



2024 INNOVATION CIRCLE GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Deadline: April 18, 2024, 5:00PM Central

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Teachers are most effective, and improve in their practice, when they are problem solvers and innovators, who learn, take risks, reflect, and collaborate. Fund for Teachers' fellows understand that transformational learning experiences catalyze these problem-solving experiences for teachers and students, ultimately changing schools and communities.

To seed innovation on priority topics in education, Fund for Teachers now offers Innovation Circle Grants exclusively for past Fellows. These grants are grounded in unique problems of practice, determined by students' unique assets and needs. Different from our Fellowship grant, Innovation Circle grants are designed around a predetermined set of topics. Fellows will still design a learning experience but will also participate in a 'circle' of Fellows to stimulate and support innovation. Circles will meet for approximately 10 hours over the course of the year to design innovative solutions to their problems of practice.

2024 Innovation Circle Grant Topics Include: Advancing Student-Centered Learning, and Teachers Shaping the Future of Education. A detailed description of each circle can be found [here](#).

HOW IS THIS GRANT DIFFERENT?

Innovation Circle Grant	Fellowship Grant
FFT Fellows	PK-12 grade teachers
Individuals only	Teams and individuals
1-year waiting period between grants	5-year waiting period between grants
Self-determined learning occurs during your summer school break. *	Self-determined learning occurs during your summer school break.
Learning happens through self-guided, independent study and collaboration with other Fellows	Learning happens through self-guided, independent study
1.5-hour circle meetings support innovation design and implementation	Independent implementation

**Those applying for the Teachers Shaping the Future of Education grant will have a choice in learning, but do not have to plan for it.*

ELIGIBILITY

Applicant eligibility requirements:

- A Fund for Teachers Fellow, in good standing with the organization, who still lives and teaches in the continental US and Hawaii.
- A full-time preK-12th grade teacher who spends at least 50% of their time directly providing instruction to students;

- Applicants must have plans to return to a classroom or teaching environment the year following their fellowship and demonstrate the ability to incorporate what they learn into their teaching; and
- Applicants must wait one year between awards and cannot apply in years that a Fellowship Grant application has been submitted.

Project Eligibility: Fund for Teachers does not make grants to support student travel, the completion of post baccalaureate degrees, university/college credit hours, courses for graduate credit, licensing, or licensure, onsite (or campus) professional development at your school or by the district, compensation for substitutes, stipends and requests that only include classroom supplies, such as books, technology, or other materials. All project eligibility is at the discretion of Fund for Teachers.

CIRCLE REQUIREMENTS

1. Fellowships should begin after the last day of school and be completed by the first day of school in the fall, with all fellowship related expenditures made by January 31, 2025.
2. In our experience, Fellows who actively participate in Circle meetings produce better innovations. Please plan to attend $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Circle meetings.
3. Fellows are required to submit several post-fellowship deliverables to the Fund for Teachers. Deliverables will include:
 - An expense report;
 - Passport (a public, written reflection of your experience/innovation);
 - Fellow Surveys; and
 - Documentation of your innovation shared with other fellows and attendees at a virtual *unconference*.

Fellows who fail to attend the Circle meetings, complete post-fellowship reporting and/or use fellowship funds in manner not consistent with their grant proposal will be deemed, “Not in Good Standing.” Fund for Teachers, at its discretion, may refuse future applications from individuals listed as “Not in Good Standing.”

APPLICATION

As a past grant recipient, you have an existing online account. If you used an email address that is no longer working, please call 1-800-681-2667 or email info@fundforteachers.org and we can update your account. All applicants must apply online between March 4 and April 18 with final submission made by **5PM CST, on April 18, 2024.**

The entire application is completed online and will require digital signatures. As part of the application process an email will be sent from info@fundforteachers.org to your principal to verify your employment.

Part One: Coversheet

- Create a 1-2 sentence project description (350-character limit).
- Sign your coversheet. Once signed, an email will be sent to your principal asking for a digital signature to verify your employment. Edits to signed coversheets are not permitted, except for revisions to the project description.

Part Two: Proposal

Your proposal should articulate creative, thoughtful activities or projects that demonstrate potential for innovative solutions to your problem of practice.

- Create and save your proposal using a word processor, avoiding any formatting.
- **Limit your proposal to 9,000 characters, including spaces**, (approx. two, single spaced, typed pages) cumulative for all sections.
- Avoid identifying references.
- Avoid using hyperlinks and web addresses.
- Refer to the Scoring Criteria when addressing each of the proposal sections.

Please Note: There are different proposal questions for each Circle topic. Please review the questions for your desired Circle before beginning.

Advancing Student-Centered Learning

Section I: Grant Purpose

- Describe an issue or aspect of the student/community/family experience you believe needs to change or develop further.
- Use data, examples and/or local stories to support your point(s).
- Describe your area(s) of needed learning to promote change.

Section II: Learning Plan

- For each portion of your summer learning plan, describe what you hope to learn (Note: This is not a space for your implementation plan, just your learning plan).
- Outline the details of your summer learning experience. Include details about the workshops, books and/or experiences in which you plan to engage.

Section III: Collaboration for Change

- Describe your experience with educational change or innovation.
- Explain why you think collaboration with other teachers about this topic might be important for you?

Teachers Shaping the Future of Education

Section I: Grant Purpose

- Describe an issue or aspect of the student/community/family experience you believe needs to change or develop further.
- Describe your area(s) of needed learning to better engage in policy conversations and advocacy about this topic.

Section II: Collaboration for Change

- Describe ways that you have engaged in change and/or your areas of growth to bring about change.
- Describe an experience you have had with systems-level change (at your school or beyond). What role did you get to play/or do you wish you played in that experience?

Part Three: Itemized Budget Sheet

The **Itemized Budget is for the Advancing Student-Centered Learning Circle ONLY**. Fund for Teachers will directly pay the service provider for the participation costs of the Teachers Shaping the Future of Education Circle.

The Itemized Budget is a listing of your fellowship expenses by category. In addition to fellowship related expenses, you will also be asked for the length of your fellowship and the related destinations. The Centering Students Innovation Circle awards up to \$1,000 for your summer learning experience. You should not include any costs for implementing your innovation. A \$500 allowance for Innovation implementation will be given through a secondary process to be discussed during your Circle meetings.

Please be aware of the following:

- Use whole numbers, rounding up to the nearest dollar when necessary.
- Certain products and services may not be purchased using grant funds. A full list of non-allowable expenses may be found under Quick Links or here.
- The following are the categories to be itemized:
 - PARTICIPATION COSTS: Tour, registration, and course/program fees including online workshops and
 - EQUIPMENT: Includes, but not limited to, cameras, recorders, laboratory equipment and computer hardware necessary for fellowship and classroom Please consider borrowing these pieces of equipment from your school, if available. Any equipment purchased with the grant funds must be accessible to the entire school upon return.
 - TRANSPORTATION: any fare to and from Estimate rental car cost based on current gasoline prices. For personal vehicles, calculate the mileage at a rate of \$.585/mile. Grant funding can only cover mileage or gasoline, not both.
 - LODGING: Seek moderately priced motels/hotels or, if applicable, home
 - FOOD: Food costs should reflect actual destination rates and cannot exceed \$50 per day/per
 - OTHER: Specific costs of your fellowship not outlined in the preceding

SELECTION PROCESS

Your application will be reviewed and scored anonymously by multiple Fund for Teachers volunteers. Their scores and available funding will determine who we award. Applicants will be notified by email of the selection committee results on **April 29, 2024**, by email.

To avoid creating bias for or against an applicant, the coversheet and any identifying information is removed from your proposal prior to the selection process. This means that the survey questions and all information on your coversheet will not be used to determine grant selection. To help make sure that we are reducing bias in the selection process, please refrain from using your name, your school or district names within your proposal to ensure a fair selection process. Your proposal may be reviewed in a geographic region other than your own. When describing where you teach it is permissible to acknowledge your city and state.

Fund for Teachers reserves the right to review the terms and conditions of this grant program, and to make changes at any time, including termination.