



Texas Retired Teachers Foundation

TRAINING SESSION 2020

TRTF: Overview

What is the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation?

- The Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) is the philanthropic arm of the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA).
- Founded in 1988, the Foundation's original purpose was to raise funds to build the home office for TRTA in Austin. After the successful completion of the TRTA building, the Foundation was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
- TRTF supports several charitable programs and one educational program: Beginning Teacher Scholarships, Classroom Assistance Grants, "A Helping Hand," the Disaster Relief Fund and the Legacy Campaign as well as the Lehr-Pritchard Endowment Fund.

Charitable Programs: *supporting retired, current, & future educators*

- ***Beginning Teacher Scholarships*** are awarded to recent college graduates who are about to begin their first year of teaching. All recipients must be relatives of a TRTA member.
- ***Classroom Assistance Grants*** are awarded to public school teachers who demonstrate daily commitment to public education and Texas children through the creation of programs, events or other learning platforms.
- ***“A Helping Hand”*** provides public education retirees with financial assistance for a one-time special need or short-term hardship. Recipients include anyone who is eligible to receive an annuity from TRS.
- ***Disaster Relief Fund*** provides grants to both retired and active educators struggling after natural disasters (such as hurricanes).
- ***The Legacy Campaign*** creates resources such as videos that focus on the economic and social impact the TRS pension fund has on the state and its residents and promotes building a strong public education legacy in Texas.

TRTF Liaisons and Representatives

Liaisons:

Serve at the District level

Representatives:

Serve at the Local Unit level

- **Speak on behalf of the Foundation** at functions such as local and district meetings and answer basic questions about the Foundation.
- **Provide donation cards** and/or brochures to local unit members as needed; accept donations from local unit members or other people in the community.
- **Serve as “A Helping Hand” representative**, which includes providing applications to retirees in need, assisting them in completing paperwork, and forwarding all paperwork to TRTF.

Speaking on behalf of TRTF

Resources for you:

- One-page Summary
- Resource Guide (FAQ) (download at www.trtf.org)
- Annual Calendar of Events (general calendar of TRTF activities, included in Resource Guide)
- Website (www.trtf.org)
- *The Ledger* (TRTF's electronic newsletter. Please e-mail sarah@trta.org if you would like to sign up.)
- Talking Points (may be downloaded from the TRTF website, and may be shortened/customized to suit your needs and time constraints)

Donations

- Donations may be designated for any of the Foundation's charitable programs: Beginning Teacher Scholarships, Classroom Assistance Grants, "A Helping Hand," Disaster Relief Fund, or the Legacy Campaign.
- Donations may be made in honor or in memory of someone.
- **Resources:**
 - ❖ *Donation cards (website: www.trtf.org)*
 - ❖ *Brochures (TRTF state office) (call 1.800.880.1650 or email help@trtf.org to request)*
 - ❖ *Copies of The VOICE*
 - ❖ *Or donate online at www.trtf.org/donate*

Serving as “A Helping Hand” Representative

Program launched statewide in October 2010!

- “A Helping Hand” documents
 - ❖ *Application*
 - ❖ *Guidelines*
 - ❖ *Instructions for applicants*
 - ❖ *Instructions for you (“A Helping Hand” representatives)*



“A Helping Hand” brief training

- **The purpose of “A Helping Hand”**

- ❖ *To provide public education retirees with financial assistance for a one-time special need or short-term hardship.*

- ❖ *Financial assistance is defined as a grant, not to be repaid by the individual receiving the funds.*

“A Helping Hand” continued...

- **Who can apply?**

- ❖ *Any person who is receiving or is eligible to receive an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS).*

- ❖ ***Including:***

- ❖ *Retired educators or beneficiaries*

- ❖ *Retired education support personnel (food service, transportation, custodial staff, etc.)*

- ❖ *Anyone eligible for a TRS benefit who is not yet retired*

- ❖ *Any of these who are or are not members of TRTA*

“A Helping Hand” continued...

- Grants are awarded from this program for EMERGENCY NEEDS only.

Emergency need is defined as a short-term financial hardship caused by unexpected or extenuating circumstances such as natural disasters, illness, injury, accidents, or crisis that requires quick action.

- Examples:
 - ❖ *Food, rent, or utilities*
 - ❖ *Emergency transportation and vehicle repair*
 - ❖ *Medical/dental expenses*
 - ❖ *Expenses related to home repairs or vandalism*

“A Helping Hand” continued...

- What is **NOT** considered an emergency?
 - ❖ *Non-essentials*
 - ❖ *Financing vacation*
 - ❖ *Paying fines or legal expenses*
 - ❖ *Liquidating or consolidating debt*
 - ❖ *Purchasing a home*
 - ❖ *Making home improvements for aesthetic purposes only*
 - ❖ *Covering bad checks or paying credit card bills*

Qualifying Documentation

- **Emergencies *must* be verified with qualifying documentation such as:**

- ❖ *Bills*

- ❖ *Estimates*

- ❖ *Collection notices*

- ❖ *Other documentation demonstrating the financial cost incurred or that will be incurred by the grant seeker.*

“A Helping Hand” continued...

- **How much aid may the grant seeker request?**

- ❖ *TRTF will award grants in any amount up to \$1,000 per grant application*

- ❖ *TRTF may consider grant applications in which the requested amount exceeds the \$1,000 limit**

**approval of such a grant shall not set a precedent*



The applicant should indicate on the application form how much aid is needed and attach qualifying documentation (bills, estimates, collection notices, etc.) to the request.

“A Helping Hand” continued...

- **How often may a grant seeker request aid?**

- ❖ *Applicants may request aid as many times as they wish within a calendar year; however, the awarding of an initial grant in no way implies or guarantees that a subsequent grant application will be approved.*

Disclaimer: TRTF reserves the right to deny any application that does not meet the program guidelines or that does not reflect or further the values of the Foundation as expressed in its mission.



“A Helping Hand” continued...

How does a grant seeker apply?

- The individual in need (referred to as the Grant Seeker) submits the application to the Local Unit or District
- A concerned friend, family member, or citizen submits the application on behalf of the Grant Seeker to the Local Unit or District
- *NOTE: At times, a grant seeker may contact the TRTF office by phone and send the application directly to TRTF*

“A Helping Hand” continued...

What is your role in the application process?

- Make applications, guidelines and instructions available to grant seekers (available **only** through the TRTF state office or in the Resource Guide)
- Accept applications from grant seekers and verify:
 - ❖ Application is complete (especially Section 1)
 - ❖ Qualifying documentation is included
- You (HH Representative) must sign the application
- You must forward completed applications ONLY to TRTF in a timely manner
 - ❖ Preferably via email (sarah@trtf.org), fax (512) 476-1003, or FedEx (TRTF, Attn: A Helping Hand, 313 E. 12th St. Ste. 220, Austin, TX 78701).

“A Helping Hand” continued...



To request a “**A Helping Hand**” application with guidelines, please contact Sarah Richardson at the TRTF office!

1 (800) 880-1650

Ext. 104

sarah@trta.org

“A Helping Hand” continued...

What happens next?

- Once the application is received by TRTF, TRTF will contact the Grant Seeker verifying receipt of application
- A committee will review the application
 - ❖ *you may receive a phone call to discuss the application*
- If the application is approved, TRTF will forward funds directly to the vendor to whom money is owed
- All Grant Seekers will receive a letter from TRTF informing them of the final status of the application

“A Helping Hand” continued...

The importance of confidentiality

- All District Presidents/Foundation Liaisons and Local Unit Presidents/Foundation Representatives must complete and return a **Confidentiality Agreement** to TRTF



The information provided by the Grant Seeker or by a person submitting the application on someone's behalf should always remain confidential, and should not be shared with anyone other than TRTF board members and staff or TRTF legal counsel

The Future of TRTF

The Lehr-Pritchard Endowment Fund

- TRTF has created an endowment fund in honor of past trustees Mike Lehr and Tom Pritchard
- *An endowment is a fund established by a donor or donors in which the original and subsequent contributions are held in perpetuity or for a specific term of years.*
- *It is invested to provide regular, predictable income for a specified charitable purpose and to maintain or increase its purchasing power.*
- *The contributions are not spent; usually only a portion of the earnings is expended.*

The Lehr-Pritchard Endowment Fund

- 2016 marked the 25th year since TRTA, under the leadership of Mike Lehr and a number of other individuals, came up with a strategy called the “CPI Catch-Up” plan to help retirees receive benefit increases to make up for significant losses due to high inflation rates of the 1980’s.
- Mike worked tirelessly to get the Texas Legislature to pass the first CPI Catch-up in 1993 and then continued to work to get additional retiree benefits in 1995, 1997, 1999 and 2001.
- By 1999, retirees benefits had been fully adjusted for inflation and were ahead of inflation by 10%. In 2001, adjusted benefits exceeded inflation by 15%. During 1999 and 2001, the multiplier was also increased so that all retirees from 2001 on will receive benefits that are 15% higher than the amount would have been prior to the CPI Catch-up initiative.
- **Total value to all current and future retirees: \$14.8 billion!**

The Lehr-Pritchard Endowment Fund

- The likelihood for significant benefit increases for retirees going forward is very low.
- Over time, it is expected that the number of retirees needing assistance will increase as the purchasing power of fixed annuities is eaten away by inflation.
- Former TRTF President and long-time trustee Tom Pritchard was instrumental in developing and launching TRTF's most recognizable program, "A Helping Hand."
- To ensure that adequate resources are available in the future to fund the "A Helping Hand" program, TRTF has created the "Lehr-Pritchard Endowment Fund" with earnings from the endowment being dedicated to "A Helping Hand."

The Lehr-Pritchard Endowment Fund

In April 2019, TRTF met its minimum required donations of \$200,000 to establish the endowment!

The fund will raise over \$2 million in which to generate earnings to help fund the “A Helping Hand” initiative!

Questions and Answers



Sarah Richardson



Administrative Assistant



Texas Retired Teachers Foundation



1 (800) 880-1650 Ext. 104



sarah@trta.org