

Teachers Community Fund (TCF)

A community-driven direct-aid effort for teachers and support staff in AAPS

The Goal

Establish a time-limited, community-driven, direct-aid funding mechanism to help keep teachers and support staff in their jobs through the end of the contracted school year.

The Why

Dramatic mid-year increases to health care premiums have significantly worsened already unsustainable and lagging compensation for many AAPS teachers and support staff. Mid-year departures will only further destabilize our schools. We seek to reinforce “the floor” while other advocacy and negotiating efforts work to shift policy and practice. Any additional or longer term purpose for this effort will be informed by community input.

Quick Links

[Get Support](#) (on hold) | [Give Support](#) | [Help The TCF Team](#)

Latest Update

We do not maintain a public facing social media account or website. We will communicate all individual correspondence directly by email. All general updates will be dated and shared on this document. The most current update will be noted here, up top. Previous updates will be moved to the bottom of the document.

5/12/2025

TCF has completed our 10th funding cycle as well as our current funding goal! We are so grateful to have been able to help facilitate \$35,640 of fund sharing for 45 teachers and staff in the AAPS district. We know the need is great and persists and will continue

to advocate for adequate compensation and benefits for those who give so much to our kids and schools. Our team will be closing our regular administrative process for the summer. We will continue to talk with staff and members of the AAEA about what is needed in the future. We are open to feedback and ideas about how to best leverage the infrastructure built for this effort in service of other community care efforts. If you'd like to talk / share / connect with us, please do reach out @ tcfundinaaps@gmail.com

Additional Information

The Context

The AAPS 23-24 budget crisis added incredible strain to an already fraught situation. Dramatic mid-year health care insurance increases in 24-25 have pushed teachers and support staff into an even more precarious situation. [Many teachers have reported that staying in this district will be impossible given the current imbalance of compensations and costs.](#) Come January many staff are facing extremely difficult choices about their own financial security and well being.

We fear an understandable exodus of teachers and support staff who can no longer afford to stay. We know that larger changes need to occur for teaching and working in AAPS to become a sustainable and viable career choice. We support but are not directly involved in the advocacy and negotiating efforts that are underway to attain some necessary policy and practice shifts. In the meantime, we are mobilizing community support to help those teachers most impacted by this latest unexpected, undue financial blow. Our teachers and support staff should not be suffering, nor can our schools weather the loss of more teachers and staff.

The TCF is designed to try and help consistently, across a number of months, with smaller fund amounts. We give each month based on the capacity of donor support. Funding amounts one month don't guarantee the same amount going forward, although that is our goal. As of now we aren't able to support larger one-time needs.

The Plan

The Timeline

- December 2024. Parent group establishes admin committee; aligns with teachers and community partners; solicits need and community funding capacity; creates administrative and communications infrastructure
- January - June 2025. TCF runs, matching teachers and staff in need with those in the community wanting to help.
- March - June 2025. TCF will solicit feedback and suggestions about the usefulness of this model for our community and invite collaboration.

The Basic Structure

- The Teachers Community Fund is a mechanism for direct aid. It does not hold any funds; it makes connections.
- AAPS teachers and support staff request support.
- Parents, community members, public citizens pledge support.
- The admin team will match requests for support with pledges for support, keeping all information confidential apart from the necessary information to connect supporters to teachers and support staff.
- Funds will be directed to specific teachers prioritizing need and avoiding any potential conflicts of interest (examples: parent supporter from Pittsfield will be directed to teacher recipient at Tappan, and parent supporter of a HS Band student will be directed to a teacher at an elementary school.)
- Community supporters will give directly using Venmo, CashApp, Zelle or Gift Card.
- Teacher or Staff Member will confirm receipt with admin team.

FAQs

Who is leading and organizing this effort?

Parents from the AAPS community, including: Adelaide Lancaster, Becca Hogan, Kelly Pfeifer, Susannah Keller are managing this effort. No one who is a part of this team is employed by AAPS. We are AAPS parents volunteering solely in our roles as parents and not in any other capacity or on behalf of any organizations we may be part of.

How does the Admin Team function?

The Admin Team is committed to the following norms while leading this short-term effort:

- We will each individually lean away from advocacy efforts related to the district at this point in time, meaning we will generally not make public school board comments or talk to the press. We will focus on this mutual aid network.
- We will operate by way of a consensus decision-making model.
- We will speak only for ourselves as individuals and not as representatives of other AAPS- or school-related organizations.
- We are not affiliated with the AAEE or any other teacher or staff organization.
- We will hold all data confidential and share only minimal contact information to connect supporters directly to teachers and staff.
- We will maintain transparency by sharing information via our public web page.

Who is eligible for funds?

Student-facing Ann Arbor Public School employees below the administrator level. Anyone who expresses need or financial challenges. Examples, Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Occupational Therapists, etc.

How does an employee qualify for money? Is there an application?

There is no application. There is a short survey where we are gathering important information to facilitate the sharing of funds. We believe teachers and other staff when they tell us they are struggling.

Who will have access to my data?

Only the TCF admin team members named above. Giving details (amounts and preferred way of receiving support) will be shared directly with the community donor unless the AAPS teacher or staff member elects otherwise.

Where is the money held?

Money is not held anywhere. Instead, the TCF admin team will direct supporters to give directly to those in need of support by way of Venmo, Cashapp, Zelle or Gift Cards as necessary.

I haven't ever participated in mutual aid...where can I learn more?

Mutual aid is an organizational model where voluntary, collaborative exchanges of resources and services for common benefit take place amongst community members to overcome social, economic, and political barriers to meeting common needs. Here are a few articles and resources that provide more background and explanation. [Here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#).

I'm a teacher/staff member, how can I sign up to receive support?

Please do! [You can sign up to get support here.](#)

How do I donate or sign up to support a teacher or staff member?

If you or someone you know wants to contribute to TCF to keep teachers in our district, please [fill out this survey](#) and we will be in touch with you soon.

Can I donate directly to teachers at my kids' school?

While we understand the desire to contribute directly to your own school or classroom, the goal of TCF is to support the entire community through aiding teachers across the district. When we receive a pledge to give, we will purposefully direct that supporter to a teacher outside their school community.

Is my donation tax deductible?

No. The TCF is set up to be direct support from individuals to other individuals; there is no 501c3 or tax-exempt status for your gift to a teacher in the community.

I worry this won't be enough!

It won't be. Many substantial and more sustainable changes need to be made to secure AAPS teachers and staff. Therefore, there is value in strengthening our collective community giving muscle. And there is value in continuing to advocate for change through other community initiatives and organizations (see below.)

What else can I do to improve conditions for teachers and staff?

- Follow statewide actions and advocacy.
- Follow [updates and actions from the AAEA \(Teachers' Union\)](#), Fred Klein AAEA makes comprehensive statements at most [Board of Education meetings](#).
- Get involved in your childrens' school's PTO/PTSO and the [AAPS PTO Council](#).
- Support our most vulnerable schools by supporting the PTOC Equity Fundraiser.
- Support our most vulnerable students through these [Winter Giving Lists](#).
- Follow and join the efforts of [AAPS Community United](#).

Previous Updates

4/4/2025

TCF has completed its seventh (3/21) and eighth (4/4) fund matching cycles. Across the last two pay cycles 24 recipients received \$3,630, bringing our total amount of funds shared to \$30,470.

Unfortunately due to limitations in what we've been able to raise, TCF has had to shift our giving formula. As we are not able to sustain continued monthly support for each recipient we will

instead work towards allocating the same amount of total financial support for each recipient who has already requested funding.

The maximum that some recipients have received has been \$800. Recipients who have already received this amount from TCF have been told that we are not able to continue providing funding. Recipients who have not yet received that amount from TCF have been told that, going forward, we will inform them each month how much we are able to contribute towards this goal amount.

We know this is a stressful time for many and that many are experiencing financial uncertainty. Should funding commitments and capacity shift, we will adjust accordingly. For now, our request form is closed and we are focused on meeting our current goal: helping each recipient receive a total of \$800 in fund matches. The total amount of additional funds required to meet this goal is approximately \$5,000 between now and the end of the school year. We can do it!

We have great appreciation for all those working so hard to serve and support our kids and community, and wish we could do more to help ease the burden. We will continue to post updates here corresponding to each pay cycle.

3/7/2025

TCF completed its sixth fund matching cycle. 19 recipients received a total of \$3,150 in matched funds from 9 donors, bringing our total amount of funds shared to \$26,840.

Unfortunately due to limitations in what we've been able to raise, TCF has had to shift our giving formula. As we are not able to sustain continued monthly support for each recipient we will instead work towards allocating the same amount of total financial support for each recipient who has already requested funding.

The maximum that some recipients have received has been \$800. Recipients who have already received this amount from TCF have been told that we are not able to continue providing funding. Recipients who have not yet received that amount from TCF have been told that, going forward, we will inform them each month how much we are able to contribute towards this goal amount.

We remain hopeful that the legislation that would help alleviate this financial burden for teachers, and which remains in political limbo - now in the courts, will be signed into law. [On 2/28 a MI judge ruled that the bills should be presented to the Governor for signature but did not order that it be done.](#)

We know this is a stressful time for many and that many are experiencing financial uncertainty. Should funding commitments and capacity shift, we will adjust accordingly. For now, are focused on meeting our current goal: helping each recipient receive a total of \$800 in fund matches. The total amount of additional funds required to meet this goal is approximately \$7,000 between now and the end of the school year. We believe it's possible.

We have great appreciation for all those working so hard to serve and support our kids and community, and wish we could do more to help ease the burden. We will continue to post updates here corresponding to each pay cycle.

2/21/2025

TCF completed its fifth fund matching cycle. 11 recipients received a total of \$3,040 in matched funds from 18 donors, bringing our total amount of funds shared to \$23,690.

We are glad to know that a slight raise and steps have been agreed upon between the district and the union. Impacted teachers received these increased funds during this pay cycle as well.

Unfortunately due to limitations in what we've been able to raise, TCF has had to shift our giving formula. As we are not able to sustain continued monthly support for each recipient we will instead work towards allocating the same amount of total financial support for each recipient who has already requested funding.

The maximum that some recipients have received has been \$800. Recipients who have already received this amount from TCF have been told that we are not able to continue providing funding. Recipients who have not yet received that amount from TCF have been told that, going forward, we will inform them each month how much we are able to contribute towards this goal amount.

We remain hopeful that the legislation that would help alleviate this financial burden for teachers, and which remains in political limbo - now in the courts, will be signed into law. [On 2/28 a MI judge ruled that the bills should be presented to the Governor for signature but did not order that it be done.](#)

We know this is a stressful time for many and that many are experiencing financial uncertainty. Should funding commitments and capacity shift, we will adjust accordingly. For now, are focused on meeting our current goal: helping each recipient receive a total of \$800 in fund matches. The total amount of additional funds required to meet this goal is approximately \$10,000 between now and the end of the school year. We believe it's possible.

We have great appreciation for all those working so hard to serve and support our kids and community, and wish we could do more to help ease the burden. We will continue to post updates here corresponding to each pay cycle.

2/7/2025

TCF completed its fourth fund matching cycle. 19 recipients received \$4,860 from 32 donors, bringing our total amount of funds shared to over \$20,000. This is tremendous and we are heartened to hear of the impact these funds are making.

And yet, teachers and staff continue to experience significant need. In our next round of fund matching, the need is significantly higher than the pledged giving capacity. Unfortunately, TCF will have to prioritize new requests as well as those who have so far received less funding.

We are glad that the unions have negotiated a slight wage increase that will be retroactive for this last year and will be paid to teachers and staff in the next pay cycle. While teachers and staff still have a long way to go towards sustainability but every dollar helps.

TCF has, conservatively, only engaged about 1% of AAPS families as donors. We know we can do so much more to help, but need your assistance in reaching more people.
Please consider raising your hand if you haven't already - all sized contributions matter.

You can help us spread the word by also forwarding this invitation to your friends, neighbors, and PTOs!

I'm inviting you to join me in participating in the Teachers Community Fund, which is getting direct financial support to the AAPS teachers and support staff most in need and at-risk of having to leave our district. This effort was started in response to the tremendous hike in health care costs for AAPS employees. I am part of a group of community members making direct monthly donations to help keep these teachers and staff here through the year. So far we've shared over \$20,000 in support but more hands make lighter work and the need is great. Will you join us? You can learn more here and sign up here: <http://www.tinyurl.com/tcfinaaps>

The bill from the Michigan legislature that would bring some relief remains in political limbo, with potentially a lengthy path ahead for resolution. It has been reported that Senate Democrats have sued Senate Republicans over the 9 stalled bills, including the one which would raise the amount of health care funding employers are required to pay public employees. We are hopeful on behalf of all teachers and students that this resolves soon.

1/24/2025

TCF completed its third fund matching cycle. 20 recipients received \$7,090 from 49 donors, bringing our total amount of funds shared to nearly \$16,000.

Teachers and staff continue to experience significant need. The bill from the Michigan legislature that would bring some relief remains in political limbo, with potentially a lengthy path ahead for resolution.

Our community has been generous in their response to this call to action. And we are facing a \$4,000 gap in stated need and previously pledged commitments for this next fund matching cycle.

We have, conservatively, only engaged about 1% of AAPS families. We know we can do so much more to help, but need your assistance in reaching more people.

[Please consider raising your hand if you haven't already - all sized contributions matter.](#)

Please also forward this invitation to your friends, neighbors, and PTOs!

I'm inviting you to join me in participating in the Teachers Community Fund, which is getting direct financial support to the AAPS teachers and support staff most in need and at-risk of having to leave our district. This effort was started in response to the tremendous hike in health care costs for AAPS employees. I am part of a group of community members making direct monthly donations to help keep these teachers and staff here through the year. So far we've shared nearly \$16,000 in support but more hands make lighter work and the need is great. Will you join us? You can learn more here and sign up here: <http://www.tinyurl.com/tcfinaaps>

1/10/2025

TCF completed its second fund matching cycle aligned with the 1st January AAPS paycheck. 11 recipients received \$2,460 from 16 community donors. January 10th's paycheck is the first one that reflects the additional health care costs for teachers and staff. Many are already experiencing the strain of this financial loss.

Some hopes had been higher with the passing of HB 6058 which was designed to raise the threshold of contributions towards health care that public employers would have to make for their employees. [Despite being passed this bill and others are now being held in political limbo.](#) While immediate impacts to AAPS were unclear and haven't been publicly delineated this bill has represented hope for some not-too-far-off reprieve. Financial bargaining between the AAEEA (teachers union) and the district continues to be underway. In the meantime, teachers are suffering and so too are their students and school communities.

We are now preparing for our third round of fund matching to align with the 2nd January AAPS paycheck. Previous recipients who have not received funds in January are eligible as well as those who requested funds before January 10th. New requests received after January 10th will be considered for February dispersals.

In order to sustain monthly support, we are seeking 37 more donors to raise their hands to support our teachers once or on-goingly. [Please join us here.](#)

Need has been demonstrated across the district, as has support from our community. Historically, most AAPS-related giving and support opportunities are school specific. So it is *wonderful* to see our community's care and generosity extend across our whole community.

12/30/2024

TCF completed its first fund matching cycle aligned with the 2nd December AAPS paycheck. 17 recipients received \$6,420 from 27 community donors. Our next fund matching cycle is underway for dispersals between January 5th and January 10th.

Our goal is to sustain monthly support, with recipients receiving funds on or around either the 1st or 2nd paycheck date of each month.

January 10th's paycheck is the first one teachers and staff will receive that reflects the additional health care costs. Many are anxiously preparing for a big financial hit. Because bargaining is still underway, *potential* additional financial support from AAPS will not be determined in time. Because it is unclear what potential additional financial support is or would have been possible, many teachers have had to select plans that have significantly higher deductibles.

In order to sustain monthly support, we are seeking 40 more donors to raise their hands to support our teachers once or on-goingly. [Please join us here.](#)

Need has been demonstrated across the district, as has support from our community. Historically, most AAPS-related giving and support opportunities are school specific. So it is *wonderful* to see our community's care and generosity extend across our whole community.

We wish teachers and families rest and restoration during this final week of winter break.

12/20/2024

The TCF team has begun to receive applications - both requests for support as well as financial pledges. Some funding requests that were designated as an ASAP need are being fulfilled in the coming days. We are otherwise working on infrastructure that will enable support to begin in January. We are so grateful that our community is showing up to demonstrate care for those experiencing significant financial distress. As of now, our aggregate need outpaces our pledges by 40%. **Our goal is to connect with 50 more willing community donors by the end of January.** [Please raise your hand to support and stabilize our amazing AAPS teachers and support staff.](#) We are in touch

with those who have submitted information via the forms. If you have specific questions, please email us.

12/12/2024

We plan to gather interest from both those who need support and those who want to pledge support through the remainder of December 2024. We hope to start matching needs and offers in January 2025.

Contact Information

Questions or Suggestions can be directed to the TCF admin team here:

tcfundinaaps@gmail.com