

CONTINUING SCHOLARS AWARD (CSA)

Information and Guidelines

About the Continuing Scholars Awards

The Arlington Education Foundation's Continuing Scholars Awards (CSAs) provide Arlington educators with grants of up to \$2,500 to support meaningful professional enrichment experiences. The purpose of the CSA program is to invest in educators' continued learning and professional growth in ways that ultimately benefit their students, schools, and the broader Arlington Public Schools community.

CSAs support opportunities that allow educators to expand their knowledge and skills, gain new perspectives, challenge themselves professionally, and develop their capacity as educational leaders. Eligible experiences may include programs, non-credit courses, classes, educational expeditions, seminars, workshops, conferences and other professional learning experiences sponsored by professional organizations, universities, and institutes.

Eligibility

Any current Arlington Public Schools (APS) educator or staff member is eligible to apply for a Continuing Scholars Award.

While all APS employees are eligible, priority may be given to proposals from individuals in student-facing roles and/or proposals that demonstrate a clear and meaningful impact on students.

Applicants must also meet the following requirement:

- Applicants may not have received a Continuing Scholars Award within the previous two years. The waiting period will be measured from the date of final report submission.

When to Apply

CSA grant proposals are reviewed monthly during the school year.

Applications submitted by the **25th of each month, September through May**, will be considered at the following Arlington Education Foundation Board meeting, which is typically held on the first Sunday of the month.

Applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible to allow adequate time for review and planning.

Eligible Professional Enrichment Experiences

CSAs support professional enrichment experiences that contribute to an educator's professional and intellectual growth and, in turn, benefit students.

Eligible experiences may include:

- Conferences and conventions
- Non-credit courses and classes
- Seminars and workshops
- Educational expeditions
- Professional learning programs
- Other enrichment experiences sponsored by professional organizations, universities, institutes, or other educational organizations

AEF does not fund courses or programs that earn graduate credit or lead to a degree. If a program offers graduate credit as an option, CSA recipients may participate only if they do not enroll for or receive graduate credit.

Timing and School Absences

While CSAs may support professional enrichment experiences throughout the year, applicants should carefully consider the impact of missing school or work days when selecting an enrichment experience. Proposals that require an applicant to miss school or work days may be held to a higher standard in demonstrating how the experience will meaningfully benefit students and connect back to the applicant's educational role.

If attendance at a program or event will require missing work days, applicants must obtain any required approval in advance from their school principal, supervisor, or the Superintendent, in accordance with district policy. Documentation of this approval must be submitted with the application.

What CSA Funding Covers

Continuing Scholars Awards provide grants of up to \$2,500 to cover reasonable expenses associated with the approved professional enrichment experience.

Eligible expenses may include:

- Program registration fees
- Tuition for eligible non-credit programs
- Required materials and program fees
- Travel expenses
- Accommodations
- Meals, within AEF reimbursement guidelines
- Other reasonable expenses directly related to participation in the approved program or experience

Awards are intended to support the applicant only. Expenses for companions, family members, or other individuals are not eligible for reimbursement.

Funding and Reimbursement Model

The maximum amount that may be requested for a CSA is \$2,500.

AEF uses a reimbursement model and does not pay vendors or program providers directly. Grant recipients are responsible for paying approved expenses and submitting appropriate documentation for reimbursement.

Receipts are required for all reimbursement requests. Reservation quotes or estimates—for example, a hotel reservation quote—are not considered receipts.

If actual expenses exceed the amount awarded, AEF is not able to increase the grant award. Applicants should therefore develop their budgets carefully and identify how they will cover any costs that exceed the amount requested from AEF.

Grant recipients must submit receipts for reimbursement within 12 months of the award. [12/18 months of the award—AEF to determine].

How to Apply

Fill out the [on-line application found on our website](#).

Our [AEF school representatives](#) are eager to help you through the application process. Please let them know of your interest, and they will be in touch! Applicants may also reach out to grants@aefma.org with any questions.

Below are the questions that will be found on the online application.

Applicant Information

- Full name
- Mailing address
- Email address
- Phone number
- Position within Arlington Public Schools, including school, department, and/or grade level
- Length of employment with Arlington Public Schools
- Whether the applicant has previously received a CSA award and, if so, when
- Whether the applicant has previously received or participated in an AEF Innovations Grant and, if so, when

Program or Event Information

- Name of the program or event
- Name of the program provider or vendor
- A website link or URL for the program provider
- A description of the program or event, including relevant information about its curriculum, content, and/or goals
- Dates of the program or event
- Documentation of required approval if participation will result in missed work days
- Information about the program's application or acceptance process, if applicable
- Whether the program offers graduate credit

Please note: AEF does not fund courses or programs that earn graduate credit or lead to a degree. If a program offers graduate credit, applicants must confirm that they will not be taking the program for graduate credit.

Funding and Budget Information

- Whether they have requested funding for the experience from Arlington Public Schools or another district source
- If district funding was requested and declined, the reason for the decision, if known
- The total amount requested from AEF. The maximum CSA request is \$2,500.
- The total cost of the program or event
- An explanation of how any costs exceeding the CSA request will be covered
- A detailed budget of anticipated expenses

The detailed budget may include: (also see Budget Guideline section below for more details)

- Program or event costs or tuition
- Transportation expenses, including airfare, train, or other travel
- Lodging
- Meals
- Materials or other required fees
- Other expenses directly related to the experience

Questions to Support Your Application

1. Why have you chosen this enrichment experience?
2. How is this experience relevant to you as a learner, and/or how will it broaden or deepen your intellectual development?
3. How will this experience make a difference to you as an educator and in your classroom or professional role?
4. How will your students benefit from your participation in this experience?
5. How and when will you share what you learn with colleagues and/or the broader community?
6. Is there anything else you would like AEF to know about you or your grant application?

Expectations of CSA Recipients

CSA recipients are expected to make the most of their professional enrichment experience and to share their learning with others.

Recipients will be asked to:

- Sign an AEF grant agreement.
- Complete the approved professional enrichment experience.
- Share their learning with the broader community, including students, colleagues, and the Arlington Public Schools community. This may include participating in AEF's annual grants showcase, typically held in January, contributing to an AEF media story, or sharing their learning in other meaningful ways.
- Submit itemized receipts and required documentation for reimbursement within 12 months of award.
- Submit a brief written report about the experience and its impact within three months of completing the experience.

Budget Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to help applicants develop a budget for their proposed experience.

Transportation

- Airline and train travel will be reimbursed for Main/Economy class tickets only. AEF does not reimburse upgraded travel.
- Personal vehicle mileage will be reimbursed based on the current IRS standard mileage rates. Applicants should provide documentation of the total miles traveled.
- AEF encourages the use of public transportation or shared transportation when practical.
- Reasonable transportation expenses for taxis and rideshare services, such as Uber or Lyft, may be reimbursed when needed.

Accommodations

- AEF will reimburse reasonable, mid-range hotel accommodations.
- Applicants are encouraged to seek discounts available through the course, conference, program, or professional organization.
- AEF will use GSA Per Diem Rates as a guideline for determining reasonable lodging costs for a particular location.
- Internet access charges, mini-bar expenses, cleaning charges, and laundry expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.

Meals

- Itemized receipts are required for meal reimbursements. Credit card statements alone are not sufficient.
- Alcohol is not eligible for reimbursement.
- Meal reimbursements are capped at the applicable GSA Per Diem Rates.