



Professional Learning



AFT Teacher Leaders Program

2024-25 Application of interest for local leaders



DEADLINES AND TIMELINES

- [Informational webinar](#) for program updates: April 9 at 7 p.m. EDT
- [Application of interest](#) deadline: April 18
- [Recruitment webinar](#) (optional): May 14 at 7 p.m. EDT
- [Program updates webinar](#) for returning locals and facilitators: July 29 at 7 p.m. EDT
- Orientation for *new* locals: July 30-31

The AFT has launched an extensive campaign, Real Solutions for Kids and Communities, that rejects the toxic attacks against public education in favor of working to strengthen public schools, making real solutions for kids a national priority.

We are addressing learning loss, loneliness and creating a joy of reading through the use of transformative strategies that can be sustained, integrated and scaled to help children recover and thrive. These strategies focus on literacy, community schools, experiential learning, safety, mental health and well-being, and investment and resources in our public schools.

Teachers serve as crucial leaders in educational change, acting as frontline catalysts for innovation and improvement. Their firsthand experience in classrooms equips them with valuable insights into effective teaching methods and student needs. By embracing leadership roles, teachers can drive curriculum enhancements, advocate for supportive policies, and inspire colleagues to adopt best practices. Empowering teachers as leaders fosters a collaborative culture where expertise is shared, creating a dynamic learning environment. Recognizing and harnessing the leadership potential within the teaching community is pivotal for sustainable, student-centered education reforms that positively impact both classrooms and broader educational systems.

AFT's Teacher Leaders Program is a vehicle for achieving these aspirations. It brings together a select group of teachers to learn how to take active leadership roles in their schools, unions and communities. These teachers then serve as catalysts to build the profession and strengthen the union and its connection to the community to generate support and understanding of public schools. These teacher leaders use the skills they develop in the program long after completing the yearlong program.

The AFT Teacher Leaders Program will support the goals of union locals and provide them with:

- Strong ties to community organizations and community leaders;
- An informed teacher voice;
- A member engagement opportunity;
- A vehicle for positive messaging about public schools and their unions; and
- A pipeline for future schools and union leaders.

Participating educators will develop skills related to:

- Creating a collaborative culture;
- Accessing and using research;
- Reaching out to families and communities;
- Becoming advocates for teachers, students and their families, and for public education;
- Understanding policy issues and making recommendations to and through their unions; and
- Making oral and written presentations, including using social media.

Through their participation in the AFT Teacher Leaders Program, educators will:

- Become conversant with both the local and national dialogue on education;
- Develop relationships with local policymakers and community leaders;
- Connect practice, research and policy;
- Serve as a sounding board and advisory group for union leaders; and

- Become more actively committed to and involved in their local union.

Real solutions for educational change in public schools involve a multifaceted approach addressing the many challenges facing public education today. Researching proven strategies and combining the elements of the Real Solutions for Kids and Communities campaign can bring about sustainable change in improving teaching, learning and community involvement.

Encourage your members to become part of a network of more than 2,300 teacher leaders who have participated in the program.

Program Requirements

1. The local union president or designee selects a program facilitator who helps recruit members for the local cadre. The participants must be full AFT dues-paying members. Then, over the school year, the program facilitator convenes the selected members for eight hours per month to support them as they learn to take active leadership roles in their schools, union and communities. Typically, in-person meetings are held one Saturday a month from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., but locals are free to select dates and times that work for them, as long as they meet eight hours per month either in person or virtually.

Another consideration is the duration of the program. Schools with an August-May school year typically run their program from September to April, while those with a September–June school year meet from October to May.

2. This program is designed for first-time participants only. Participants will receive up to a \$1,500 stipend, pending completion of all program requirements.
3. A special application for all TLP alumni participants will be sent out August 1, 2024. Participants may choose one of two ways to engage in the alumni program:
 - Participants in **Special Tracks** projects focusing on one of the following areas will receive up to a \$1,000 stipend pending completion of all program requirements:
 - » Community Schools
 - » Educator Shortage
 - » Education Technology
 - » Experiential Learning
 - » Literacy
 - Participants in the **Alumni Advocacy and Activism** program will receive up to a \$1,000 stipend pending completion of all program requirements. Participants will develop their voice to advocate for public education and professional issues in a research-based training that is designed to help alums:
 - » Build upon the research skills and engage in the inquiry process to investigate, inform, and support policy issues and positions;
 - » Learn how to think like policymakers by exploring worldviews, formulating policy objectives and positions, and identifying advocacy and activism strategies for impact;
 - » Explore their individual teacher leadership stories, experiences with students, and personal connection to advancing change and equity in education;
 - » Develop policy recommendations and share these with stakeholders, decision-makers, advocates and the public via op-eds, policy memos and testimony, and through advocacy campaigns;

- » Work to change and influence laws and policies at the school, district and state levels to improve opportunities for students, educators, schools and communities; and
 - » Connect with fellow educators to gather input and shape key issues in local and state education policy.
4. Interested new local union presidents (or designees) and their facilitators should participate in an informational webinar on April 9 at 7 p.m. EDT ([preregistration required](#)). If selected for the program, these presidents and facilitators should also participate in a [recruitment webinar](#) on May 14 at 7 p.m. EDT. All new local presidents (or designees) and new program facilitators are required to attend the national orientation meeting July 30-31, to learn about various programmatic issues, including action research and facilitation strategies. Returning locals and facilitators are required to attend a [program updates webinar](#) on July 29 at 7 p.m. EDT.
 5. Before the beginning of the school year, the local union president (or designee), local executive board and local program facilitator will recruit up to 12 local AFT members to participate in the program. The AFT will provide up to a \$1,500 stipend for each new member, which the members will receive contingent upon successfully meeting program requirements. The AFT also will provide up to a \$2,500 stipend for one facilitator per local.
 6. All participants will engage in a nationwide conversation with AFT President Randi Weingarten at a date TBD.
 7. Locals will provide space for these monthly meetings and cover local costs associated with the meetings (printing, food, etc.).

Application Process

Attend an informational webinar on April 9 at 7 p.m. EDT. [Register here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Be sure to add this meeting to your calendar!

Plan to attend the recruitment webinar on May 14 at 7 p.m. EDT. [Register here](#).

Submit your application of interest online by April 18, [here](#).

All applicants will be notified of their status by May 19.

If you have any questions about this program or the process to apply, please contact Lisa Dickinson by email (edickinson@aft.org) or phone (419-346-5374).

Depending on the size of your local, the minimum number of participants ranges from eight to 12, but the maximum number of new participants is 12.

Locals with more than one facilitator may divide this stipend or pay the other facilitator(s) from their local budget.