



The FriendsOffice W.R.I.T.E. (We Reward Innovative Teaching Endeavors) Program is a concept designed to attract and retain passionate, qualified and talented teachers within our schools. W.R.I.T.E. is a grant program with an annual value of up to \$1500, intended to be used on products available through FriendsOffice. It is not associated with any government or public entities.

In this program, teachers have the opportunity to apply for a grant that will enhance the tools available to them within their own classroom by writing a short essay on the topic of **“If I had [this product from FriendsOffice], I could do [this].”** Completed applications and essays will be reviewed by the FriendsOffice Board of Directors.

The grant will be based upon particular guidelines laid out within this document. The Grand Prize value of the award is \$500 in school and classroom supplies from FriendsOffice. There will be a First Runner Up who will receive up to a \$300 grant, a Second Runner Up who will receive up to a \$200 grant and even a Third Runner Up, who will receive up to a \$100 grant.

Guidelines

I. Synopsis:

Teachers will choose a topic or teaching style that is novel and innovative in thinking in which they currently utilize within their classroom(s). This idea must showcase their individuality, as well as their desire to improve their students’ studies. They should also communicate the products they could utilize that are available through the FriendsOffice catalog. They will report on their innovation and the specific products necessary to better this innovation within in an essay addressed to the Board of Directors of FriendsOffice. ***Essays must have a minimum of 500 words and a maximum of 1500 words.***

The time frame of their essay can take place at any given point within their teaching career. Concrete examples of students or staff that they have impacted, as well as supplies they have used or would like to use are recommended. Quotations from the individuals they may have had an impact on (i.e. eye witnesses) can be present in their essays.

All essays and submission forms are due to FriendsOffice by January 31st of the current school year (i.e. if you are in a 2016-2017 school year, essays and submission forms are due by January 31st, 2017).

II. Purpose: The purpose of the W.R.I.T.E. Program is to support teachers and their classroom needs, as well as their efforts pertaining to the novel or innovative teaching style they implement daily. This program may bring to light the high degree of teacher involvement in our school buildings and communities and should show how they can benefit from supplies available through FriendsOffice.

III. Definitions

- A. "Core content area" means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics, and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Also included are early childhood education, elementary education, middle school level education, secondary school education, and special education.
- B. "School Year" is defined as the nine (9) month period from September 1 – May 30.
- C. "Teacher" is an individual who is teaching in a K-12 classroom in a public or private school and holds a "professional" (i.e., not initial, temporary, transitional, interim, graded, warrant, special subject or permit) teaching certificate as defined by the State Department of Education.
- D. "Professional" certificate is issued to candidates who hold an initial or critical needs teacher certificate, or who have met requirements under the interstate reciprocity agreement, upon their successful completion of:
 - (1) at least two years of continuous, successful in-service teaching, including an induction year
 - (2) the appropriate Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) examination
 - (3) the formal performance evaluation of professional teaching

IV. Teacher Eligibility: Initial Application

- A. To be eligible for the W.R.I.T.E Program, the applicant must:
 - (1) Be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident who meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statutes
 - (2) Be a citizen as set forth by the state
 - (3) Hold a "professional" teaching certificate as defined and conferred by the State Department of Education
 - (4) Be under current contract as a teacher in a school system
- B. In addition to the above requirements, applicants must also:
 - (1) If the \$500 grant is received, the recipient must teach within a school for at least one year following completion of the scholarship grant year and to refund the scholarship amount if the one-year teaching commitment is not honored
 - (2) Be able to demonstrate their innovative teaching philosophy or regimen, as well as the products they could utilize from FriendsOffice.
- C. The applicant must also certify that he/she has not defaulted and does not owe refunds on any Federal or State financial aid.
- D. The applicant must submit the W.R.I.T.E. Program application by the stipulated deadline and comply with all the directions contained therein.

V. Teacher Eligibility: Continuing Application

- A. In order to continue eligibility for additional W.R.I.T.E Program funds in subsequent years, the applicant must comply with the following:
 - (1) Submit the application for another W.R.I.T.E. Program Grant by the stipulated deadline and comply with all the provisions contained therein.

VI. Amount/Duration of Award

- A. Applicants may receive up to \$500 per fiscal year which runs from July 1-June 30. Funds must be used for supplies and elements needed and necessary within their classrooms above and beyond what their current school system offers them. Funds will be directly added to the applicants account with FriendsOffice upon successful completion of all Program requirements and notification that they were a winner.

B. Any teacher may receive up to three grants within a five year period, assuming that demand exceeds availability of funds. If demand does not exceed availability of funds in any given year, this restriction will be waived.

C. Applicants must re-apply annually and provide evidence of having met continued eligibility requirements.

VII. Scholarship Grant Disbursements

A. Each year, the grant recipient may receive scholarship grant funds not to exceed \$500 per fiscal year. Awards will be made by school year in accord with the funding priorities for the program established by the Board of Directors of FriendsOffice.

B. Scholarships will be processed after the conclusion of each semester and after transcripts and signed W-9 forms have been received.

C. Only one grant per applicant may be distributed each fiscal year. Duplicate applications will not be processed.

VIII. Appeals Procedure

A. A denied applicant may appeal the decision by forwarding written documentation supporting the reason for the appeal to the Board of Directors of FriendsOffice.

B. A grant recipient who does not meet the continued eligibility criteria for renewal of the W.R.I.T.E. Program forfeits continued participation in the program and may request an appeal based on extenuating circumstances.

C. A grant recipient wishing to appeal any non-renewal decision based on extenuating circumstances must submit the following source documents to the Board of Directors of FriendsOffice by no later than the established appeals deadline (January 31) for the academic year for which the scholarship is requested:

- (1) A completed application for appeal as described below
- (2) A letter requesting an appeal describing the extenuating circumstances
- (3) A letter from the recipient's principal supporting the appeal
- (4) Other supporting documentation for the appeal

IX. Submission

Application forms and essays should be completed online at www.friendsoffice.com or forwarded with your statement and two references by January 31st of the current school year to the following address:

FriendsOffice

Corporate Headquarters

Attn: Marketing

2300 Bright Road

Findlay, Ohio 45840

info@friendsoffice.com

800.427.1704 ext. 1127