



# TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER  
TOLERANCE.ORG

## 2020 GUIDELINES

# Award for Excellence in Teaching

The biennial Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching recognizes five classroom educators from across the United States who employ research-based practices that help students develop positive identities of themselves, cultivate empathy and appreciate different perspectives, think critically about injustice, and develop the skills to take action against injustice. Educators' practices should demonstrate a commitment to thoughtful inquiry and critical thinking, equity and justice.

The 2020 winners will each receive a \$5,000 cash award and an expense-paid trip to historic Montgomery, Alabama, to be honored at the Awardee Summit.

### Award Criteria

To be considered for the award, you must:

- ☞ Be a K–12 classroom teacher;
- ☞ Teach in the United States in a public, charter, private or parochial school;
- ☞ Provide concrete examples and artifacts of your teaching practice;
- ☞ Secure approval to interview and film you and your students in your school;
- ☞ Contribute to projects that demonstrate best practices in anti-bias education over the two-year tenure of the award;
- ☞ Be available to travel to Montgomery, Alabama, for the Awardee Summit, in October 2020.

Teaching Tolerance will film awardees in their classrooms, allowing their expertise to serve as a model for the half-million educators in the Teaching Tolerance community. Awardees must be able to participate in an interview at their school and to secure permission to conduct classroom filming with students during the spring of 2020. The filming may take up to two days and aims to capture your best practices in cultural responsiveness and excellence in teaching. Additional footage from classroom visits will be used in Teaching Tolerance professional development resources, social media and marketing, and made available to Teaching Tolerance's nationwide community.

### Selection Criteria

A selection committee that consists of practicing and veteran educators and scholars will review 10 finalists' portfolios and select the five awardees. To qualify as a finalist, educators must demonstrate excellence in teaching practices that align with the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards. The goals of these standards are to help students:

- ☞ develop positive views of themselves and their identities;
- ☞ appreciate and celebrate the different perspectives and lived experiences of their peers;
- ☞ recognize and think critically about injustice;
- ☞ have the skills and disposition to take action against injustice.

For further explanation of these standards, see the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards.

[www.tolerance.org/frameworks/social-justice-standards](http://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/social-justice-standards)

The achievement of these goals will be evaluated through the categories of instruction, classroom management, family and community engagement, and teacher leadership. For further explanation of these categories please see Teaching Tolerance's *Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education*.

(<https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/critical-practices>)

### Instruction

- ☞ Uses curriculum to reflect the rich diversity of the world, providing both windows and mirrors through text selection, teaching strategies, and student tasks. Generates critical student engagement, analysis and voice.
- ☞ Draws attention and makes direct connections to historical and present-day injustices. Highlights in their instruction important figures, groups and movements that have pushed back against injustice.
- ☞ Creates opportunities for collaborative and cooperative learning among students.

### Classroom Culture

- ☞ Creates an inclusive environment that welcomes all students. Students demonstrate respect through formal and informal interactions. Classroom environment is reflective of diverse perspectives.
- ☞ Fosters a community where students are empowered and supported in working toward ending injustice.
- ☞ Fosters an environment where all students feel affirmed and have access to opportunities. Classroom is a safe space.

### Family & Community Engagement

- ☞ Displays cultural sensitivity in engaging students, their families and communities. Values family and community knowledge and wisdom as ongoing classroom resources.
- ☞ Facilitates opportunities for engagement in student-led initiatives for families and stakeholders.
- ☞ Honors familial connections and contributions and actively involves guardians as partners in learning. Uses a variety of methods so that all families and stakeholders can be active members of the school community.

### Empowering & Liberatory Practice

- ☞ Consistently acknowledges and identifies areas for growth. Works to improve practice through strengthening all areas of teaching practice.
- ☞ Identifies areas for growth within their school community and works to address those areas outside their classroom. Sets an example for students, colleagues and community members through professional and interpersonal relationships.
- ☞ Challenges injustice, intervenes when instances of bias or prejudice arise. Works to build alliances among colleagues in sharing work of combating bias and prejudice and fostering a more equitable environment. This can involve writing on social media, blog, etc.

### Scoring

Each bullet point is scored on a 1–5 scale, with 5 being the highest. The highest possible score is a 60.

## **Award Schedule**

### **November 1, 2019:**

Online application opens.

### **December 8, 2019:**

Online application closes. Only complete applications will be considered.

### **January 2020:**

Teaching Tolerance notifies 10 finalists.

### **February 3, 2020:**

Each finalist submits a portfolio that includes:

- a 100-word biography;
- one original lesson plan that demonstrates excellence in the award criteria;
- a 250-word reflection on student work, including examples;
- a short teacher-created video (3–5 minutes) that demonstrates the candidate’s proficiency in the award criteria.

### **February–March 2020:**

The awards committee reviews finalists’ portfolios and selects five awardees.

### **Early spring 2020:**

Awardees and their principals are notified. Teaching Tolerance staff coordinates classroom interviews and filming.

### **May 2020:**

Winners are publicly announced.

### **October 2020:**

Winners are honored at a celebration in Montgomery, Alabama.