Awards & Grants

The Arizona Education Association and the AEA Foundation for Teaching & Learning offer grants and awards that support excellence in education, fund innovative teaching projects, and provide scholarships to education students.

All applications are available online at AEA-Foundation.org.
Annual Awards

Christa McAuliffe “I Touch the Future, I Teach” Award

PURPOSE: The AEA awards an educator who is recognized by their peers as an educator who inspires them and makes them proud to be a teacher. Named for Christa McAuliffe, the first American civilian—and teacher—in space, this award honors an Arizona educator. The state winner becomes AEA’s entrant in the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence competition.

ELIGIBILITY: The nominee, nominated by a peer, must be an AEA member who exemplifies excellence in teaching by advancing student learning, addressing issues of cultural diversity, advocating for the profession, providing leadership among colleagues, being a lifelong learner, and using creative or innovative ideas.

AWARD: A permanent plaque bearing the names of each year’s recipient is displayed at AEA headquarters in Phoenix. The honoree receives a $1,500 cash award. Presentation of the award and plaque is made at the AEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence ceremony. The NEA Foundation offers a $25,000 honorarium for the national honoree.

ESPecially for Kids Award

PURPOSE: The AEA recognizes extraordinary efforts by education support professionals on behalf of public education.

ELIGIBILITY: All current Education Support Professional (ESP) members of an AEA local affiliate who have been AEA members for at least three years as of January 15 of the award year are eligible. Nominees must be an “active” member at the time of selection. Individuals must be nominated by their local association affiliate, either a wall-to-wall or ESP affiliate.

AWARD: A permanent plaque bearing the names of each year’s recipient is displayed at AEA headquarters in Phoenix. The honoree receives a $1,500 cash award. Presentation of the award and plaque is made at the AEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence ceremony.

Human and Civil Rights Award

PURPOSE: The AEA recognizes leadership in promoting ethnic minority participation in the Association, programs or activities that lead to improved human relations, efforts that lead to improvement in school district support of human and civil rights, or successful implementation of human and civil rights in Arizona education.

ELIGIBILITY: Any AEA member or a current or past Arizona resident who worked in the state.

AWARD: The honoree is featured in the AEA Salute to Excellence award booklet and on the AEA website. The honoree receives a $1,000 cash award. Presentation of the award and plaque is made at the AEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence ceremony.

All applications are available online at AEA-Foundation.org. Annual Award & Annual Grant applications due March 1.
Affirmative Action Award

Purpose: The AEA Affirmative Action Award honors leadership in increasing the number of ethnic minority students choosing to enter teaching, efforts that improve school-district hiring practices and increased minority employment, and successful implementation of affirmative action policies within school districts.

Eligibility: Any AEA member, AEA local association, or Arizona public school district may be candidates for this award.

Award: The honoree is featured in the AEA Salute to Excellence award booklet and on the AEA website. Presentation of the award, a plaque, is made at the AEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence ceremony.

Diversity Award

Purpose: The AEA Diversity Award recognizes excellence in teaching or promoting diversity, tolerance, and respect for humankind through an instructional program or curriculum.

Eligibility: Any AEA member or team of AEA members may be nominated for this award.

Award: The honoree is featured in the AEA Salute to Excellence award booklet and on the AEA website. Presentation of the award, a plaque, is made at the AEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence ceremony.

Partners in Education Award

Purpose: The AEA honors those who support neighborhood schools. The award honors corporations, local businesses, individuals, or community groups that exhibit exemplary support for local public schools.

Eligibility: Local association presidents accept nominations from members, but select only one nominee per year. All qualified nominees earn Partners in Education Awards.

Award: The honoree is featured in the AEA Salute to Excellence award booklet and on the AEA website. Presentation of the award, a plaque, is made at the AEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence ceremony.

Presidential Award for Excellence in Education News Coverage

Purpose: The AEA recognizes print, radio, and television reporters for exceptional work in covering education issues and events.

Eligibility: Local association presidents nominate media outlets or reporters for their performance. More than one nomination is allowed. The AEA President selects the final award winners, though all who qualify are honored.

Award: The honoree is featured in the AEA Salute to Excellence award booklet and on the AEA website. Presentation of the award, a plaque, is made at the AEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence ceremony.

Public Relations Partner Award

Purpose: The AEA honors an exceptional school public relations person who has demonstrated a strong relationship between the district, the local association, and the community and whose efforts have improved the public’s understanding about public schools.

Eligibility: Local association president nominates the PR person from their district.

Award: The honoree is featured in the AEA Salute to Excellence award booklet and on the AEA website. Presentation of the award, a plaque, is made at the AEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence ceremony.

School Bell Award

Purpose: AEA presents the School Bell Award to honor excellence in local association communications.

Eligibility: Applicants are honored for quality in content, balance of coverage, style, appearance, and Association advocacy in their work to share the Association’s message with various audiences.

Award: Winners receive a gift card and certificate of appreciation.

All applications are available online at AEA-Foundation.org.
Annual Award & Annual Grant applications due March 1.
Open Grants

National Board Certification Scholarship
PURPOSE: The AEA Foundation for Teaching & Learning offers scholarships to teaching professionals who pursue National Board Certification, the highest professional achievement in teaching. Applicants are encouraged to utilize all available financial resources to offset their National Board Certification fees.

ELIGIBILITY: Preference will be given to AEA members (but others can apply) enrolled in at least one of the Arizona K12 Center NBCT programs, have contributed personal funds to program components and submitted an application to the NBPTS.

Mary Kay Haviland Angel Fund
PURPOSE: The Mary Kay Haviland Angel Fund offers direct assistance to an individual student with educational or personal needs. Grants may be used to purchase items that improve an individual student’s school learning or academic performance.

ELIGIBILITY: Any school employee may apply on behalf of an individual student, who is under the professional charge of the requesting school employee.

Professional Development Grant
PURPOSE: The Professional Development Grant is offered to further the teaching profession through leadership development, craft and skill improvement, or collaborative learning with colleagues.

ELIGIBILITY: Any full-time teacher or education support professional currently employed in an Arizona K-12 public school.

Allen W. Sayler Fine Arts Grant
PURPOSE: This grant offers scholarships to develop an appreciation of fine arts and to enrich the lives of children by seeking way to support students in music, drama, dance and art.

ELIGIBILITY: Any organization or public school employee that offers fine arts program opportunities to under-served, public school students in Arizona public school.

Diversity Grant
PURPOSE: The AEA Diversity Grant offers opportunities to develop and pursue instructional programs or curriculum that promote diversity, tolerance, and respect for humankind.

ELIGIBILITY: The program must be initiated and implemented by an AEA member or team of AEA members.

GSA Encouragement Grant
PURPOSE: Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Encouragement Grants offer opportunities for Gay-Straight Alliances in Arizona to pursue their mission of improving the school climate for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

ELIGIBILITY: Each project must be initiated and implemented by an Arizona GSA that is registered with the GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network). It is preferred that the club sponsor be an AEA member.

Annual Grants

Nell Wilcoxen Scholarship
PURPOSE: This AEA Foundation for Teaching & Learning scholarship helps defray tuition costs to pursue a teaching career.

ELIGIBILITY: Scholarships are available to AEA members or their immediate family.

LIFT Grant
PURPOSE: AEA Learning Improvement through Faculty Teams (LIFT) Grants are given for the purpose of enhancing student learning through the collaboration of faculty, who may include support professionals.

ELIGIBILITY: Each project must be initiated, implemented, and directed by teams of at least two AEA members.

Promise Grant
PURPOSE: Promise Grants support members’ small projects that are in the spirit of AEA’s mission—“Keeping the Promise of Quality Public Education”—and address one of AEA’s Strategic Objectives.

ELIGIBILITY: Each project must be initiated and implemented by an AEA member. Grants may be awarded for a broad range of projects that are designed to further one of the strategic objectives and ultimately improve student learning.

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