



AMERICAN CIVIC EDUCATION
TEACHER AWARD

Introduction

A free society must rely on the civic knowledge, skills and virtue of its citizens and those they elect to public office. Many institutions help to develop Americans' knowledge and skills and shape their civic character and commitments. Family, religious institutions, the media, and community groups exert important influences. Schools, however, bear a special and historic responsibility for the development of civic competence and civic responsibility. Schools fulfill that responsibility through both formal and informal curricula beginning in the earliest grades and continuing through the entire educational process. Civic education, therefore, is essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy. To this end, the important role of teachers in preparing young people for the obligations of citizenship cannot be overstated.

The Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress at Indiana University, and the National Education Association are launching an annual program to honor American teachers of civics, government, and related fields. Titled the American Civic Education Teacher Awards, the program is designed to promote national recognition and respect for the teaching profession as a whole and for teachers of civic education in particular. The awards will honor elementary and secondary civic education teachers who have demonstrated a special expertise in teaching about the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Congress, and public policy at the state and local levels. To this end, the program will select and showcase three exemplary teachers whose students represent the diversity of the American public and private school systems.

The honored teachers will travel twice to Washington, D.C., to attend special activities in connection with ACETA. Travel and lodging expenses for the teachers will be provided by the sponsoring organizations.

Goals of the Program

Through American Civic Education Teacher Awards, selected teachers of civics and government will be recognized both for their excellent work and also as representatives of their profession. American Civic Education Teacher Awards will also inform the public of the challenges of teaching and the different conditions under which teachers serve the public good.

American Civic Education Teacher Awards aims to pay tribute to elementary and secondary school teachers representing:

- ✦ the teaching of civic education for democracy, whether or not it is in separate civics or government classes
- ✦ the diverse populations of today's schools
- ✦ each geographic region of the United States

Selection Committee and Sponsoring Organizations

The committee that will select the teachers to be honored is composed of representatives from the following educational organizations.

- ✦ Center for Civic Education
- ✦ Center on Congress at Indiana University
- ✦ National Education Association

Other Participants

The Office of the Historian of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Historical Office of the United States Senate will also participate in the educational program for selected teachers to be conducted in Washington, D.C., in September, 2006. It is anticipated that an educational advisory committee comprised of representatives of other national educational organizations will be added in the program's future years to act as an educational advisory committee.

Students

Additional consideration will be given to applicants who teach

- ✦ ethnic and racial minorities
- ✦ recent immigrants
- ✦ disabled and special education
- ✦ gifted and talented

Geographic Diversity

A criteria for deliberation will be to recognize teachers representing each geographic region of the United States, including teachers from rural, suburban, and urban areas.

Selection Process

Everyone remembers with admiration and respect those teachers who made significant and lasting contributions to his or her education. These are the types of teachers who will be selected for American Civic Education Teacher Awards.

The selection committee does not have a single model teacher in mind, but will select teachers with different styles, methods, backgrounds, and types of students. Our intention is to provide the public with a portrait of the broad range of excellent teachers contributing to the civic education of the American student.

- ✦ In March 2006, applications will be distributed by the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress, and the National Education Association.
- ✦ During April, teachers will submit applications to the address on page 5. April 15, 2006 is the deadline to submit applications.
- ✦ In early May 2006, three outstanding teachers will be selected. The announcement will be made on or about May 15.

- ✦ In spring 2006, the teachers will be videotaped in their classrooms and communities for possible broadcast or display at the Congressional Conference on Civic Education held annually in Washington, D.C.
- ✦ In September 2006, the three teachers will travel to Washington, D.C., and participate in a three-day educational program. The program includes attending floor sessions and committee hearings in the U.S. Congress, meeting members of Congress and other key officials, and visiting historical sites such as the National Archives and the U.S. Supreme Court.
- ✦ November 17–20, 2006, the three teachers will be recognized at a special program during the Congressional Conference on Civic Education in Washington, D.C.

Selection Criteria

Letters of recommendation and the applicant's own statement should provide evidence of the teacher's strong command of the subject or subjects taught and his or her ability to communicate this knowledge in ways that contribute to students' civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions. Evidence of the teacher's contributions to the development of civic virtue in his or her students should also be provided. Special consideration will be given to applicants whose teaching is highly esteemed by their colleagues and other members of the educational community.

In May 2006, the selection committee will review all applications and select the teachers to be recognized. Teachers who are selected will be videotaped in their classrooms and communities in the spring of 2006.

Applicant Eligibility

- ✦ Applicants must be full-time classroom teachers of grades K-12.
- ✦ Applicants must be teaching full time during the 2006-2007 academic year.
- ✦ Applicants must be United States citizens or foreign nationals residing in the United States or its territories.
- ✦ Employees of the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress, and the National Education Association and their immediate families are not eligible.
- ✦ Substitute teachers and part time teachers are not eligible.
- ✦ As a condition of participation, the three teachers selected to receive ACETA awards must attend all activities during the Washington, D.C., trips in September and November 2006.
- ✦ Selected teachers must agree to be videotaped in their classrooms to capture the essence of their unique teaching abilities.
- ✦ Selected teachers must agree to participate in publicity efforts for ACETA.

Applicant Requirements

- ✦ Applicants must fully complete all components of the enclosed forms and submit them together, postmarked by April 15, 2006. Partial or incomplete submissions will not be accepted. Entries will not be returned. There is no fee to enter.
- ✦ Letters of recommendation from the school principal and two teaching peers must be submitted on the official forms along with the teacher's application.
- ✦ The principal or another administrator with appropriate authority must approve videotaping in the teacher's classroom for possible television broadcast.
- ✦ In addition to allowing time for videotaping in the school and classroom, the school must be prepared to provide up to six days of release time for the teacher to travel to and attend special activities in connection with ACETA, including two trips to Washington, D.C.

General Application Instructions

Each applicant must complete the following forms to be considered for the **American Civic Education Teacher Awards** in 2006. Applicants should read carefully the preceding sections, the application forms, and these instructions before completing the application materials. *Please type all responses and limit answers to the space provided.*

- 1** The biographical information is self-explanatory and requires your signature.
- 2** In the self-portrait, you should explain your style and method of teaching in a manner understandable for a reviewer who may not be an expert in pedagogy or in the vernacular of the profession. Please explain what it is about your accomplishments in teaching civics, government, and related fields and in sharing your knowledge with your colleagues and students that others might identify as exemplary, citing specific examples where appropriate. It might be helpful to refer to the selection criteria on page 2. Information about your personal and teaching background might well prove illuminating in this exercise. List any relevant awards or honors you have received.

Use only the form provided and confine your self-portrait to two typed standard pages. The self-portrait must be composed by you. Submit text only; no graphics, photographs, or videos will be accepted.

- 3** Your application must be accompanied by three letters of recommendation: two from teaching colleagues and one from your principal. You must type your name on the top of each letter of

recommendation before giving it to the evaluator. If the principal is unavailable, a letter from the superintendent or another administrator with appropriate authority will be accepted as a substitute. Each writer should seal the completed form with one copy in an envelope, sign his or her name across the seal, and return the envelope to you.

- 4** Please send one copy of the completed application (biographical information and self-portrait) with the three sealed envelopes containing the letter of recommendation by the U.S. Postal Service or by common carrier to the address on page 5.
- 5** Applicants will be notified via email that their applications have been received.
- 6** We will publicize the results of the selection process on or about May 15, 2006, on the websites of the three sponsoring organizations. All materials must be submitted together and post-marked no later than April 15, 2006. Please be certain that the application is neatly typed. Retain a copy for your records.

Mail to

American Civic Education Teacher Awards
Center for Civic Education
5145 Douglas Fir Road
Calabasas, CA 91302

Checklist

Use the following checklist to ensure that your application is complete:

- Application Form completed, checked for accuracy, and signed.
- Teacher Self-Portrait completed on the form provided.
- Three envelopes, each containing the original and one copy of each Letter of Recommendation, sealed and signed with the writer's signature across the seal.
- The completed package must be post-marked no later than April 15, 2006.

Note

Do not submit application materials separately. Those applications that are not submitted with all required information in one complete package will not be considered.

Do not submit material other than the application forms (such as cover letters or résumés). Superfluous materials will not be used in the selection process and will not be entered in your file. Due to the volume of applications, no materials will be returned to applicants, including any component of the application file.

APPLICATION FORM

A1

1 Personal Information Please print your information neatly and limit your answers to the spaces provided.

Name <small>(as you would like it to appear in print)</small>		
Home Address	Street	
City	State	Zip Code
Home Telephone	School Telephone	
E-mail Address		

2 School Information

School at Which You Currently Teach <small>(complete school name)</small>		
Address	Street	
City	State	Zip Code
Telephone		
Principal's Name	Telephone	
E-mail Address		
Superintendent's Name		
School District		
Address	Street	
City	State	Zip Code
Telephone		
E-mail Address		

3 Educational Background

Universities or Colleges Attended
Location
Dates Attended
Field of Study
Degree/Credential Earned

4 School Profile

Check and complete those items which best describe you or your school.

TYPE OF SCHOOL

- Elementary
- Middle/Junior High
- High School
- Other _____

TYPE OF COMMUNITY

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban

APPLICANT'S GENDER ___Optional

- Female
- Male

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

APPLICANT'S RACE/ETHNICITY ___Optional

- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Other _____

STUDENTS' RACE/ETHNICITY ___% of Class ___Optional

- _____ % African American
- _____ % Asian
- _____ % Caucasian
- _____ % Hispanic
- _____ % Native American
- _____ % Other _____

STUDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS ___% of Class ___Optional

- _____ % At Risk
- _____ % Disabled
- _____ % Gifted & Talented
- _____ % Low Socioeconomic
- _____ % Recent Immigrants
- _____ % Other _____

I certify that all the statements made in this application are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize ACETA to release my "biographical information" and "self-portrait" to the press if I am selected to participate. I consent to being televised and to allow ACETA to use my name, likeness, and voice in connection with ACETA in perpetuity, worldwide, and by any and all means now known or hereafter devised. I further certify that I am the sole author of the self-portrait and I agree to abide by the terms of eligibility listed on page 4 if I am selected to participate.

Signature *(sign in ink)*

Date

5 Applicant's Self-Portrait

Applicant Name

Please refer to the instructions on page 4. Use only this form, limit your self-portrait to page 8 and page 9. Type your response in the box below. Include specific information on any of your teaching practices that you think would be considered exemplary by other civic educators.

APPLICATION FORM

A4

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION **Principal**

Applicant Name

American Civic Education Teacher Awards (ACETA) is an annual program that recognizes exemplary representatives of the teaching profession. To this end, the program will select and honor elementary and secondary school teachers working with classes representing the diversity of the American public and private schools. The program is sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress at Indiana University, and the National Education Association.

The person named above is submitting an application to be considered for American Civic Education Teacher Awards. The award will recognize teachers who will be remembered with admiration and respect by their students for having made a contribution to their education. The selection committee does not have any single model of teacher in mind, but will select teachers with different styles, methods, backgrounds, and students. The intention of this process is to provide the public with a portrait of the broad range of outstanding teachers contributing to the civic education of the American student.

As part of the selection process, the selection committee would like to read your assessment of the applicant's accomplishments as a teacher, command of the subject, and ability to communicate with and inspire students. Evidence also should be provided of the teacher's contributions to the development of civic character in his or her students. You should describe the extent to which the teacher is held in esteem by colleagues, students, parents, and other members of the school community. Please also comment on how well the teacher would serve in various forums as a spokesperson for the profession.

The teachers ultimately selected will be videotaped in their communities and classrooms for ACETA and possibly one or more documentary programs.

To be eligible for selection, the teacher must secure official authorization for the videotaping by film crews under contract to ACETA. Although every attempt will be made to minimize disruption to the school routine, if the teacher is selected it will be necessary to film for up to two days in and around the teacher's classroom during class sessions. Furthermore, participation in this program will require the teacher to be absent from classes for up to six days.

The selection committee relies on you to be as candid and specific as possible. Your prompt completion of this form is requested; the applicant can neither complete the application nor be considered for selection without your authorization and recommendation. Your letter will become part of the teacher's confidential file, intended only for use in ACETA's selection process.

Please return this form, plus one copy, to the applicant in a sealed envelope with your signature across the seal. The teacher must submit the sealed envelope as part of the completed application postmarked on or before April 15, 2006. This letter will not be returned to the applicant after ACETA's selection process.

Letters should not exceed one page in length. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Principal's Name

School

Address

Home Phone ()

Office Phone ()

E-mail Address

Length of time you have known the applicant

Principal's Signature

*By signing this letter you are granting permission for the **American Civic Education Teacher Awards** to videotape or film the teacher in his or her classroom and on other school property for up to two days.*

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION Teaching Colleague 1

Applicant Name

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Letters should not exceed one page in length. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Colleague's Name

Teaching Assignment

School

Address

Home Phone ()

Office Phone ()

E-mail Address

Length of time you have known the applicant

Colleague's Signature

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION Teaching Colleague 2

Applicant Name

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Letters should not exceed one page in length. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Colleague's Name

Teaching Assignment

School

Address

Home Phone ()

Office Phone ()

E-mail Address

Length of time you have known the applicant

Colleague's Signature