Over the years, we have received many questions about what constitutes a good Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program (TCFP) proposal. The program brochure indicates that proposals will be judged based on substance, clarity and feasibility as well as the potential to cultivate meaningful renewal. Reviewers recognize that meaningful renewal is personal in nature and can take many different forms. Therefore, it is important for an applicant to clearly explain how his/her project will result in renewed energy, enthusiasm and creativity for them.

Applicants should carefully review the TCFP description and application instructions to ensure that their proposed projects fit well within the intents and purposes of TCFP and as a guide in effectively addressing all required elements of the proposal. In the past, reviewers have identified several hallmarks of successful proposals that we hope you will find helpful.

**Preparation**

Reviewers are impressed by proposals that show evidence that the project and corresponding activities have been well planned and that applicants have done their homework. This includes diligent research about the opportunities and activities available to pursue the project, contacts with relevant individuals and organizations, and considerable thought about the kinds of experiences that applicants are seeking through their renewal projects.

**Passion**

Passion is an important element of successful proposals. Reviewers often refer to the ability to hear applicants’ voices speaking from their hearts directly to the reviewers. This may be apparent when someone proposes a project around a talent or interest that has languished due to everyday demands and stresses or perhaps through a proposal to pursue something new that has captured the applicant’s imagination and desire for new learning experiences. Reviewers are drawn to proposals that convey enthusiasm, imagination, creativity, and evidence of “individual stretch.” They also appreciate proposals that articulate how an educator’s renewal is expected to directly or indirectly impact their schools and classrooms.

**Educator as Learner**

Reviewers have found that compelling proposals place the educator in the role of learner and risk-taker. Renewal projects that take applicants out of their comfort zones and into learning new skills appeal to reviewers. Reviewers also appreciate
an indication that such departures can help educators understand their students’ experiences and frustrations.

**Timeline**

The timeline should reflect a series of activities over a substantial period of time that are clearly focused and tightly connected to the project’s goals. Although there are no specific requirements as to how long the project should take or when activities should occur, the Endowment has observed that it takes a substantial block of time, usually a minimum of four to six weeks, to achieve the kind of renewal envisioned by TCFP. Summer and other extended school breaks may be ideal for the majority of project activities.

If the project includes travel, it is important that sufficient time is spent at the proposed destination(s). Some applicants may find a long time in one location refreshing, while others may prefer to visit a variety of locations for shorter stays.

Reviewers suggest that projects with most of their time devoted to activities generally are stronger than those with only two or three weeks of activities and the remainder of the time devoted to documentation. Although documentation, such as PowerPoint presentations, sorting photographs, editing video, collating scrapbooks, etc., may be important, it should not consume the majority of project time.

**Recommendation Letters**

Reviewers prefer letters that reference the project and the educator, rather than generic letters of support. If school permission is required for follow-up activities, approval should be clear in one of the recommendation letters. Note: Principal approval is not required for proposals from teachers, guidance counselors and library/media specialists. However, principals and assistant principals must include a statement affirming their district’s or governing board’s approval for participation in the project.

**Attention to Detail**

Reviewers are favorably inclined towards proposals that are easy to read and follow. A successful proposal follows the application procedures and proposal format in order. It is grammatically correct and carefully proofread. The case for the proposed project should be stated concisely within the page limit allowed, and the activities, timeline and budget should be compatible. Budgets should be accurate and all necessary attachments must be submitted.
Proposal Submission

Please prepare application packets in the following order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single applicant/single grant</th>
<th>Group application/multiple grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal: Items 1 – 5 (5-page limit)</td>
<td>Proposal: Items 1 – 5, including a separate TCFP Proposal Cover Sheet for each applicant (Only one Cover Sheet counts towards 5 page limit.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 6: Statement of future plans</td>
<td>Item 6: Separate statements of future plans for each applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 7: Letter(s) of recommendation</td>
<td>Item 7: Separate letter(s) of recommendation for each applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 8: Teaching license (Principals must also include statement affirming board’s approval of participation in project.)</td>
<td>Item 8: Teaching licenses for each applicant. (Principals must also include statement affirming board’s approval of participation in project.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mail the original and two complete copies of your proposal (including all attachments referenced above) to:

Barbara S. DeHart  
Program Director, Education  
Lilly Endowment Inc.  
P.O. Box 88068  
Indianapolis, IN 46208-0068  
(317)924-5471

Proposals that do not include the original and two copies of the proposal and attachments are considered incomplete. All proposal materials become the property of the Endowment and will not be returned.