

2019

# Teacher Creativity Fellowship

A program for personal renewal of Indiana educators



Lilly Endowment Inc.  
A Private Philanthropic Foundation



## TIPS FOR WRITING SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS

Over the years, we have received many questions about what constitutes a good Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program (TCFP) proposal. The program guidelines indicate that proposals will be judged based on substance, clarity and feasibility as well as the potential to cultivate meaningful renewal. Reviewers recognize that meaningful renewal is personal in nature and can take many different forms. Therefore, it is important for an applicant to clearly explain how his/her project will result in renewed energy, enthusiasm and creativity for them.

Applicants should carefully review the TCFP guidelines and application instructions to ensure that their proposed projects fit well within the intents and purposes of TCFP. The instructions should be carefully followed as a guide to effectively address all required elements of the proposal. In the past, reviewers have identified several hallmarks of successful proposals that we hope you will find helpful.

### **Preparation**

Reviewers are impressed by proposals that show evidence that the project and corresponding activities have been well planned and that applicants have done their homework. This includes diligent research about the opportunities and activities available to pursue the project, contacts with relevant individuals and organizations, and considerable thought about the kinds of experiences that applicants are seeking through their renewal projects.

## **Passion**

Passion is an important element of successful proposals. Reviewers often refer to the ability to hear applicants' voices speaking from their hearts directly to the reviewers. This may be apparent when someone proposes a project around a talent or interest that has languished due to everyday demands and stresses, or perhaps through a proposal to pursue something new that has captured the applicant's imagination and desire for new learning experiences. Reviewers are drawn to proposals that convey enthusiasm, imagination, creativity, and evidence of "individual stretch." They also appreciate proposals that articulate how an educator's renewal is expected to directly or indirectly impact his/her school and classrooms.

## **Educator as Learner**

Reviewers have found that compelling proposals place the educator in the role of learner and risk-taker. Renewal projects that take applicants out of their comfort zones and into learning new skills appeal to reviewers. Reviewers also appreciate an indication that such departures can help educators broaden their students' horizons and understand their experiences and frustrations.

## **Timeline**

The timeline should reflect a series of activities over a substantial period of time that are clearly focused and tightly connected to the project's goals. Although there are no specific requirements as to how long the project should take or when activities should occur, the Endowment has observed that it takes a substantial block of time, usually a minimum of four to six weeks, to achieve the kind of renewal envisioned by TCFP. Summer and other extended school breaks may be ideal for the majority of project activities.

If the project includes travel, it is important that sufficient time is spent at the proposed destination(s). Some applicants may find a long time in one location refreshing, while others may prefer to visit a variety of locations for shorter stays.

Projects with most of their time devoted to activities generally are stronger than those with only two or three weeks of activities and the remainder of the time devoted to planning or documentation. Although documentation, such as PowerPoints, blogging, sorting photographs, editing video, collating scrapbooks, etc., may be important, it should not consume the majority of project time.

## **Recommendation Letters**

Reviewers prefer letters that include the relationship of the author to the applicant and reference the project and the educator, rather than generic letters of support. If school permission is required for follow-up activities, approval should be clear in one of the recommendation letters. Note: Principal approval is not required for proposals from teachers, guidance counselors and media specialists. However, principals and assistant principals applying for a grant must include a statement affirming their district's or governing board's approval for participation in the project. All applicants must include at least one letter of support from a colleague within his/her school or district.

## Attention to Detail

Reviewers are favorably inclined towards proposals that are easy to read and follow. A successful proposal:

- Follows the application procedures and proposal format in order
- Is concisely written within the page limit and avoids redundancy
- Is grammatically correct and carefully proofread
- Uses a 12-inch font and one-inch margins
- Has descriptive, detailed and compatible activities, timeline and budget. Airfare, hotel and activity expenses should be based on recent research

## Proposal Submission

A complete application includes the following:

Single Applicant/Single Grant	Collaborative Grants
Proposal Cover Form (all applicant information is completed online)	Proposal Cover Form (each applicant completes online application)
Proposal (5-page limit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative</li> <li>• Timeline</li> <li>• Budget - no more than \$12,000</li> </ul>	Proposal (5-page limit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative</li> <li>• Timeline - outlined as a team or individually depending on the project</li> <li>• Budget - not more than \$12,000 per applicant</li> </ul>
Recommendation Letter(s)  Applicant may submit up to three letters	Recommendation Letter(s)  Each applicant may submit up to three letters
Teaching or administrative license  (Principals and assistant principals must also include statement affirming board's approval of participation in project.)	Teaching or administrative license for each applicant  (Principals and assistant principals must also include statement affirming board's approval of participation in project.)