



Cultivating Curiosity, 2025. Photo by ONREP

Oregon Natural Resources Education Program Statewide Equity Survey: Voices, Insights, and Next Steps



Oregon State University
Extension Service

Oregon Natural Resources
Education Program

About the Survey

In Fall 2024, we conducted an online Equity Survey using our online survey collection platform to gather feedback from educators and partners on our progress, areas for improvement, and unmet needs. A total of 278 individuals responded. This report provides a summary of what you shared, what we learned, and the responsive actions ONREP is taking now and in the future.



Nature Journaling, 2024. Photo by ONREP

Environmental Education Definition



A single, ready-made definition of environmental education can leave out educators who don't see themselves reflected. ONREP wanted a definition shaped by our community.

We asked for input and received 87 responses. After reviewing feedback and identifying themes, we created a shared definition that reflects multiple perspectives and the voices and experiences of those who contributed.

Co-created Environmental Education Definition

Environmental education is a lifelong exploration that highlights the deep interconnection between people and the natural world. It honors nature alongside the cultural perspectives and experiences of individuals and diverse communities, fostering awareness, knowledge, and collective action to protect the planet and sustain life.

Top Recurring Environmental Definition Themes

1. Environmental Awareness and Stewardship
2. Connection to Nature and Place-Based Learning
3. Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity
4. Critical Thinking and Inquiry-Based Learning
5. Hands-On and Experiential Learning
6. Understanding Human-Environment Interrelationships
7. Developing a Sense of Wonder and Curiosity
8. Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Approaches
9. Action-Oriented and Solution-Focused Education



Professional Development Event Experiences

To understand what makes professional development accessible, inclusive, and meaningful to Oregon educators, we asked the following questions:

1. Have you attended professional development within the past 4 years at ONREP or another program that was an outstanding example of inclusivity?
Please tell us about it (73 Responses).
2. Within the past 4 years, what facilitation techniques have you experienced that have best created an environment of belonging in learning spaces? Facilitation techniques can be from ONREP or another program (64 responses).

Inclusive Practices and Techniques That Foster Belonging in Learning Spaces

- **Connect to Identity and Culture** – Reflect local context, cultural perspectives, and multilingual options.
- **Invite Participation** – Use low-pressure activities and varied formats for engagement.
- **Design for Access** – Apply Universal Design with flexible, multi-modal options.
- **Communicate Clearly** – Favor plain language and model respectful communication.
- **Offer Multiple Pathways** – Incorporate multidisciplinary, social-emotional, and trauma-informed approaches.

ONREP Workshop Experience



Science with a Side of Art, 2025. Photo by ONREP

Emphasis on Inclusivity

Workshops focused on inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed approaches are valued by participants.

Highlighted Workshops

Nature Journaling and trauma-informed wildfire training workshops are noted for their relevance and inclusivity.

Supportive Learning Techniques

Quiet spaces, affinity groups, and varied facilitation methods supported multiple learning styles effectively.

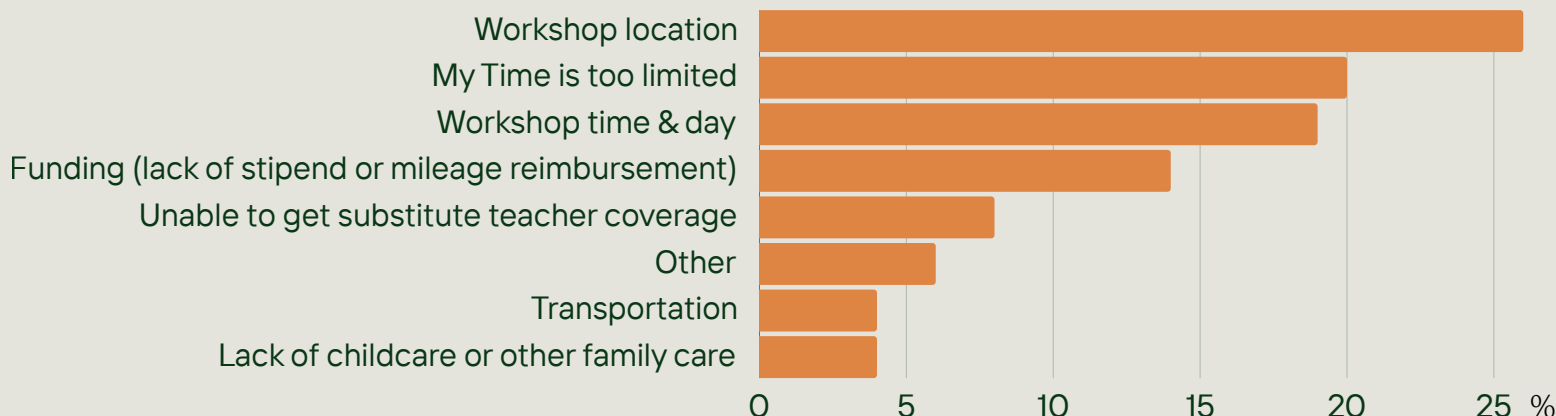
Areas for Improvement

Respondents identified a need for better accessibility accommodations and more representative speakers.

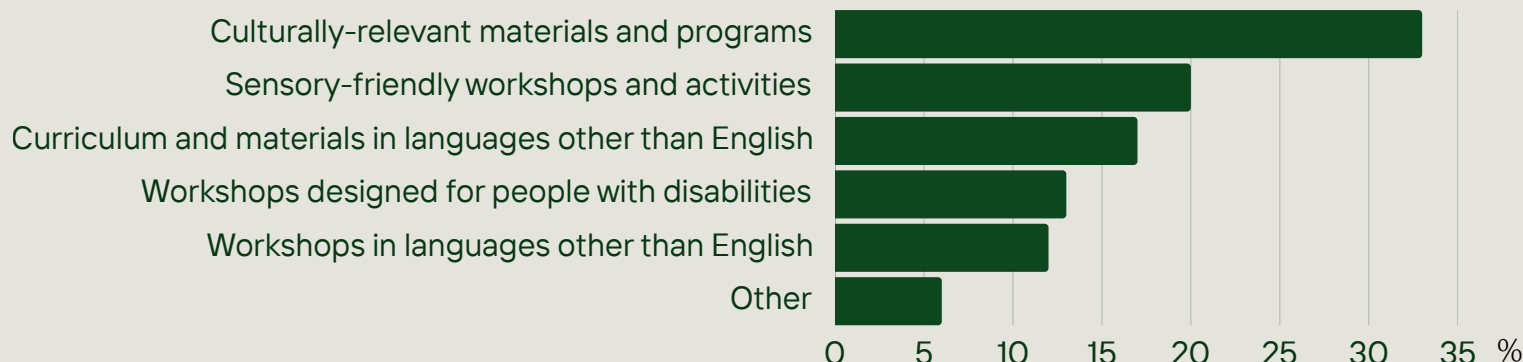
Barriers/Needs for Workshop Attendance



1. What barriers prevented you from attending an ONREP workshop? (112 responses)

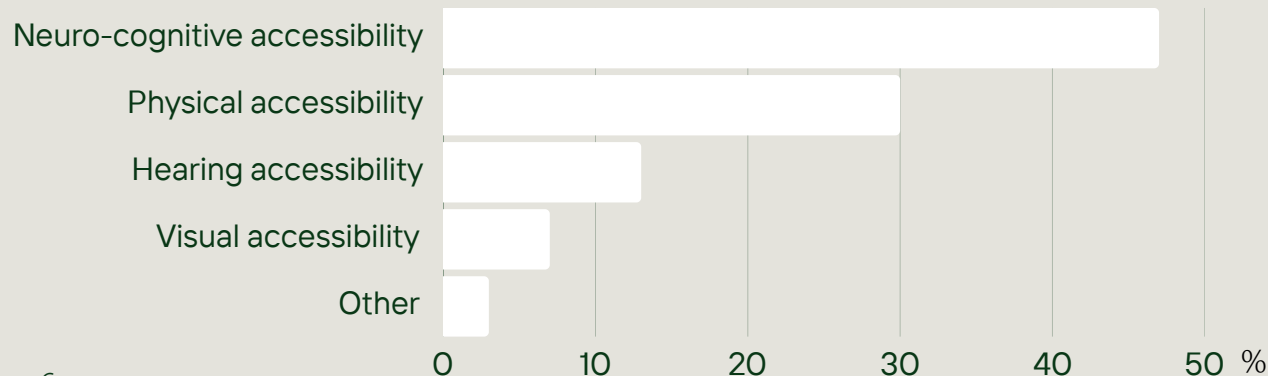


2. How can we improve our outreach and make our workshops more accessible to Oregonians? (180 responses)



Other languages requested for workshops and materials were: Spanish (66%), American Sign Language (14%), Russians (9%), Braille (8%), Vietnamese (5%), Chinese (5%), other languages (5%).

3. Accommodation requests for educator disabilities (21 responses)



What We Heard & Actions We Are Taking

Themes	What can ONREP do better?	How is ONREP addressing this?
Educator Audience	Expand our reach to more diverse communities.	<p>We will strive to build partnerships with culturally specific organizations.</p> <p>We are aiming to continue to diversify the ONREP facilitator cadre to be representative of Oregon communities.</p> <p>We will offer more variety in workshop formats, languages, materials, and so on to meet the needs of all learners.</p>
Universal Design and Cultural Responsiveness in Workshops	<p>Design workshops for people with diverse abilities.</p> <p>Offer workshops serving bilingual communities (Spanish/English).</p> <p>Provide all pertinent information about activities, location, and format upfront.</p> <p>Be mindful of conducting land and labor acknowledgements.</p>	<p>We will continue to learn about and apply principles of equity, inclusion, liberatory, and universal design when designing, planning, and implementing workshops wherever possible. This may include audio aids and resources that are available in multiple formats.</p> <p>We have a plan to translate some of our workshop forms into Spanish, and we can offer select teaching materials in Spanish and hopefully offer a bilingual workshop soon.</p> <p>We will strive to partner with groups and organizations who have expertise in disability accommodations for workshops.</p> <p>ONREP will reconsider land and labor acknowledgements when they are thoughtfully planned, paired with action, and approached with care to minimize harm.</p>

Themes	What can ONREP do better?	How is ONREP addressing this?
Workshop Venues and Formats	<p>Provide all pertinent information about the content and the venue upfront.</p> <p>Provide more time during workshops to learn from one another.</p> <p>Low internet bandwidth may be a barrier for rural and frontier communities to attend virtual workshops.</p> <p>Workshops need to be offered in different geographic areas, not clustered around hub areas only.</p>	<p>We have started listing considerations in our workshop postings, which include the information we gather about the venue as well as the format to share in advance with participants. This includes site information like the terrain and available amenities, such as wheelchair accessible bathrooms.</p> <p>If a workshop is utilizing a location that is not accessible to all, we will support facilitators to create and implement an additional workshop with similar content at a more accessible site or offered virtually.</p> <p>We will plan to incorporate more networking time into workshop design.</p> <p>We will strive to offer low-internet bandwidth options for select virtual workshops (i.e., audio-only design, share slides ahead of workshop).</p> <p>We will look into funding options to offer in-person workshops outside of the hub areas, as well as continue offering virtual workshops that are available in all geographic regions.</p>



Nature Journaling, 2023.
Photo by ONREP

Themes	What can ONREP do better?	How is ONREP addressing this?
Marketing and Outreach	<p>The ONREP monthly marketing email does not reach new audiences, especially in rural and remote areas.</p> <p>More advanced information is needed regarding workshop logistics, how to get substitute reimbursement, lodging options, and travel.</p>	<p>We will continue to reach out to Educational Service Districts (ESDs), community organizations, and school districts who we currently don't reach to share professional development opportunities, and look to increase the number of educator conferences and events where we table.</p> <p>We have moved up the timeline for sending out information on logistics, sub reimbursement, and other pertinent information to be sent soon after someone registers for a workshop.</p>
Scheduling and Engagement	<p>Workshops need to be offered during multiple times within and outside educator working hours. No time or day will serve all needs.</p> <p>Many educators are not yet aware of ONREP and what the program offers.</p>	<p>We will continue to be mindful to schedule workshops at varying times of day and days of the week, paying particular attention to offering workshops outside of educators' work time.</p> <p>We will plan to attend more Oregon conferences, school staff meetings, camps, and school events to share information about our programming</p>

We thank the Gray Family Foundation for their support and funding of this project.

ONREP is a program that values learning. We will continue to refine, improve, and shift as we learn – we encourage you to join us in this work.

We welcome your ideas, insights, and experiences. Please contact us at ONREP@oregonstate.edu or call (541)737-9121.

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