Chapters Redefining Education Advocacy Through Empowerment (CREATE) Grant

CREATE Grants are chapter and/or statewide community service projects that positively promote the NEA Student Program through strategies designed to enhance public education, increase advocacy and outreach to communities; support younger educators involvement in the Association; and supports the development of innovative approaches to engagement. CREATE projects can make a positive difference for communities. Today’s students are faced with tremendous obstacles to learning and survival. There is a direct correlation between what happens in communities and what happens in schools. NEA Student Program members who volunteer in CREATE projects are able to help communities overcome many of the challenges students face and provide them an opportunity to lead productive lives.

Each chapter-only project must involve a NEA Student Program campus chapter, a NEA local affiliate, and a community organization. Each state-wide project must involve a NEA Student Program state chapter, the state student leadership, a community in which the project is occurring, community partners, and a NEA constituency (NEA-Retired, ESP, Higher Ed, or Active).

CREATE grants will be awarded for projects that align with the three core values of the NEA Student Program:

- **Teacher Quality (up to $3,000):**
  - Projects involving pre-professional development and job preparation. At local meetings and workshops, state conferences, and national symposiums, our members encounter professional development opportunities: guest speakers on classroom management, experts on testing and practitioners sharing tips on smoothly running science labs. Job preparation comes in the form of resume workshops, portfolio tutorials, mock interviews and new teacher panels. Student Program publications and websites share teacher quality information relevant to our members, including certification requirements and resources for working with special needs children. Student members and chapters partner with Local Associations to enhance in-the-classroom opportunities and secure “real world” insights into the education profession. Students shape their college curriculum by serving as change-agents on boards and committees. Our members’ involvement in the NEA Student Program increases their ability to become quality educators.

- **Community Outreach (up to $3,000):**
  - Projects involving how NEA Student Program members engage the people and environment around them; making an impact in our communities — locally and globally — and valuing the meaningfulness of such involvement. Our members learn about communicating with parents, experience partnering with local businesses, and find grant support through Chamber of Commerce consortiums. We design and implement projects as diverse as after-school tutoring programs, Harry Potter learning carnivals, and Senior Citizen dances. New teachers who are NEA Student Program Alumni are more successful in helping their students achieve because they know how reaching out to the community provides them access to material and human resources.
- **Political Action (up to $2,000):**
  - Projects which include both the realization that political and legislative issues impact the education world and the initiative to get involved. We celebrate issue awareness around vouchers, IDEA funding, and state-mandated new teacher rights. We share information with peers, family and community. We sponsor voter registrations, get-out-the-vote activities, contact elected officials, help elect pro-public education officials, and lobby our local, state and national legislators. By educating each other, organizing activities and publicizing our involvement, we are making an impact.

NEA members gain a number of benefits from volunteering in **CREATE** projects. Student Program members become better prepared for their education careers. Practitioners and future educators have an opportunity to work side by side. The project can enhance the Association’s credibility in the community and on campus. NEA’s more than 3 million members know that winning community support for schools and universities is an effort that must begin with the Association. Community support is an essential ingredient in any program to achieve excellence. Look upon **CREATE** projects as an opportunity to make a difference in children’s lives, provide a needed community service, and strengthen the Association.

**Grant Guidelines**

~ **Teacher Quality:** Total - $20,000
   - Grants awarded up to $3,000 each

~ **Community Outreach:** Total - $20,000
   - Grants awarded up to $3,000 each

~ **Political Action:** Total - $10,000
   - Grants awarded up to $2,000 each

All applications must be submitted electronically—no exceptions!

**Online Applications:**
The application can be accessed using the following link:  
http://pf.nea.org/forms/fr/rpic/student-grant/new

Applications must provide contact names and email addresses of the State Student Organizer, Campus Advisor (if applicable) and the primary contact person on the grant. Copies of the application must be sent to all parties listed.
Launching a CREATE Project

Launching a CREATE project need not be a grand-scale endeavor. Whether you’re sponsoring a one-time holiday party for disadvantaged children; operating a daily tutoring program; providing member pre-professional workshops; or organizing an education/political rally, etc., you are fulfilling a community need. That’s what is important.

Members of an NEA Student Program chapter can establish a rewarding project if members are enthusiastic, willing to put in the time, and committed to following through to the end.

So, you’ve determined that your local or state chapter is ready. A question may come to mind: How do I initiate the project? Before beginning, assess all the variables. What do you want to do? How many people are willing to help? What materials and financial resources will you need? What will determine success? CREATE is typical of most projects in its initial stages, but its focus makes the project special. Instead of building a birdhouse or running a bake sale, you will be serving the community.

Here are a few suggestions on how to proceed:

1. Build interest. One person can’t make a successful CREATE project. Begin by discussing the initiative with your local Association leaders. Place CREATE on your executive committee’s meeting agenda. Once you establish interest among your leaders, organize a committee to get started.

2. Explore ideas and research. At the first committee meeting, review the suggested topics for projects included in this guide. Discuss how these or other projects would address local needs. Survey your members’ interests. Consider what projects will give student members experiences that they can’t get in the formal teacher education program. Talk about projects that would provide positive visibility. Be sure to include your chapter advisor in all discussions. Find out how other NEA local affiliates are involved in the community. PreK-12 teachers, education support, and retired members can be especially helpful in putting your project together. They know the community, and they probably have worked on similar projects. Your UniServ office can help you make contact with these NEA affiliates. Identify social service agencies and community groups. Explore what they do. You may find that they are involved in projects of interest to your chapter. In this case, much of the start-up work is already done.

3. Make decisions. Once you’ve sifted through the information, decide what type of CLASS project you’d like to launch. Be realistic. Choose a project that your local Association can handle. Decide who will be responsible for what. Determine timelines for development and implementation.

4. Plan and organize. What is necessary to make your project work? Volunteers are a key ingredient. If you have an organized chapter, you simply need to recruit volunteers. You may also need to designate the following positions:
   - A project coordinator has responsibility for putting all the pieces together and producing a community-oriented, student-based CREATE project.
   - An organizer has primary responsibility for recruiting, training, and retaining project volunteers. This is a big job! The size and scope of the project will determine how best to divide the various functions among your members and other volunteers.

5. Follow-up and evaluate. Be sure to send thank you notes to member volunteers, community contributors, and media contacts. Include copies of any newspaper clippings of the project.
Evaluate the project. If you plan to continue it, keep notes on how you can make improvements.

What should you do if you want to initiate a CREATE but do not have an NEA Student Program chapter on your campus?
- Contact your NEA state affiliate or the NEA Student Program office, neasp@nea.org, to request a Handbook for Local Leaders.

How can NEA Active and Retired members (or Association staffers) initiate a CREATE project?
- Begin by helping to establish a local chapter (if none exists) on a college campus. Once the chapter is operating, you will have a base from which to operate a CREATE project. Contact the NEA Student Program office, neasp@nea.org, to request a copy of the Handbook for Local Leaders.

Things to Keep in Mind
1. Be sure your project is coordinated with your state or local education Association. Remember that the project must fulfill at least one of the tenants of the application, teacher quality, community outreach, or political action.
2. The project must include the names of the local Associations (including both the Active and Student chapters) and the community organization(s) involved. Local Associations can be K-12, retired, higher education or education support professional locals.
3. There must be a detailed description of the project that includes a budget. The grant application will be considered incomplete if all required information is not provided. The grant proposal should also include goals, projected outcomes, timeline and an evaluation mechanism.
4. Clearly explain what money you need and how you will use it. Remember, this is a volunteer program, so you may not use the money to pay participants, salaries, or speakers. You may, however, use money to offset some transportation costs. The budget may include expenses for materials, training, resources, publicity, maintenance, and other items specifically related to the project. The Student Program office makes funding decisions and may revise the budget you submit.
5. A copy of the grant application MUST be sent to the State Student Organizer, State Association President, State Student President/Chairperson, and the Campus Advisor (if applicable). Failure to do so will cause the application to be incomplete and will not be considered for funding. The grant award should be used for start-up and maintenance. But we encourage you to create a project that can garner additional financial support from other groups as well.
6. Expect to receive a response to your grant application within four weeks. The person responsible for the grant will receive a confirmation if the application has been approved. A copy of the grant evaluation will be provided at that time and must be returned no later than July 1st. If you receive a grant, your NEA state affiliate will remit a check to your local chapter account.
7. Be sure to complete each section of the application. Be specific in your responses. Make sure your project meets all of the criteria. Indicate measurable outcomes and an evaluation component. Finally, don’t be afraid to ask for help.
POSSIBLE PROJECT IDEAS

You might want to consider the following list for project ideas. Other local volunteer organizations or campus groups may also be a source of useful projects.

- Sponsor an education rally.
- Organize a state-wide Outreach to Teach project.
- Organize a special education awareness series to recruit education majors.
- Organize a unity and awareness event.
- Develop a student leadership award and banquet.
- Organize a statewide organizing effort to establish Future Educator clubs in middle and high schools.
- Sponsor a leadership conference in conjunction with a local school district to recruit minority students into education.
- Present a “Bringing Teaching To Life” event through your College of Education.
- Promote the teaching profession through forums, workshops or campus conferences.
- Sponsor a book drive.
- Conduct a fundraiser for school supplies and materials.
- Work with a center for at-risk children.
- Get involved in a drug abuse prevention program.
- Volunteer in an adult learning program.
- Start a literary circle.
- Volunteer to help with programs such as the Special Olympics.
- Have a fundraiser for an established organization such as the March of Dimes.
- Sponsor a Big Brother/Big Sister program/
- Host skill-building seminars on topics such as baby-sitting, childcare, or conflict resolution.
- Work with Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops.
- Work with enrichment centers for gifted and talented students.
- Visit the local hospital’s children’s ward and read to children.
- Adopt a Classroom.

Discuss these ideas with your volunteers. The projects listed here may spark an idea for a project that is more appropriate for your community. Remember what is most important. Your goal is to make a difference in your community.

For additional information, please contact the NEA Student Program, neasp@nea.org or call 202-822-7176.