



AMERICAN CIVIC EDUCATION  
TEACHER AWARDS

2015 TEACHER APPLICATION

## 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 conduct an annual program to honor American teachers of civics, government, and related fields. Titled the American Civic Education Teacher Awards (ACETA), 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.

## Goals of the Program

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

ACETA 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, and
- ✦ each geographic region of the United States

## Selection Committee and Sponsoring Organizations

The committee that selects 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

## 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 ACETA.

The selection committee does not have a single model teacher in mind, but selects 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 February 2015, applications will be distributed by the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress, and the National Education Association.
- ✦ May 15, 2015, is the deadline for teachers to submit applications to the relevant address on page 5.
- ✦ In June, three outstanding teachers will be selected and the announcement will be made.
- ✦ The winning teachers will provide a five- to six-minute video that will be posted online on the websites of the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress, and the National Education Association.

## 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.

## Students

Additional consideration is given to teachers of students in the following categories:

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

## Geographic Diversity

A criterion for deliberation is to recognize teachers representing diverse geographic regions of the United States, including teachers from rural, suburban, and urban areas.

## Applicant Eligibility

- ✦ Applicants must be full-time classroom teachers of grades K–12. Substitute teachers and part-time teachers are not eligible
- ✦ Applicants must plan to teach full time during the 2015–2016 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.
- ✦ Selected teachers must agree to submit a video of their classrooms to capture the essence of their unique teaching abilities.
- ✦ Selected teachers must agree to participate in publicity efforts for ACETA.

## Application Requirements

- ✦ Applicants must fully complete all components of the enclosed forms and submit them together, postmarked by May 15, 2015. 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 or Internet broadcast.

## General Application Instructions

Each applicant must complete the following forms to be considered for the 2015 **American Civic Education Teacher Awards**. 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 information requested on Application Forms A1 and A2 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 to a reviewer who might not be an expert in pedagogy or in the vernacular of the profession. 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 type your self-portrait on the front and back of the form. 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: one from your principal and two from teaching colleagues. Type your name on the top of each letter of recommendation before giving it to the evaluator. If your 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 and one copy in an envelope, sign his or her name across the seal, and return the envelope to you.
- 4** Your application must include your résumé, not to exceed two pages.
- 5** Send one copy of the completed application (biographical information and self-portrait) and a résumé with the three sealed envelopes containing the letters of recommendation by the U.S. Postal Service or by common carrier to the relevant address on page 5. All materials must be submitted together and postmarked no later than May 15, 2015. Retain a copy for your records.
- 6** Applicants will be notified via email that their applications have been received.
- 7** The results of the selection process will be announced in mid-May 2015 on the websites of the three sponsoring organizations.

## Mail to

Applications should be submitted to one of the three sponsoring organizations:



**American Civic Education Teacher Awards**  
Center for Civic Education  
5115 Douglas Fir Rd., Suite J  
Calabasas, CA 91302



**American Civic Education Teacher Awards**  
Center on Congress at Indiana University  
1315 E. Tenth Street, Suite 320  
Bloomington, IN 47405



**American Civic Education Teacher Awards**  
c/o Jennifer Locke  
Teacher Quality Department  
National Education Association  
1201 16th Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

## Checklist

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

- Application Form completed, checked for accuracy, and signed.
- Application Form completed, checked for accuracy, and signed.
- Applicant's résumé (maximum two pages).
- 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 postmarked no later than May 15, 2015, and mailed to one of the three sponsoring organizations.

## 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, letters of recommendation, and résumé. Extraneous materials (cover letters, articles, or videos) 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 Important note: All information must be typed. Please limit your answers to the spaces provided.

Name (as you would like it to appear in print)

Home Address

City State Zip Code

Home Telephone School Telephone

Email Address

## 2 School Information

School at Which You Currently Teach (complete school name)

Address

City State Zip Code

Telephone

Principal's Name Telephone

Email Address

Superintendent's Name

School District

Address

City State Zip Code

Telephone

Email Address

## 3 Educational Background

Universities or Colleges Attended

Location

Dates Attended

Field of Study

Degree/Credential Earned

## 4 Sponsoring Organization (Please check one box only for the organization to which you are applying.)

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

## 5 School and Applicant Profile

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

School year begins on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

School year ends on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

School is in session daily from \_\_\_\_ A.M. to \_\_\_\_ P.M.

### 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

\_\_\_\_\_

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- NEA
- NCSS
- Other educational organization \_\_\_\_\_

### 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 and 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 selected information on the application form to the press if I am chosen 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 in the application instructions if I am selected to participate.

Signature *(sign in ink)*

Date



## 6 Applicant's Self-Portrait

Applicant Name

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

## 7 Applicant's Self-Portrait (page 2)

Applicant Name

# 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 selects and honors elementary and secondary school teachers working with classes representing the diversity of America's 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 awards 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. Also comment on how well the teacher would serve in various forums as a spokesperson for the profession.

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

To be eligible for selection, the teacher must secure official authorization to videotape his or her classroom. Furthermore, participation in this program may require the teacher to be absent from classes for up to three 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 May 15, 2015. This letter will not be returned to the applicant after ACETA's selection process.

Letters should not exceed one page in length.

Principal's Name

School

Address

Home Phone

Office Phone

Email Address

Length of time you have known the applicant

Principal's Signature

*By signing this letter you are granting permission to the teacher to videotape his or her classroom and on other school property.*

# LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION Teaching Colleague 1

Applicant Name

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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 videotape their communities and classrooms for ACETA and possibly one or more documentary programs.

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.

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 May 15, 2015. This letter will not be returned to the applicant after ACETA's selection process.

Letters should not exceed one page in length.

Colleague's Name

Teaching Assignment

School

Address

Home Phone

Office Phone

Email Address

Length of time you have known the applicant

Colleague's Signature

# LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION Teaching Colleague 2

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 selects and honors elementary and secondary school teachers working with classes representing the diversity of the America's 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.

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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.

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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 May 15, 2015. This letter will not be returned to the applicant after ACETA's selection process.

Letters should not exceed one page in length.

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