

## **Guidelines for AEF Innovative Teaching Grant online applications**

PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE PACKET AND THE FULL APPLICATION BEFORE BEGINNING YOUR APPLICATION.

### **MISSION**

The mission of Aldine Education Foundation is to provide community-based support to the Aldine Independent School District in pursuit of excellence in teaching, innovation in the classroom, and superior learning opportunities for all students.

AEF's Innovative Teaching Grants help us reach these goals by directing resources to:

- enhance and enrich educational opportunities for students;
- support innovative efforts by teachers aiming to strengthen classroom learning; and
- engage the community in supporting quality public education.

### **PURPOSE**

Innovative Teaching Grants are designed to encourage and facilitate unique and creative instructional approaches to accomplish Aldine ISD goals and Campus Improvement Plans. Aldine Education Foundation offers teachers and administrators the opportunity to apply for grants to support innovative projects that encourage higher levels of student learning.

The grants must enhance student performance and support the mission, goals, and objectives of the campus and the school district. Grant awards are intended to be used as seed money to fund new programs and projects rather than continuation of previously funded projects or ongoing programs.

### **ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY FOR AEF GRANTS**

Individuals or teams (maximum of 5 individuals) employed by Aldine ISD are eligible to apply for Innovative Teaching Grants as long as a positive impact on students can be demonstrated in the proposal. Previous AEF grant recipients must have submitted a Grant Evaluation Form in order to be considered for future grants. Workshop attendance is strongly suggested. Principal approval is required.

### **SCOPE AND REQUIREMENTS**

Projects designed to begin during the Spring semester that meet the selection criteria will be considered. Grants may fund instructional and classroom materials, parent involvement programs, or any activity or material that supports higher levels of student academic achievement.

Grants must be in compliance with Aldine ISD goals and Campus Improvement Plans and follow all District policies and procedures for grant applications. Materials purchased with AEF grant funds are to remain the property of Aldine ISD and should remain at the campus to which the grant is awarded. All applications require a Principal's signature to ensure alignment of the project with Aldine ISD goals and Campus Improvement Plans and curriculum goals.

Grant awards are based on the demonstrated needs for the project and the funds available. An award may cover only a portion of the entire project cost requested. A detailed budget is essential for thorough assessment of projected costs, describing how the entire budget will be spent.

All expenditures for equipment or supplies must be consistent with the description outlined in the application. Changes following any awarded grant funds must be approved by AEF before expenses will be allowed. All materials purchased with AEF grant funds become the property of Aldine ISD and must be identified accordingly.

Grants are not intended to pay for college or graduate school courses or programs for which other funds are available. Grant money will not be awarded by AEF for the purpose of funding Aldine ISD educator stipends. AEF grants also may not be used to purchase materials such as core curriculum texts, standard school supplies or furniture, and daily food needs that should be covered in the school's operational budget.

Awarded grant funds will be held in a designated Aldine ISD account to be drawn down by the grant recipient for the needs of the project. Funds are not given directly to the grant recipient. It is expected that grant funding will be used by the end of the school year in which the funds are awarded. Expenditure of funds must follow Aldine ISD purchasing guidelines and technology standards.

Grant recipients will be asked to attend a grants management session conducted by Aldine Education Foundation and Aldine ISD's Federal, State, and Special Programs (FSSP) department. This will provide detailed information on the grant delivery process and spending procedures. A bookkeeper from FSSP will be assigned to each grant recipient to ensure compliance with District policies.

Beginning in 2018, all AEF Innovative Teaching Grant applications MUST be submitted online. No paper applications will be accepted.

#### **AWARD LEVELS**

Grants of up to \$1,500 will be awarded to individual teacher-initiated projects. Grants of up to \$7,500 will be awarded to campus teams or departments (maximum of 5 individuals). The number of awards will depend on funds available from AEF and the quality of applications received and selected by its Grant Review Committee. Partial awards may be made at the discretion of the Committee.

#### **CRITERIA**

The following criteria will be used to review grant applications:

- Originality of the project, demonstrating educational innovation
- Evidence that students will benefit from the grant funding
- Alignment with Aldine ISD goals and the Campus Improvement Plan
- Clear objectives that are well articulated, attainable, and measurable
- Appropriateness of funds as detailed in budget request; budget is complete and realistic
- Evaluation plan, including measureable indicators of success
- Timeline fits award period and is adequate to deliver project
- Sustainability or potential for future impact
- Inclusion of project partners
- Applicant followed instructions and kept campus/individuals anonymous
- Applicant attended grant training workshop offered by FSSP

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

- All applications must be submitted through an online application system. Links are available on Aldine Education Foundation's website as well as through the Federal, State, and Special Programs website.
- Individual applicants, or the lead applicant for a group project, must register in the online system. You'll create a profile with your Aldine ISD email address as your username and a password that you create. Keep this information secure as it will allow you to begin your application, save, and return to it to complete in future sessions.
- Read these guidelines and the full application in their entirety prior to beginning your application. You will then have a better idea of planning for your project and what information is requested.
- Be forewarned: AEF has a grant application deadline BUT YOU MUST ALSO FOLLOW ALDINE ISD requirements which include two earlier submissions related to any grant request. Please work closely with the Program Director of Resource Development in FSSP to ensure you follow all Aldine ISD policies.
- The online application will require you provide your Principal's contact information to confirm they understand you are applying and approve the details of your project. Be prepared to provide to them a copy of your application for their review.
- Applications must be finalized and submitted online by the posted deadline. No late applications will be accepted. All Aldine ISD requirements must be met before submitting to AEF.

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

AEF's Grant Review Committee is comprised of Aldine Education Foundation board members, District staff, and community representatives. The application, review, and award processes are coordinated by AEF staff in conjunction with Aldine ISD's Program Director of Resource Development.

All applications will be subject a blind review relative to applicants and campuses. Accordingly, specific reference to the applicants and campus should not be included in your application.

Applications that meet the stated criteria and are received on time are shared with AEF's Grant Review Committee. Each application is independently read by at least three Committee members and scored according to the Reviewer Score Sheet as provided on AEF's website.

The Committee will meet to review the cumulative score of each application and to determine funding recommendations to propose to AEF's Board of Directors for final approval. Grant applicants are alerted of awards usually in mid-November.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRANT RECIPIENTS**

- Use the awarded funds for the purposes stated.
- Spend the funds within the grant project period (January – May).
- Implement all project activities prior to the end of the school year.
- Document project activities and outcomes.
- Track progress toward stated goal and objectives.
- Fully implement project between January and May and submit a final evaluation to Aldine Education Foundation (online) by the end of June.
- Agree to share successful procedures (or difficulties others can avoid) in staff development sessions.

### **TIPS FOR COMPLETING A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION**

You can begin your online application once you register and return to it as many times as necessary to review and complete it before the deadline. It saves automatically. Do not share your login information to the system and your application with your project partners.

To fully explain your proposed project, your application should be written with as much description and detail as possible, but be succinct as there are character count limitations within the online system for each question. **Your application should not identify individuals or your campus.**

#### ***Project Description***

- This provides a brief overview of your proposed project. Make sure someone who reads ONLY this section will have a glimpse into what you hope to accomplish.

#### ***Need for Project***

- Describe the problem or issue your project will address in terms of your project's audience.
- Describe the area of student achievement you wish to address and give any data that supports this is a need.
- Include how your proposal addresses Aldine ISD goals and your Campus Improvement Plan.
- Keep your information simple and straightforward. Do not use jargon or acronyms.

#### ***Objectives***

- You must provide three Objectives; you have the option of adding two more.
- Relate your project objectives to the need stated.
- Your objectives must be measurable so that you can evaluate if you reached them at the end of the project.
- Objectives should be **SMART**: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time bound.

#### ***Proposed Project Activities***

- Show how the project supports the problem/need identified.
- Relate activities to a stated objective.
- List steps/activities to be followed as you implement your project.
- Be specific.

#### ***Timeline of Activities***

- Provide a list (month by month) of all project activities that will help you meet your objectives.
- If an activity is longer than a month, you can list it in each month that it occurs.
- Funded projects must take place fully within January – May.

#### ***Evaluation Strategy***

- These should relate to your measurable objectives.
- Identify what data will be collected and how it will show objectives have been met.
- Indicate how you will know whether the project was successful at the end of the project period.

**Partners**

- Are there others who will participate in this project? (CIS, Rotary, PTO, Lion's Club, parent groups)
- What will their roles be?
- Detail what contributions (cash or in-kind gifts or just time) they will make toward this project.

**Sustainability**

- Demonstrate if there is potential for project continuation beyond the funding period.
- If you have successes (or failures), how will lessons learned be shared beyond your Grant Evaluation Form or project team?
- If project continuation is planned, how will you secure funding for recurring costs?

**Budget**

To complete this section, you will have to download an Excel spreadsheet, complete the required information, save the document, and upload it to the online application system.

- Plan ahead!
- Please be aware that once funds are awarded, no additional funds are available.
- Research costs thoroughly as budget changes are not always allowed.
- Purchase of technology or construction/maintenance require additional written approvals.
- Service agreements or contracts may delay project implementation up to four weeks.
- Be sure to include shipping/handling costs.
- Aldine ISD-approved vendors must be utilized (check with your bookkeeper).
- Plan accordingly to ensure all necessary items are documented and accounted here.

**REMEMBER**

- Aldine Education Foundation seeks to fund innovative teaching methods and activities through these grants. A unique approach to an existing problem strengthens the proposal's chances for funding.
- A list of previous years' grants is available at <http://aldineeducationfoundation.org/grant-summaries/>. It is best to avoid these projects or similar ones as they will not seem innovative to our Committee.
- Do not use your name or your campus in the application unless specifically requested.
- Grants are used to fund projects that are not funded through the school or District budgets. Grants cannot fund teacher travel or stipends.
- Objectives and outcomes should be consistent with Aldine ISD goals and your Campus Improvement Plan.
- When creating your budget, research carefully and be realistic. Small grants are just as likely to be awarded as large grants. Partial funding will be considered. Funds will not be awarded for budgeted items available from District resources.
- Projects awarded must be fully implemented and evaluated by the end of the school year in which the award was received.
- Be aware of Aldine ISD's policies regarding grant requests and their deadline requirements in seeking approvals prior to grant submission deadlines.
- Read through the Reviewer Score Sheet and Final Evaluation Form as you're planning and writing your proposal.
- All grant recipients will be required to report on their project. Make sure to plan for that in your end-of-year preparations.
- ATTEND A TRAINING WORKSHOP – it helps!