



INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING

# GRANT PROGRAM GUIDE

RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS



2024-2025

[www.cta.org/IFT](http://www.cta.org/IFT)

# Table of Contents

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Overview ..... [Page 2](#)

Support and Assistance ..... [Page 3](#)

Four Things CTA Members Should Know About Applying for an IFT Grant ..... [Page 4](#)

Types of IFT Grants ..... [Page 5](#)

Timeline ..... [Page 6](#)

Application Review Process ..... [Page 7](#)

Grant Recipient/Project Coordinator Responsibilities ..... [Page 8](#)

Strength-Based Teacher Driven Change ..... [Page 9](#)

IFT Grant Application Eligibility FAQ ..... [Page 10](#)

IFT Dos and Don'ts and Funding Guidelines ..... [Page 11](#)

IFT Grant Applicant Checklist ..... [Page 12](#)

Appendix A: Strength-Based Equity Matrix ..... [Page 13](#)

Appendix B: Sample Grant Application ..... [Page 14](#)

Appendix C: Sample Budget ..... [Page 16](#)

Appendix D: Sample Timeline ..... [Page 17](#)

Appendix E: Sample Summary Report Form ..... [Page 18](#)

Appendix F: Sample Financial Report Form ..... [Page 19](#)

Appendix G: Project Coordinator Check-In Meetings ..... [Page 20](#)

# Overview

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The Institute for Teaching (IFT) mission is to enhance, support, and sustain high-quality teaching and high-quality public schools for all California students. Through mobilizing teachers, special programs, research, conferences, networking, and community-based coalitions, the IFT seeks to advance public education and promote the common good of our students and communities.





Through our efforts we help all students and schools by awarding grants directly to CTA members and local chapters. To date, CTA members' voluntary dues contribution have funded a total of 643 grant projects totaling more than \$7.6 million. For the 2024 -2025 school year the IFT awarded 74 grants totaling \$925,399 to educators across the state to implement projects that will transform their classroom.

If you're interested in applying for an IFT grant, you will need to prepare a grant proposal, budget, and timeline. We are seeking grant proposals that are innovative, creative, practical, action-oriented, and student centered. Using our [Strength-Based Equity Matrix](#) as a framework, your proposal must address all seven Strength-Based Equity Matrix factors as this will be the lens through which your proposal will be evaluated by our Grant Selection Committee.

Your IFT grant application must be submitted online by March 31, 2025. Awarded IFT grants will be implemented during the 2025-2026 school year. We strongly encourage you to thoroughly review the contents of this resource guide before beginning your application. If you need assistance or have additional questions, please contact us at [IFT@cta.org](mailto:IFT@cta.org).

# Support and Assistance

We offer various types of support to assist you with applying for an IFT grant including training at various CTA events, regular office hours, and an online booking site where you can schedule a one-on-one session.

Support	Details
<p><b>Training/Presentations</b></p> 	<p>We offer training at CTA conferences. Visit the <a href="#">CTA Website</a> for more information.</p>
<p><b>Office Hours</b></p> 	<p><b>Tuesdays</b>  <b>2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</b>            Call (650) 697-1400 or schedule a video conference through our online IFT Booking Site.</p>
<p><b>Online Booking Site</b></p> 	<p><b>IFT Booking Site</b>            Use this site to schedule a one-on-one session during our regular office hours.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here</a></p>
<p><b>Email</b></p> 	<p><b>Contact Us Anytime</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:IFT@cta.org">IFT@cta.org</a></p>

# 4 Things CTA Members Should Know About Applying for an IFT Grant

01

Since 2010, the CTA Institute for Teaching has been utilizing a portion of CTA members' \$20 voluntary dues contribution to fund strength-based teacher driven projects at schools all over California. To date, the IFT has funded 643 grant projects totaling more than \$7.6 million. All CTA members are eligible to apply for an Educator grant (up to \$5,000) or an Impact grant (up to \$20,000).

02

This is a competitive grant program. Grant proposals are evaluated by the IFT Grant Selection Committee, made up of four educators from around the state and the IFT Program Consultant. These educators represent various grade levels and are experienced in the strength-based approach. To date, the IFT has received a total of 1,883 grant applications.

03

The grant application period opens on **December 1, 2024**. **Applications will be due no later than March 31, 2025**. Links to supporting documents and other information can be accessed from the IFT website. In May 2025, grant proposals will be reviewed by the Grant Selection Committee, using the Strength-Based Equity Matrix as a lens. The committee will select grant proposals to recommend for funding to the IFT Board of Directors.

04

In June 2025, the IFT Board of Directors will vote to approve the grant proposal recommendations. In July 2025, notification of funding will be sent to all applicants (awarded and nonawarded). Grant funds will be distributed in August 2025, for use during the upcoming school year. As part of the application process, Local Association Presidents are asked to agree to have the Local Association serve as the fiscal agent on behalf of the grant recipient. This increases accountability and ensures the individual member incurs no tax liability.

Visit the IFT webpage for more information: [www.cta.org/IFT](http://www.cta.org/IFT)

# Types of IFT Grants

The Institute for Teaching offers three different grants. During the application period (December 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025), you can only apply for an Educator grant, an Impact grant or the Environmental Education Cohort. Impact grants require a team of two or more members (3 team members are recommended) and all team members must be active CTA members. Environmental Education Cohort grants are designed to support projects centered on environmental education. Environmental Education Cohort grantees will participate in a virtual cohort-based Community of Practice and an in-person convening.

If you are implementing a grant project for the 2024-2025 school year, have been approved for a 2024-25 carryover, are currently serving as a team member for an Impact grant, or have not submitted the required reports for a previously awarded grant, you are not eligible to apply for an IFT grant until you have been notified that all grant requirements have been met. Before applying, please refer to the following documents in this guide: [IFT Grant Application Eligibility FAQ](#), [IFT Dos and Don'ts and Funding Guidelines](#), and [IFT Grant Applicant Checklist](#).

Educator Grant	Impact Grant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to \$5,000</li> <li>▪ Implemented by an individual educator</li> <li>▪ Impacts a classroom or single group of students at a school site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to \$20,000</li> <li>▪ Implemented by a team of 2 or more educators (a team of 3 is recommended)</li> <li>▪ Impacts multiple classrooms or sites within a school district</li> </ul>
Environmental Education Cohort (new!)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grant applications must focus on environmental education and/or climate change</li> <li>▪ Grantees will join a statewide cohort with regular opportunities to connect with educators across California</li> <li>▪ IFT will cover all expenses for grantees to attend an exciting in-person convening at a CTA conference (TBD)</li> <li>▪ Applicants may apply for either:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Environmental Educator Grant: up to \$5,000 to be implemented by an individual educator to impact a classroom or single group of students</li> <li>○ Environmental Impact Grant: Up to \$20,000 to be implemented by a team of 2 or more educators to impact multiple classrooms or sites within a school district</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

# Timeline

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Awarded grants will be implemented during the 2025-2026 school year.

<b>Important Dates</b>	<b>Action</b>
December 1, 2024	Application Submission Window Opens
March 31, 2025	Deadline to Submit Application
May 2025	Grants Reviewed by IFT Grant Selection Committee and Recommended for Funding
June 2025	IFT Board Votes on Committee Recommendations
July 2025	Notification of Funding
August 2025	Funds Disbursed
July 2026	Summary and Financial Reports Due

# Application Review Process

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The IFT grant program is very competitive. Each year the number of grant applications received exceeds our annual funding. To date, CTA members' voluntary dues contribution have funded a total of 643 grant projects totaling more than \$7.6 million

Complete applications submitted by March 31, 2025, will be reviewed by the Grant Selection Committee. In May 2025, the Grant Selection Committee will select grant proposals to recommend to the IFT Board for funding. The Committee is made up of educators from around the state and the IFT Program Consultant. These educators are past IFT grant recipients, represent various grade levels, and are experienced in the [Strength-Based Approach](#).

To prepare applications for review, we remove identifying information (such as your name, school, and local association) to ensure a fair process. Each application will be reviewed based on its own merit using the [Strength-Based Equity Matrix](#) as a framework.

## **Applications that are **not** selected for funding usually fall within these categories:**

- Not student centered.
- No clear plan to implement a project.
- Responses do not address the matrix factors/questions.
- Majority of the budget allocated for stipends, guest speakers, or release time.
- Majority of the budget allocated to purchase equipment/services a district should provide.

After the review process, all applicants will be notified of the outcome of the award decisions. Grant proposals that are not selected for funding may be evaluated for improvement upon request.



# Grant Recipient/Project Coordinator Responsibilities

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In May 2025, the IFT Grant Selection Committee will review applications and identify grant proposals to recommend to the IFT Board for funding. In June 2025, the IFT Board will vote on the recommendations, and applicants will be notified of the award decisions in July 2025.

If your grant proposal is selected for funding, you will receive an award letter detailing the next steps. As a grant recipient and project coordinator, you will be responsible for the following:

- Implementation of your grant project
- Tracking grant project expenses
- Meeting regularly with your local treasurer
- Attending **two** [check-in meetings](#) with the IFT Program Organizer
- Completing and submitting a [Summary Report](#) by July 31, 2026
- Completing and submitting a [Financial Report](#) by July 31, 2026

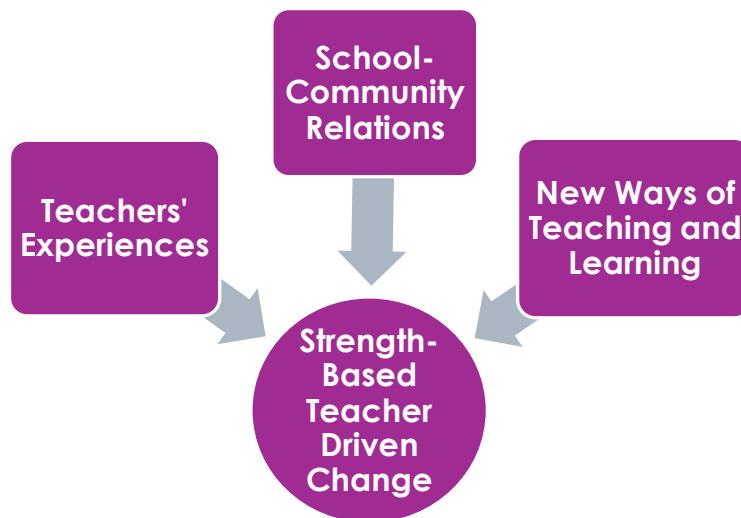
Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to meet with their local treasurer to discuss their local association's reimbursement procedures before making purchases. All awarded grant funds must be accounted for and included in a financial report at the conclusion of the grant implementation year.

# Strength-Based Teacher Driven Change

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The Institute for Teaching attempts to bring a new approach to school change by focusing on two key factors: 1) change that is teacher driven and 2) change based on what is working and successful in schools and classrooms. Strength-Based Teacher Driven Change (SBTDC) is a result of the continual search by classroom teachers to invent and build on the great things taking place in their school communities. It is formulated from teacher experiences in the classroom, teacher school-community relations, as well as the teaching and learning process.

The IFT grant program supports CTA members' efforts to bring Strength-Based Teacher Driven Change to their schools. The SBTDC model allows educators to provide an asset-based approach to emphasize talents over weaknesses and strengths over deficits to create a learning environment that supports and encourages every student to do their best. By focusing on what works in schools, the IFT believes strength-based models for school change add a new dimension to school improvement.





### **IFT Grant Application Eligibility FAQ**

**Application Timeline: December 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025**  
**Awarded IFT Grants will be implemented during the 2025-2026 school year.**

- 1. Question:** May all CTA members apply?  
**Answer:** Yes. All members with an active CTA membership may apply.
- 2. Question:** Can I apply for more than one IFT grant?  
**Answer:** No. During the application period (December 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025) you can only apply for either an Educator grant or an Impact grant. Impact grants require a team of two or more members and all team members must be active CTA members.
- 3. Question:** If I was awarded an IFT grant previously, when am I eligible to apply for another IFT grant?  
**Answer:** If you are implementing a grant project for the 2024-2025 school year, have been approved for a 2024-25 carryover, are currently serving as a team member for an Impact grant, or have not submitted the required reports for a previously awarded grant, you are not eligible to apply for an IFT grant until you have been notified that all grant requirements have been met.
- 4. Question:** Can grant projects be implemented at different school sites?  
**Answer:** Yes. Impact grants or Impact Renewal grants may be implemented at different school sites within the same school district. All team members must be listed in the online grant application.
- 5. Question:** Can my team members be from different school districts or local associations?  
**Answer:** This question only applies to Impact grants. Team members can work at different school sites but must work within the same school district and be members of the same local association. If your grant application is selected and awarded, your local association must also agree to serve as the Fiscal Agent for the awarded grant funds.
- 6. Question:** What is the online grant application timeline for approvals?  
**Answer:** Online IFT grant applications are due by March 31, 2024. The IFT Grant Selection Committee will meet in May 2025 to review applications and select proposals to recommend to the IFT Board. The IFT Board will meet in June 2025 to approve the recommendations for funding.
- 7. Question:** As an IFT Grant Project Coordinator may I utilize unused grant funds during the next school year?  
**Answer:** If the awarded grant funds are not utilized during the implementation year or if there are left over funds, they must be returned unless a carryover request is submitted and approved.



## IFT Dos and Don'ts and Funding Guidelines

**Application Timeline: December 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025**

**Awarded IFT Grants will be implemented during the 2025-2026 school year.**

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify your CTA membership. You must be an active CTA member to apply for an IFT grant.</li> <li>• Maintain your CTA membership throughout the grant implementation period.</li> <li>• Identify a team of at least two members to apply for an Impact grant. The Project Coordinator can be a part of the team of two. All team members must be CTA members. We strongly recommend teams of 3.</li> <li>• Review the sample grant application and Strength-Based Equity Matrix in our IFT Grant Program Guide.</li> <li>• Use the <a href="#">Strength-Based Equity Matrix</a> as a framework for developing your IFT grant proposal. Make sure your proposal addresses all seven Strength-Based Equity Matrix factors.</li> <li>• Determine how your proposal will address the needs of diverse learners and improve student learning.</li> <li>• Upload your budget and timeline in a PDF, Excel, or Word format.</li> <li>• Remember to include any additional funds or in-kind contributions that you anticipate receiving to fund your project.</li> <li>• Limit stipends to up to \$1,000 per team member and disburse no more than \$500 per team member each calendar year of the grant implementation.</li> <li>• Inform your local association president that you intend to apply for an IFT grant. Their signature will be necessary to complete the application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not design a project that requires sustainable, long-term funding sources.</li> <li>• Do not include the purchase of gift cards, classroom sets of equipment, classroom furniture, appliances, or permanent infrastructure.</li> <li>• Do not include items that supplant computers, technology, school equipment, or services a district should provide.</li> <li>• Do not include the hiring of external professional development providers or the implementation of district required professional development.</li> <li>• Do not include funding to employ staff or to start/expand a new or existing program or center.</li> <li>• Do not include funding for conferences or travel expenses related to conferences.</li> <li>• Do not allocate more than 1/3 of your budget to cover personnel costs. This includes release time for substitutes and stipends for planning and project collaboration. (See the Dos column for information related to stipends.)</li> <li>• Do not request funding for personal educational scholarships.</li> <li>• Do not request retroactive funding (funding for items you have already purchased).</li> <li>• Do not wait until the very last minute to submit your IFT grant application. You may run into some unexpected technology issues or need assistance with submitting your application.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Revised: 11/18/2024</b></p>



### IFT Grant Applicant Checklist

**Application Timeline: December 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025**

**Awarded IFT Grants will be implemented during the 2025-2026 school year.**

- Please make sure to have a conversation with your local association president about your interest in applying for an IFT grant. You will need your president's email address for the grant application. After completing your application, IFT will send your president a Fiscal Agent Agreement. Once signed, your IFT application is considered complete.
- We encourage you to have a conversation with your site administrator about your grant project.
- Before you begin to complete your online application, please make sure to read the following resource documents:
  - [IFT Grant Application Eligibility FAQ](#)
  - [IFT Dos and Don'ts and Funding Guidelines](#)
  - [IFT Grant Applicant Checklist](#)
  - [IFT Strength-Based Equity Matrix](#)
- Applicants must complete our online IFT grant application. Emailed and paper applications will not be accepted.
- Have your grant budget and timeline ready to upload before starting the application.

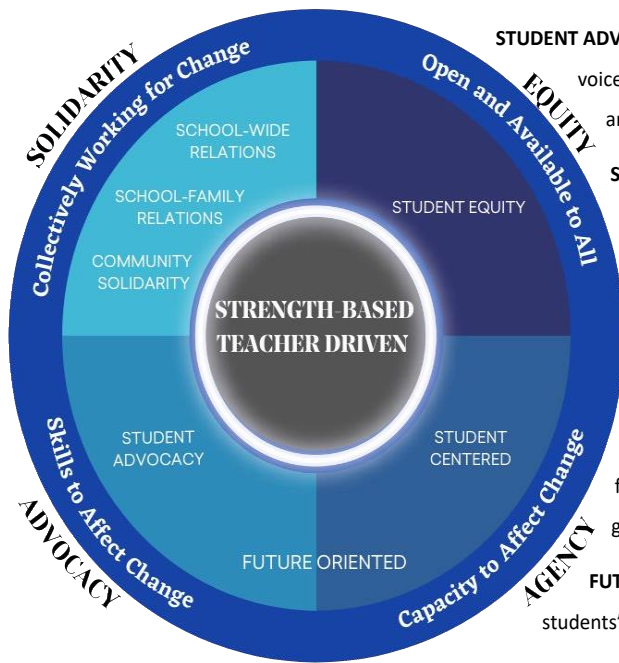
# Appendix A



## A STRENGTH-BASED EQUITY MATRIX

**STUDENT CENTERED** – Describe how your grant proposal will promote student agency, ownership, responsibility, and self-reliance.

**STUDENT EQUITY** – Describe how your grant proposal will promote learning opportunities and access for all students.



**STUDENT ADVOCACY** – Describe how your grant proposal will advance student voice and positive student interdependence by supporting team building and student collaboration.

**SCHOOL-WIDE RELATIONS** – Describe how your grant proposal will increase commitment from your colleagues and school-community stakeholders for the teaching and learning process.

**SCHOOL-FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS** – Describe how your grant proposal will integrate parental personal strengths and positive experiences into the teaching and learning environment.

**COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY** – Describe how your grant project allows for networking and coalition building with community groups/organizations utilizing a lens of racial and social justice.

**FUTURE ORIENTED** – Describe how your grant proposal will enhance students’ skills and build their capacity for future success.

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## Appendix B

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# IFT Grant Application Outline

**SAMPLE**

This is an example of the online application questions. It is recommended that you compose your responses in a word processing program (you can also use this [google template](#)) then cut and paste the text into the online application.

### Section 1: General Information

- **Grant Project Coordinator Information**

Name

Personal Email (The IFT will not send communication to a school district email.)

Phone

- **Local Association Information**

Local Association Name

Local Association President Name and Email

### Section 2: Project Information

- **Project Information**

Project Title

Project Summary (100-200 words)

Grant Type

Student Grade Levels Impacted

Estimated Number of Students

- **School Site Information**

School Sites Impacted

- **Team Members**

Name

Personal Email (The IFT will not send communication to a school district email.)

Phone

School Site

### Section 3: Project Proposal

**SAMPLE**

Use the Strength-Based Equity Matrix as a guide to answer the following questions.

**Equity Matrix Factors (300 words max per question)**

- **Factor 1: Student Centered**  
Describe how your grant proposal will promote student agency, ownership, responsibility, and self-reliance.
- **Factor 2: Student Equity**  
Describe how your grant proposal will promote learning opportunities and access for all students.
- **Factor 3: Student Advocacy**  
Describe how your grant proposal will advance student voice and positive student interdependence by supporting team building and student collaboration.
- **Factor 4: School-Wide Relations**  
Describe how your grant proposal will increase commitment from your colleagues and school-community stakeholders for the teaching and learning process.
- **Factor 5: School-Family Relationships**  
Describe how your grant proposal will integrate parental personal strengths and positive experiences into the teaching and learning environment.
- **Factor 6: Community Solidarity**  
Describe how your grant project allows for networking and coalition-building with community groups/organizations utilizing a lens of racial and social justice.
- **Factor 7: Future Oriented**  
Describe how your grant proposal will enhance students' skills and build their capacity for future success.

**Section 4: Project Budget, Timeline, and Agreements**

- **Budget and Timeline**

Budget (Attachment Required)

Timeline (Attachment Required)

Application Consents

- Have you discussed this project with your site administrator?
- Do any elements of your project require your school district's permission or special permits?
- Consent – acknowledge accuracy of application information and agree to privacy policy.



# Appendix C

## Sample Budget

Item Description	Quantity	Amount	Total
Culturally Relevant Novels	250	\$10.00	\$2,500.00
Art Supply Kits	50	\$25.00	\$1,250.00
Journals	50	\$7.00	\$350.00
Student Incentive Awards (Cannot include monetary payments or gift cards)	100	\$5.00	\$500.00
Substitute Release – 3 teachers	1 day	\$150.00/day	\$450.00
Collaboration and Planning Stipend (Only allowed for Project Coordinator and/or team members)	2/People	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$6,050.00</b>

### Notes:

1. Be sure to review our [IFT Do's and Don'ts and Funding Guidelines](#) before preparing your budget.
2. The items listed in your budget should support the accomplishment of the activities in your proposal.
3. Your budget is a guide, and you can include approximate amounts for the items you want to purchase. Be sure to include tax and shipping.
4. Your budget total must reflect the amount of grant funds you are requesting.
5. Make sure your budgeted line items are clear and specific. Your budget should not include items such as miscellaneous or other.
6. If you include stipends for collaboration and planning, they must be limited to no more than \$1,000 per person and with no more than \$500 per person disbursed each calendar year of the grant implementation.

## Appendix D

### Sample Timeline

Date	Activity/Event Description
August 2025	Purchase Materials and Resources - novels, journals, and art supply kits
	Administer Reading/Interest Survey
September – October 2025	Students Select Novels to Read/Literature Circles
November 2025	Students Share Their Reading - Book Talks
	Literacy Night – Parents/Community
December 2025 – January 2026	Students Select Novels to Read/Literature Circles
February 2026	Students Share Their Reading - Book Trailers
	Literacy Night – Parents/Community
March – April 2026	Students Select Novels to Read/Literature Circles
May 2026	Students Share Their Reading – Book Posters
	Students Create Visual Reflection Board
	Literacy Awards Presentation
	Literacy Celebration – Parents/Community

**Notes:**

1. The details of your timeline should be consistent with the information you included in your proposal.
2. The format of your timeline can be weekly, monthly, or quarterly but should reflect activity for the entire grant implementation year.
3. Your timeline should include the specific activities your students will engage in.

## Appendix E

### CTA IFT SUMMARY REPORT FORM

PROJECT NAME	GRANT RECIPIENT / PROJECT COORDINATOR
<p>Describe the major activities of the project during the school year.</p> <p>Describe how the project met the identified needs of your students.</p> <p>Describe how the project involved other partners.</p> <p>Describe how the project produced the intended outcomes.</p> <p>Carry over: If you have any remaining funds for the current year and are requesting to carry them over for one additional year, please briefly describe why an additional year is needed.</p>	
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>

*Email a PDF copy of this completed IFT report to [IFT@cta.org](mailto:IFT@cta.org) by July 31, 2025.*

# Appendix F CTA IFT GRANT

## FINANCIAL REPORT FORM

**Instructions:**

Please include all your grant project expenses on this form. If you have any remaining funds, please let us know via email when submitting your completed financial report if you are requesting to utilize these funds for an additional year.

<b>PROJECT NAME</b>			
<b>PROJECT COORDINATOR</b>			
<b>2025-2026 Amount Awarded: \$</b>			
<b>DATE</b>	<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>LOCAL CHAPTER/ASSOCIATION:</b>			
<b>DUE JULY 31, 2026</b>	<b>SIGNATURES</b>	<b>DATE (Month, Day, Year)</b>	
, Current President(s)			
, Project Coordinator			

*Email a PDF copy of this completed IFT report to [IFT@cta.org](mailto:IFT@cta.org) by July 31, 2026.*

# Appendix G

## Project Coordinator Check-In Meetings Support for Grant Recipients/Project Coordinators

We want to ensure that the implementation of your grant project is successful; therefore, we are committed to providing you with support throughout the school year. To accomplish this, we require all Grant Recipients/Project Coordinators to meet with the IFT Program Consultant at least **twice** during the 2025-2026 project implementation year. These check-ins will provide an opportunity to collaborate with other Project Coordinators, ask questions, and discuss the progress of your project implementation. If you are awarded an Impact grant, you are encouraged to invite your team members to attend the check-in meetings with you.

You must attend at least **one** check-in meeting between September 2025 and December 2025 and another check-in between February 2026 and May 2026. You may schedule and attend as many check-ins as you like for additional support. You will need to schedule your check-in meetings using our online Booking Site.

### Check-In Options

Meetings will be conducted in a group format virtually on Zoom, 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

If you prefer to meet individually, you can schedule a one-on-one meeting.

Meeting dates for Fall 2025 will be emailed in August 2025.

Meeting dates for Spring 2026 will be emailed in January 2026.