

# Pesticide Safety Education Program Funding - Backgrounder

National Stakeholder Team for PSEP—October 23, 2012

In the 1960's extension agents and specialist in Land Grant Universities and Colleges began teaching farmers and professional pesticide applicators about pesticide safety. Soon, Congress, through USDA, partnered with these institutions to create Pesticide Coordinator Positions, which were tasked with organizing each state or territories' efforts in pesticide safety education.

With the establishment of the U.S. EPA in the early 1970's and the advent of *mandatory certification and training requirements for restricted-use pesticides*, safety education became much more essential, organized, and robust. In 1975, Congress provided funds to EPA to partially support these efforts. However, since USDA created the safety education program through the Cooperative Extension Service (USDA/Land Grant Institutions), [USDA retained a role in managing and directing funds](#) to the states and territories. For nearly forty years, EPA and USDA have supported pesticide safety education throughout the country with EPA providing funding to USDA to distribute annually.

Federal support has declined since the program's inception in the 1970's; from an average of about [\\$1.3 million annually to now only \\$500,000. The \\$500,000 is provided to EPA by](#) Pesticide Registration Improvement Act fees and passed through USDA to the states.

[A 2011 survey](#) found funding reductions impacted programs differently across the country: no significant change (32%), significant impacts/program reduction (20%), and dramatic reductions/program elimination (29%). (The balance chose narrative responses to the survey.) Impacts include reductions in staff, the numbers of trainings offered, and development/revisions to training materials or shifts in program focus. Programs are supported to varying degrees by funds from state general appropriations (university-directed), the state lead agency ([registration fees, certification/exam fees, enforcement fines](#)), training fees, educational material/book sales, third-party sponsorship, and project grants.

Pesticide Safety Education in the U.S. is in a [precarious state](#) and stakeholders are being asked to explore ways to sustain pesticide education through enhanced federal/state/industry efforts.

You can read more about the history and nature of pesticide safety education by downloading various white papers at:

<http://psep.us>