaches a minimum of 50 “outside” donors.</p>	entire Board of Directors	Medium	
The annual conference maintains net positive income each year of the plan.	ED, Conference Committee, entire Board of Directors	Medium	

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Create targeted fundraising for specific initiatives. (For example, raising funds so that we can continue to offer EarthForce grants.)	Fund Development Committee	Lower	
Seek new EEAI merchandise (such as key chains, stickers, USB flash drives, magnetic clips, or window decals) and increase sales at the annual conference and other in-person events.	Conference Committee, PR Committee	Lower	
Leverage the online EEAI store with more rotation of choices and promotions to raise attention/brand recognition.	ED, PR Committee	Lower	
Poll members about their ideas for new EEAI funding sources.	Fund Development Committee	Lower	

Board & Committee Development highlights EEAI’s commitment to strengthen and reinforce the work of all volunteer board and committee members.

Goal 1: EEAI develops a schedule of board retreats and team building for each term to foster strong board relationships.			
Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Hire a contractor to help with team-building coinciding with annual board retreat, combining with JEDIA training when sensible. Budget for team-building as part of the annual retreat planning process.	Executive Committee	High	
Consider teacher availability and alternate schedules for meetings and retreats to accommodate.	Executive Committee	High	
Offer at least one virtual board team-building event outside of the annual retreat, conference or regular board meetings.	Executive Committee	Medium	
Support Regional Directors with monthly virtual check-ins with the Executive Committee and/or ED.	Executive Committee	Medium	
Invite special guests (such as someone working on EE legislation) to attend and present at virtual board meet-ups.	Executive Committee	Medium	

Goal 2: EEAI regularly provides updated job descriptions, responsibilities, and benefits for all EEAI board positions.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Review all current job descriptions (for board positions and committee chairs) for accuracy and additions. Include specific benefits once those have been outlined (see below). Consider revising/ adding program and event requirements for RDs.	Executive committee	High	
Seek out additional benefits for board and committee members. Formalize and create a list of all benefits for working on the board (e.g. discounts, professional references, PR for you/your organization, etc.), and make this information readily available to members via email/newsletters.	Executive Committee, PR Committee	High	
Offer stipends and discounts for conferences/events to board members and committee chairs when financially able.	Executive committee	High	
Create a separate benefit or suite of benefits for non-board EEAI members who serve on committees.	Executive committee	Medium	
Poll board members to assess what benefits are the most/least desirable for them.	Executive Committee	Medium	

Goal 3: EEAI has a succession plan for maintaining a full board of directors and executive committee.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Recruit directly to members who may have the ability to serve on the board or a committee (emphasizing the benefits).	Executive Committee	High	
All new board members and committee chairs are on-boarded in a timely and thorough manner.	Executive Committee	High	
<p>All Regional Directors and other board members will be responsible for actively helping to recruit and train their replacements, especially if they are vacating their term early.</p> <p>Recruiting replacements should first involve “open calls” for volunteers (including job description and list of benefits), followed by targeted “asks” if there is no response to the open call.</p>	All Board Members	High	
Review / revise the EEAI Constitution for clarity on mid-term board member appointments.	Executive Committee	Medium	
Investigate adding one additional Regional Director position to each region.	Executive Committee	Medium	

Staffing highlights EEAI’s commitment to fair and equitable staffing that meets the needs of employees and the organization.

Goal 1: EEAI has strong employee retention, keeping the current Executive Director and Program Coordinator in place through May 2026.			
Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Maintain enough unrestricted funds (liquid assets) to support the annual salaries for both the part-time Executive Director (averaging 20 hours/week) and the part-time Program Coordinator (averaging 30 hours/week), and budget accordingly for this priority.	Executive Committee	High	
Provide a competitive wage for all staff of no less than \$20/hour. Assess wages annually by investigating what rates other similar organizations are paying their staff, both within and outside of IL.	Executive Committee	High	
Conduct annual evaluations of all staff. All staff performing at or above standard receive wage increases after each annual review.	Executive Committee	High	

Check in with staff to get their perspective on workload and priorities at least once per quarter; assist them with pairing work to be done with the time that is available/needed.	Executive Committee	High	
Assess the need for one or both part-time staff positions to become full-time positions by 2026, and/or to add a third part-time Program Coordinator position.	Executive Committee	High	

Goal 2: Hire a staff, intern or contractor to create content and manage social media and PR for roughly 15-20 hours per month (3-5 hours per week).

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Explore how a paid internship would be structured and how to recruit for this type of position.	Executive Committee		
Investigate possible contractors and their fees. Compare this to the potential cost of a paid staff member.	Executive Committee		
Add this position to the budget for future years	Executive Committee		
By 2026, have the funds available to expand this position to 10 hours per week.			

Public Relations (PR) highlights EEAI’s commitment to public communication that elevates our profile throughout the state and nationwide.

Goal 1: EEAI promotes opportunities from “partner” organizations; and at least 5 partner organizations promote EEAI programs/events annually.			
Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Define what a “partner organization” is (i.e. are they also required to be organizational members of EEAI?) and what other organizations might qualify; create a list of these possible partners.	Executive Committee Executive Director	High	Idea: Create a photo submission campaign; winner gets a free membership
Create supporting structure and language for sharing/promoting partner program/events between organizations	Executive Committee PR Committee	High	
Release more frequent (monthly?) “news” updates in between quarterly newsletter to exclusively promote programs/events from EEAI and partner organizations	PR Committee	High	
Create a format/structure for offering reciprocal memberships with partner organizations and what benefits they will receive; create associated	Executive Committee	Medium	

language or PR materials for reaching out to possible partner organizations with this offer	Membership Committee		
Budget for EEAI staff to exhibit at other conferences (e.g. Wild Things) to increase networking with other organizations and individuals.	Executive Committee	Medium	
Increase use of program calendar on website.	Executive Director, PR Committee	Medium	

Goal 2: All board members have easy access to and utilize a PR toolkit to promote EEAI. Members know about EEAI programs and events in time to register/attend or help promote.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Create different PR toolkits for different purposes (i.e. one for marketing to formal educators and another for marketing to non-formals; toolkits for each recurring Project or program).	PR Committee		
Create an infographic or other PR tool to demonstrate how members and other educators can utilize the EL for IL.	PR Committee		
Marketing pieces for programs and events are created one month before the date and are distributed weekly (at minimum) until the registration deadline or date. Specifically ask members and the board to help distribute and share.	Executive Director, Program Coordinator, PR Committee		
Include pictures that better represent the diverse people of IL.			
Audit all PR materials to make sure the new logo and official EEAI colors are being used (use brand handbook).			
Increase promotion of Mini-Grant and Awards programs.			

Goal 3: EEAI has an active PR committee and appropriate staff support, where everyone has a defined role and tasks.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
EEAI creates and utilizes an annual PR schedule where tasks and deadlines are assigned to specific individuals or roles. Include social media presence and investigation of a new platform.	PR Committee	High	
Highlight the benefits of being a PR committee member.	PR Committee		

Membership highlights EEAI’s commitment to building a diverse and engaged membership, and providing quality benefits for those members.

Goal 1: EEAI has a growing membership with more diversity and more formal educators (teachers in higher-education, rural and urban teachers, and pre-service educators still attending college).			
Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Work with the PR committee to create one or more marketing pieces specifically for formal educators that includes a greater emphasis on “educating the educators” and specific benefits for that audience-- addressing barriers to EE in the classroom such as grant funds; professional development with CEUs; NGSS and curriculum-alignment; IL-specific resources; climate change curriculum; SEL resources; and more for middle and high school teachers.	Membership Committee, PR Committee	High	
Create a list of 5 tangible, real benefits (such as ability to share openings on the job board, or ability to promote programs and events) available only to members and not to the general public.	Membership Committee, Executive Committee	High	

<p>Create a membership statement and membership recruitment flier(s) addressing how EEAI benefits individuals and other organizations (i.e. grants, professional development, PR, etc).</p> <p>Make this tool easily accessible on the website so that potential members can share with their supervisors (marketing to bosses/administration) and others.</p> <p>Ask each member to share with 2 other non-members (one formal, one nonformal).</p>	<p>Membership Committee, PR Committee</p>	<p>High</p>	
<p>Hold a membership drive to build membership and recruit more diverse members, including organizational members and schools (see goal 2 below).</p>	<p>Membership Committee Regional Directors</p>	<p>Medium</p>	
<p>Recruit more diverse speakers and presenters for the annual conference; schedule far enough in advance to include in conference promotional materials.</p>	<p>Conference Committee</p>	<p>Medium</p>	

Require each Regional Director to submit at least one award nomination each year.	Executive Committee/RD's	Medium	
Solicit testimonials from current members and share on website and social media.	Executive Committee, PR Committee	Medium	
Reach out to past members to invite them to re-join; ask them why they are no longer a member.	Membership Committee	Lower	
Investigate how to offer a sliding scale or "pay what you can" membership option for individuals.	Membership Committee	Lower	

Goal 2: Offer free or reduced price memberships to reach educators who may feel the cost is prohibitive (especially in low-income or rural areas) and to new schools and organizations with limited budgets.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Create a new membership level just for schools.	Membership Committee	High	
Develop a system or tool for determining who can receive a free membership, as well as possible limits to our capacity for new organizational memberships (i.e. through Wild Apricot).	Membership Committee	High	
Each RD will work with members in their region to create a list of suggested schools and organizations in their region.	Regional Directors	Medium	
Create a free membership invitation flier that includes benefits, instructions/discount code, etc.	Membership Committee PR Committee	Medium	
Offer free memberships as raffle items (such as at other statewide conferences); use the flier noted above.	Membership Committee	Lower	
Each region will award 5 free memberships to select organizations or individuals in their region each year.	Regional Directors	Lower	

Goal 3: Create and distribute a needs assessment survey to members once per year.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Identify important questions and create the survey; include questions about why members stay (as in a “stay survey”) <u>as well as other items noted throughout this plan</u> (so that we are not over-surveying our members).	Executive Committee	High	
Share survey results with all members and survey participants (on website, social media, etc.)	Membership Committee	High	
Develop a plan for follow-through on survey results; integrate feedback into EEAI’s annual strategic work plan (then share the annual work plan with all members and the public).	Executive Committee	High	
Create graphic testimonials based on survey results to use for PR.	PR Committee	Medium	

Programming highlights EEAI’s commitment to increasing the quantity and diversity of educational programs that meet member and community needs.

Goal 1: EEAI has social and networking programs in each region of the state that members and the public are engaging with and excited about.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Each region of the state provides regular (monthly, quarterly, bi-yearly as works in the region) informal networking opportunities. Examples: book clubs, coffee & birding, nature walks etc.	Regional Directors	High	
Each region of the state provides at least 1 formal networking opportunity each year. Can be combined with other regions. This includes the yearly conference as a formal event.	Regional Directors	Medium	
Quarterly virtual facilitator meet-up	Executive Director & Program Coordinator	High	
Host collaborative events with other aligned organizations at least twice per year (in-person and virtual). All regions participate at least once during the strategic plan.	Executive Director, Program Coordinator, and RDs	Medium	

<p>At least one regional director in each region is trained on each of our national program offerings. RDs work together to offer at least two trainings a year in their region with support from program coordinator.</p>	<p>RDs, Program Coordinator</p>	<p>Medium</p>	
<p>Accessibility is considered for all events held and the event announcements include that accessibility information (i.e. closed captioning available, event location has an accessibility ramp, gender-neutral bathrooms will be available etc.)</p>	<p>Entire staff and Board</p>	<p>High</p>	

Goal 2: The EEAI conference is well-known throughout the state as a source of PD and networking. It has diverse attendees that include formal educators, non-formal educators, and students.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
At least one conference held at a university before end of plan		Low	
Inclusion of low-cost or free programming options for one morning/afternoon of the conference (focus on formal educators?)	ED & PC	High	
Direct asks to diverse speakers/presenters/exhibitors	Staff and board	High	
Continuation and growth of student poster session			
BIPOC and/or LGBTQI specific scholarships			

Goal 3: EEAI has a strong relationship with ISBE & ISTA (and other formal educator groups) as the source for EE information and professional development.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Create and maintain an active list of contacts at ISBE, ISTA, AIMS and other organizations that work in the state to promote EE to formal educators	Executive Director & RDs	Medium	
At least 1 in-person training event in each region of the state each year that offers ISBE hours.	ED, PC & RDs	High	
EEAI hosts a virtual Climate Summit in collaboration with other statewide and regional teacher organizations such as ISBE & ISTA & NISE (Northern IL Science Educators).	ED & PC	High	
PDF or other document that shows standards alignment of EEAI administered national curriculums	ED & PC with WonderWorks	High	
Attendance at regional and state teacher conferences as possible as exhibitor or attendee depending on the conference.	ED & PC	Medium	
Connect with ROEs directly to share our programming and standards alignment PDFs	PC & RDs	High	

Goal 4: EEAI has a plan in place to support a robust online eeCourse program for Illinois educators in collaboration with NAAEE. These eeCourses are combined into at least one eeCredential (certificate) by the end of plan.

Objective / Action Step / Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Priority Level	Notes / Progress
Work with WonderWorks PP to launch Foundation of teaching EE eeCourse	Executive Director & Program Coordinator	High	
Offer eeCourse cohorts quarterly starting in 2024. This will include at least WonderWorks course, PLT, Project Wild, and Teaching about Climate.	ED & PC	High	
Fund and Develop a JEDIA focused eeCourse for Illinois educators	ED, PC, and JEDIA Committee	Medium	
Determine what eeCredentials EEAI offers and what purpose it serves for Illinois educators.	Executive Director & Program Coordinator	Medium	

