Frequently Asked Questions
2006 National Program

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1. What is the Fund for Teachers (FFT)?

Fund for Teachers is a unique foundation whose mission is to enrich the lives of schoolteachers and students by providing recognition and opportunities for renewal to outstanding teachers. Making a difference one teacher at a time, Fund for Teachers awards grants directly to teachers for supporting professional development opportunities of their own design.

Fund for Teachers is a 501 (c) (3) corporation headquartered in Houston.

2. Who is Raymond Plank?

Raymond Plank is founding chairman of the board of Apache Corporation, a Houston-based energy company. He is a 1944 graduate of Yale University and served with the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II. In l954 he founded Apache Corporation, and presided as it has grown into an international oil and gas exploration and production corporation.

He is an active leader in civic, educational and business affairs and has chaired or served on a number of organizations, including the Washington, D.C. - based Committee for Economic Development, Carleton College and the Plank Institute at The Blake School in Minneapolis. Fund for Teachers is a reflection of Plank's deep respect for dedicated teachers, his strong sense of social responsibility and his commitment to excellence. He is passionate about challenging teachers to consider fresh, unexplored areas of thinking and giving them new hope and pride in their profession.

3. What kinds of proposals are considered for a Fund for Teachers grant?

Fund for Teachers challenges teachers to consider fresh, unexplored areas of learning. Grants are intended to deepen an applicant's content knowledge.

4. Will Fund for Teachers fund activities such as stipends for summer curriculum development?

Fund for Teachers grants do not cover costs related to per-session, honoraria or stipends.

5. Who is eligible to apply for a Fund for Teachers grant?

Applicants must have taught for at least three years (including SY 2005-2006) in grades Pre-K through twelve, and must spend at least 50 percent of their time in classrooms with students.

6. How many grant proposals did FFT receive last year? How many were granted?

Fund for Teachers received 992 grant proposals in 2005. 292 proposals were granted.

7. Who received grants last year?

2005	# of Applications in 2005	# of Grants Awarded	Total # of teachers awarded	Individual Teachers	Team Grants	# of schools represented
Atlanta	69	22	26	19	3	36
California	13	2	5	5	0	4
Chicago	20	9	12	7	2	9
Colorado	71	24	35	18	5	20
ELOB	77	20	56	28	12	28
Los Angeles	24	10	12	8	2	11
Massachusetts	91	40	48	32	7	33
Minneapolis Public Schools	44	9	9	9	0	9
The Blake School	7	5	5	5	0	1
Minneapolis_ , Minnesota_	51	14	14	14	0	10
Saint Paul, Minnesota_			14	12	1	13
New York	127	50	60	41	9	32
Oklahoma	117	46	82	15	22	36
Texas	259	57	94	59	15	71
Washington D.C.	22	11	16	8	3	10
Totals	992	319	488	280	81	323

_ FFT grants in Minneapolis are funded separately through The Blake School and Minneapolis Public Schools
_ FFT programs in Minnesota are funded through permanent endowments

8. How do I apply?

Applicants can apply online (preferably) or by mailing in a paper application. Both the online application and paper application are available at www.fundforteachers.org.

9. If I have issues while applying online, how do I contact Fund for Teachers?

If you are having trouble with the online application please email: onlineapp@fundforteachers.org or call: 1-800-681-2667.

10. Who decides which proposals are granted? How many grants will be awarded?

A selection committee conducts a blind review of the applications, using a scoring rubric to judge each strictly on its merits. The number of grants depends on the quality of proposals.

11. What is the selection committee looking for?

The selection committee uses the Fund for Teachers scoring rubric to evaluate proposals.

12. Can the selection committee make adjustments to my budget?

The selection committee may, at their discretion, make changes to your budget if they feel you have over-budgeted or submitted unrealistic/unfounded estimates in your proposal.

13. Are the grants given limited by school?

Selection committee members only see the proposal and itemized budget portion of your application. The review is a "blind" review- selection committee members do not know the name(s), school, grade level taught, etc for the proposal that they are reviewing.

14. Can I spend the grant at another time?

No. All funds MUST be expended in summer vacation 2006. (Teachers who are employed by year long institutions may use their funds during the equivalent of their summer vacation.) If you are awarded a grant and find you are unable to use it this summer, all funds must be returned to Fund for Teachers. Funds may not be used during other vacation periods or carried over to the following summer.

15. Are grants considered taxable income?

Following the lead of the national office and the practice of the other Fund for Teachers communities, Fund for Teachers will not file an IRS 1099 Form for fellows. Since grants vary, individuals are responsible to check with their own tax preparers to ascertain how to report the funds received by Fund for Teachers. In situations where fellows have not provided proper documentation (original receipts) for expenditures, the undocumented amount will be reported to the IRS as taxable income.

16. Can family or friends travel with me?

Family or friends may travel with you, but you may not count any expenses incurred by anyone other than yourself. Budget narratives and final budgets must accurately reflect only costs for your own fellowship.

17. Must money be spent in the precise categories as submitted in the budget?

The most important factors are preserving the grant proposals overall integrity and meeting the goals within the allocation. While it is hoped that budget categories as submitted are realistic, there is flexibility between categories. For example, if the cost of airfare actually comes in lower than projected, but the cost for accommodations comes in higher, a trade-off in funds is permissible. However, there are no supplemental funds to increase grants once they are awarded. Expenses incurred beyond grant limits are the responsibility of the fellow.

18. Are less expensive proposals more likely to get funded than more costly proposals?

Cost is not a factor for selection, which is based entirely on merit. Costs should be sensible and realistic in relation to the proposed activity's scope. Calculate project requirements well.

19. How much does originality count? Are duplicate applications less likely to receive attention?
Each grant is scored based on the rubric. Originality has great value and captures the attention of proposal readers.

20. Can individuals / teams submit more than one application?

Applicants may only submit ONE application, whether on a team or as an individual. Applications are judged on quality not quantity.

21. If we anticipate that our project costs more than the maximum grant available, should we include our complete budget, or just the expenditures that will be covered by the Fund for Teachers grant?

Include the entire budget on the Fund for Teachers budget page, along with a statement of understanding that you freely accept the responsibility to fund expenses beyond the $5,000 individual limit, or the $7,500 team limit. Under no circumstances are additional funds available to supplement budgets exceeding the guidelines.

22. What if a team member drops out after the grant is awarded?

If a team member drops out, it is important to contact Fund for Teachers and to come to renegotiate a new budget or have a new team member cleared. If a portion of the grant must be returned, it should be returned to Fund for Teachers, unless returning funds jeopardizes the entire project. For example, if three teachers receive grants to travel as a team and one teacher is unable to participate, then the percentage of the budget allocated for that individual's travel, accommodations, materials, etc. should be returned. If a team of five is contracting for services and the cost of the services is a flat fee whether for four or five people, then the project can proceed as planned, with the approval of Fund for Teachers.

23. Must my project be applicable to the content are I teach?

Not necessarily. While it is hoped that grants lead to deepening content knowledge of the subjects you teach, sometimes the best opportunities for learning are in entirely different areas than the ones in which you ordinarily work. This is an opportunity for teachers to explore and regenerate themselves as learners, and there are multiple ways to accomplish this goal. However, it is important to fully answer the proposal questions.

24. Are proposals for participating in a pre-packaged program (those offered by museums, colleges, etc.) weighted differently than an original self-designed projects or proposals?

Where the activity originates is not significant- the quality of the activity and the proposal is our concern.

25. Are proposals addressing activities that help teachers communicate with parents considered?

Absolutely. Grant proposals that seek to improve communications with parents, whether through acquisition of language, understanding of culture, building of communication skills, etc., are appropriate.

26. Are exact dates necessary?

It is helpful to be as precise as possible, but if final dates are not known, then stipulate a time frame. For example, three weeks in either July or August, every morning for one week, either the first or second week of August. Fund for Teachers acknowledges that it is often difficult to book reservations, register for workshops, etc., without having the funds in hand. However, it is important to describe the time frame for the activity as completely as possible. Remember that the fellowship must be completed within the limits of summer vacation 2006 and may not be carried over beyond the start of school. (Teachers who are employed by year long institutions may use their funds during the equivalent of their summer vacation.) If for any reason you cannot

complete the fellowship as described in your proposal, contact the Fund for Teachers office to discuss returning the grant funds.

27. Are students eligible to participate?

Students may travel with you, but you may not count any expenses incurred by anyone other than yourself. Proposal and itemized budget must accurately reflect your OWN proposed fellowship. Extra curricular activities should be handled using your district policies.

28. Do we have to travel?

No. Proposals have been funded where fellows never left their community.

29. When is the deadline for submissions?

Proposals MUST be postmarked or delivered to your Fund for Teachers office by midnight Friday, January 20, 2006. Applications may not be sent by e-mail or FAX. Incomplete applications are not considered.
Online applicants must not only submit their application online, but mail in a signed coversheet in order to have completed the application process. Cover sheets must be postmarked or delivered to your Fund for Teachers office by midnight, January 20, 2006.

30. How and when will I know if I've won?

Applicants will be notified no later than March 31, 2006.

31. Will I receive individual feedback if my proposal is not awarded?

Due to the number of applications received, we are unable to provided individual feedback. If you application was not chosen for funding, you are encouraged to reapply the following year.

32. Are there sessions to learn more about writing a successful grant proposal?

Yes. There will be teacher informational sessions to learn more about the Fund for Teachers grant and grant writing tips specific to Fund for Teachers.

33. Who is on the selection committee and how are they chosen?

Fund for Teachers is a national organization. However, applications are read and evaluated by a selection committee consisting of education professionals and corporate and civic leaders from the applicant's local community. The selection committee is chosen by Fund for Teachers and its administrative partners.

34. Are proposals judged anonymously?

Submissions are scored on merit alone. Within the proposal, identifying information such as names or schools should be omitted.

35. What are my obligations following my fellowship?

No later than September 29, 2006, grant recipients are required to provide Fund for Teachers with a reflective report describing their experience, along with a detailed expense report, and an outline of how their learning will be used in the classroom. The Fund for Teachers reserves the right to review the conditions and procedures of this program and to make changes at anytime, including termination of the program.
Grant recipients should understand that other obligations accompany the grant, including:

Pre-fellowship meetings, post-fellowship meetings, and a two page documentation of the impact on teaching practices one subsequent year back in the classroom.

36. How are the funds disbursed?

After notification of grant decisions, Fund for Teachers issues checks to fellows for 90 percent of the grant value. A check for the remaining 10 percent is issued after the recipient has submitted the reflective report and expense report, with original receipts to Fund for Teachers by Friday, September 29, 2006.

37. What should be included in my reflective report?

Fund for Teachers is highly interested in how you benefited from your experience. Did your experience differ from your original expectations? How do you plan to present your new knowledge in the classroom? How do you think your teaching will change because of the grant? Are there new methods of teaching and learning you have discovered? Did your adventure broaden your perspective, nurture your spirit, or increase your passion for learning? We hope you take this opportunity to share with us the lessons you experienced on your journey.

38. What form does my reflective report need to be in?

Your reflective report can be in any format. Fund for Teachers accept typed pages, photos with narratives and/or Power Point presentations, which can be provided on DVDs or CDs. Be creative.
Your reflective report may be used in a press release to encourage other fellows or shown to donors.

39. Regarding my expense report, should I submit original receipts or copies?

You will need to turn in original receipts, keeping a copy for your files. Loose receipts should be taped to 8 _ x 11 sheets of paper. Use as many sheets as necessary.

40. What is the deadline to turn in my reflective report and expense report with receipts?

The reflective report, expense report and original receipts should be mailed to your Fund for Teachers location. (Please see your application for the mailing address.) All Fund for Teachers fellows are expected to return their completed reflective and expense reports by Friday, September 29, 2006.

41. If I've received a grant, when can I re-apply?

Fellows may reapply five years after receiving a Fund for Teachers grant.