FUND FOR TEACHERS

FFT 2027 Application Guidelines

Deadline: January 21, 2027, 5PM Central

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

At Fund for Teachers, we honor teachers as skilled professionals who know their students, schools, and communities best. We believe teachers are most effective when trusted to act as problem solvers and innovators—taking risks, learning, reflecting, and collaborating to strengthen their practice. Through transformational learning experiences, Fellows deepen these skills for themselves and their students, sparking changes that ripple through classrooms, schools, and communities. Fellowship proposals that emerge from teachers' authentic problems of practice—defined by their own expertise and professional judgment—are most closely aligned with our grant goals. Additionally, we strongly encourage proposals that empower students to serve as changemakers in addressing challenges within their own communities.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A full-time preK-12th grade teacher who spends at least 50% of your 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
- Have at least three years' experience as a preK-12th grade teacher at the end of the school year.
    - Student and substitute teaching do not count towards the three-year requirement.
    - If the applicant has three years' experience by the time of their fellowship, Fund for Teachers considers them eligible.
- Previous recipients must wait for five years before reapplying.

One-on-one instructional time does not count toward the 50%-time requirement described above. Administrators, such as principals, may not apply, nor may they act as the partner applicant. Please contact Fund for Teachers if you have specific questions about your eligibility.

Open to US teachers who live and work in the continental United States and Hawaii.

Individuals may apply for up to $5,000 and teams may apply for up to $10,000 (while team members may be from different schools, districts or states, all members must meet the eligibility criteria). Upon award, Fellows will receive 90 percent of their grant, the remaining 10 percent to be disbursed upon completion of post-fellowship requirements. Please consider this timing when applying.

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We know your time is valuable, so we discourage using it to submit proposals that do not fall within funding guidelines. In this spirit, we aim to be transparent about what our grant making does not support.

We do 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. Grants cannot be used to pay for any portion of National Board Certification. **All project eligibility is at the discretion of Fund for Teachers**.

Eligible teachers may submit one application per grant cycle. Fund for Teachers is interested in your ideas only. Any indication of borrowed text will disqualify your application. This includes itineraries from websites or programming copied from providers. Additionally, previously awarded proposals may not be resubmitted for consideration.

Fund for Teachers will not accept proposals written by school/district grant writers or administrators.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in Proposal Preparation

Fund for Teachers values original ideas and authentic reflection. Applications that are substantially generated by AI, or include sections that are substantially generated by AI, will not be considered to be the applicant's original work. If Fund for Teachers determines that a proposal relies substantially on AI-generated content, the application will be removed from consideration.

Applicants may use AI tools in limited ways to support the writing process, such as brainstorming or proofreading. However, applicants are solely responsible for ensuring that all proposal content is original, accurate, and reflects their own thinking and experiences. AI-generated content may include factual errors, fabricated sources, plagiarism, or other issues that could compromise the integrity of an application.

Fellowships should begin after the last day of school in the spring and be completed by the first day of school in the fall, with all fellowship related expenditures made September 2, 2027.

APPLICATION

The entire application is completed online and will require digital signatures. Please add *info@fundforteachers.org* email contacts to ensure you receive all notifications and important communications throughout the application process.

Part One: Coversheet

All applicants must apply online. Your coversheet should be completed in one sitting. You may log out and return as many times as necessary to complete your proposal and budget.

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Before you begin, determine if you are applying as an individual or as a team.

- Create your online account, or login with existing credentials.
- Create a 1-2 sentence project description (350-character limit), detailing What you are doing + Where you are going + Why. Please avoid personal pronouns. (Sample project descriptions can be found here.)
- Sign your coversheet. Once signed, an email will be sent to your principal asking for a digital signature to verify your eligibility. Edits to signed coversheets are not permitted. Please contact us if you need to make any revisions.
- Use the formal name of your district and school. Ex: Houston Independent School District instead of HISD and John F. Kennedy Elementary School instead of JFK Elem. School.
- Teams:
    - Elect a team lead and create a team name.
    - The team lead initiates the online process and is the first to input the team's name.
    - Each team member must register, create their own Fund for Teachers account, or sign in using their existing credentials, and submit a unique coversheet.
    - The team lead cannot advance past the coversheet until all other members have completed and signed his/her coversheet.

Part Two: Proposal

Consists of five sections and should articulate creative, thoughtful activities or projects that demonstrate potential for learning for the teacher, the student, and the school community.

- Create and save your proposal using a word processor, avoiding any formatting.
- **25,000 characters, including spaces**, (approx. six and half, single spaced, typed pages) cumulative for all five sections.
- Avoid identifying references: Please refrain from using your name, your school or district names within your proposal to ensure an anonymous selection process.
- Avoid using hyperlinks and web addresses.
- Refer to the Scoring Criteria when addressing each of the five proposal sections.
- *TEAMS:*
    - Proposals should reflect collaboration and demonstrate your ability to work successfully as a team. Team members should be active participants in the writing process. They should also understand that they are financially responsible for their portion of the grant if awarded.
    - Only the team lead is responsible for entering the proposal.

Sections:

A response to each application question is required. These questions are designed to guide you in building your proposal, but they should not limit what you share. Applicants are encouraged to provide any additional information that helps articulate their fellowship goals and vision. Equally important, please review the **Scoring Criteria** (found here and under Quick Links), as these criteria reflect what the Selection Committee will use to evaluate applications and make award recommendations. Familiarizing yourself with

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them will help ensure that your narrative not only addresses the application questions but also aligns with the expectations for a highly rated proposal.

- **Fellowship Purpose and Overarching Goals**
    - Describe a skill or area of knowledge you would like to develop further as an educator. What motivates you to pursue this learning, and how does it connect to your students' strengths, culture(s), or interests?
    - How will this learning enhance your ability to meet the diverse needs of your students? What anticipated impact do you see on students' learning experiences?
    - Describe what you know about your students, including but not limited to: their collective learning needs, culture(s), interests, and academic performance. How do these factors shape your fellowship goals? What data and/or stories support the need for change in their learning experiences?
    - What are the overarching goals of your fellowship, and how are these goals aligned to both your professional growth and the needs of your students?
    - *Don't forget: Include what subject and grade level you teach!*
- **Fellowship Plan**
    - What is your summer learning plan and what key activities will you experience to achieve your goals?
    - Provide a detailed rationale for each activity. How do these activities connect to your professional growth and to your students' learning needs, strengths, culture(s), and/or interests?
    - How will your plan incorporate opportunities to learn from experts and engage in real-world experiences that push the boundaries of your current practice?
    - How will this fellowship encourage your learning about different cultures and perspectives?
    - Why have you chosen to pursue this learning opportunity in a specific location or institution? What unique aspects of this destination make it essential for your professional growth and for connecting to your students' learning needs, strengths, culture(s), and/or interests?
- **Teacher Growth and Learning**
    - What personal and intellectual challenges do you anticipate encountering during your fellowship, and how will addressing these challenges foster your growth?
    - How will you ensure that you learn deeply from immersive experiences on your fellowship? What strategies will help you reflect, analyze, and grow from these experiences?
    - What diverse perspectives or transformative moments do you hope to encounter, and how will engaging with them deepen your growth and strengthen your teaching practice?
    - How will this fellowship help you learn more about your students' strengths, culture(s), and/or interests, and how will this knowledge contribute to your instructional practice?
    - In what ways will this fellowship help you design learning experiences that are more relevant and impactful for your students?
- **Student and Stakeholder Experience**

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- How will you refine or create new student learning experiences because of your summer learning? How will these experiences increase relevance for students and align with your overarching goals and their needs? (e.g. new units, practices, routines, methods, classroom activities, school initiatives, or other student-centered experiences)?
- How will you design opportunities for students to engage in authentic, real-world and cognitively challenging work? In what ways will this allow students to reflect on and build from their own strengths, interests, and cultures?
- What strategies will you use to build partnerships with stakeholders (e.g., colleagues, parents, families, community members) and how will you enable your students to do the same? How will these partnerships foster greater student agency and leadership in their communities?
- Discuss the feasibility of the proposed changes within your school context. What conditions, supports, or challenges in your school environment will shape how you bring these new student learning experiences and partnerships to life?

- **Budget Narrative**
  - Provide a detailed budget for your fellowship, including all anticipated needs.
  - Explain how each budget item supports the achievement of your fellowship goals and aligns with the activities outlined in your learning plan.
  - Include a time frame and breakdown of costs, approximate costs as closely as possible. Consider the timing of fund distribution when planning your fellowship activities.
  - How have you ensured that your budget is research-based and adheres to grant guidelines?
  - Team budgets should include both costs broken down by individual and totals for the whole team.
  - NOTE: We strongly advise you against under budgeting. The cost of your fellowship is not a consideration in the selection process. Fund for Teachers is unable to increase your budget after you are selected.

Part Three: Itemized Budget Sheet

By completing the Itemized Budget Sheet, you will break your budget narrative down into a line-item listing. Teams: Only the team leader is responsible for entering the itemized budget.

Budget Considerations to Note:

- If including a technology expense, specify why the item is necessary for the fellowship's success; why you have chosen the specific brand/type; and whether you have prior experience using the technology. Technology expenses should not be the bulk of your proposed budget, but a necessary tool to successfully complete your fellowship.
- Food costs should reflect actual destination rates and cannot exceed $50 per day/per person. **This is NOT per diem; receipts will be required.**
- Breakdown of Expenses to be Detailed on Itemized Budget

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- TRANSPORTATION: any fare to and from destination. Estimate rental cost based on current gasoline prices. For personal vehicles, calculate the mileage at a rate of $.76/mile. Grant funding can only cover mileage or gasoline, not both.
- LODGING: Seek moderately priced motels/hotels or, if applicable, home stays.
- FOOD: Food costs should reflect actual destination rates and cannot exceed $50 per day/per person.
- PARTICIPATION COSTS: Tour, registration, and course/program fees.
- MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES: Includes, but not limited to, books, reference materials, artifacts, or realia.
- EQUIPMENT: Includes, but not limited to, cameras, recorders, laboratory equipment and computer hardware necessary for fellowship and classroom implementation. Please consider borrowing these pieces of equipment from your school, if available. Any equipment purchased with the grant funds must be accessible to entire school upon return.
- OTHER: Specific costs of your fellowship not outlined in the preceding categories. Please give clear descriptions of these expenses. Use the Budget Narrative for any further explanation.
- NON-ALLOWABLE: Certain products and services are not to be purchased using grant funds, such as toiletries, telecommunications, souvenirs, childcare, student travel, bank/credit card fees and graduate credit hours. *Access the full list of non-allowable expenses here and under Quick Links within the online application.*

Additional resources to aid you in the application process can be found within the online guidelines under Quick Links. If you have any questions regarding the online application process, please contact: info@fundforteachers.org.

Part Four: Finalizing your Submission

On the final page of the application, the following information will be collected:

1. Estimated Dates of Fellowship
2. Length of Fellowship
3. Destinations

SELECTION PROCESS

Fund for Teachers utilizes a committee of community members, past grant recipients, educators, and donors to select our grant recipients. Each committee utilizes the same process, scoring criteria form, and scoring standards. Before the committee receives grant proposals to review, each application is screened for eligibility and completeness. Applications failing to meet Fund for Teachers eligibility criteria or those not considered complete will not be sent to the selection committee. Grants are awarded based on merit and available funding; consequently, the number of grants awarded varies each year.

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Your proposal may be reviewed by a committee in a geographic region other than your own. When describing where you teach it is permissible to acknowledge your city and state.

Due to the large number of applications received, Fund for Teachers cannot provide individualized feedback on non-awarded proposals.

Applicant coversheet and identifying information is removed prior to the selection process. Please refrain from using your name, your school or district names within your proposal to ensure an anonymous selection process.

Often, foundations want to know more about who we serve. The survey questions on your coversheet are for that purpose only and are in no way used in our selection process.

Applicants will be notified of the selection committee results by email on April 6, 2027.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Awardees are expected to be active and engaged members of the Fund for Teachers community over the course of the fellowship year and the years following. This includes participating in a required orientation workshop, as well as periodic virtual meetups and participating as an active member of our digital community. Fellows are also expected to serve as ambassadors of Fund for Teachers in all professional settings.

In addition, throughout the course of the program year, Fellows are required to submit several post-fellowship deliverables to Fund for Teachers. Deliverables include: An expense report; summary report of fellowship ("Passport") immediately following their fellowship and at the end of the school year; and surveys before, during and after the fellowship experience. Fellows who fail to complete post-fellowship reporting or use fellowship funds in a 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."

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.

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