

Program Information

Is the program aligned to standards?

Yes! The lessons and project How-to Guides are NGSS-aligned. Each aligned standard is listed at the top of the individual lessons and How-to Guides.

What are the program requirements?

Participating groups must consist of high-school-aged students who go through the four required lessons and spend at least 15 hours working on the project (including design and implementation). Additionally, the participating teacher must submit the following documents via their [Connect portal](#):

- A signed MOU
- Student roster with names and grade levels of participating students
- A W-9 for the participating school or organization
- A completed How-to Guide
- An invoice
- A final program report

What is the program timeline?

We are flexible in terms of program timing. The only timeline requirements are that groups must finish the program in the same school year they began, with the Final Program Report due on May 31st. There are funding distribution deadlines on the 10th of each month, August through April. If a group submits their completed project How-to Guide and invoice, and attends a meeting with Walking Softer staff by the 10th of the month, then funds will be distributed by the end of that month. Please contact us directly if you have questions or require a different timeline.

Eligibility

What teachers are eligible for program participation?

In the Walking Softer Education Program context, “teacher” or “educator” refers to someone who can facilitate the four required lessons and project implementation with a group of participating students. This can include formal and non-formal educators, such as educators at afterschool programs.

What grade levels are eligible to participate?

All students in grades 9-12 can participate in the program, but only participating juniors and seniors are eligible to apply for the scholarship.

What is a “participating group”?

A “participating group” is a teacher and a group of students (we recommend a minimum of five and a maximum of 40) who go through the four required lesson plans and implement a community-based project after completing a project “How-to Guide” together.

A participating group is entitled to up to \$2,000 in project funding, and the teacher is entitled to a \$1,000 teacher stipend. Each participating group needs to submit all required documents (MOU, W9, How-to Guide, invoice, and Final Program Report), and the facilitating educator must attend two meetings with Walking Softer (one after signing the MOU, and one after submitting the How-to Guide and invoice and before receiving the funds).

Examples of participating groups could be a biology class that goes over the lessons and works on the community-based project together in class, or an afterschool club that meets twice a month and completes the program over the course of the year.

Can a participating group work on more than one project?

We recommend each group work on one project together. If students in one participating group have different interests, they can work on multiple projects; however, they would need to split the \$2,000 of project funding between those projects.

Can a school/organization have multiple groups participate?

Yes, however, to be considered distinct participating groups, they would need to go through the lessons and project separately and submit their own project documents. An example of a school or organization having multiple participating groups would be if a school had a “green club” and an “environmental engineering club.” Both would meet separately to go through lessons; each club would work on its own project.

Can one teacher lead multiple participating groups?

Yes, one teacher can lead multiple participating groups. However, to be considered leading different participating groups, the teacher would have to facilitate the lessons and project process separately with those distinct groups of students.

For example, if one teacher facilitated the lessons during three different biology class periods and three different projects with those different biology classes, that would be considered three participating groups. In this case, the teacher would be entitled to three teacher stipends since they are effectively doing three times the amount of work.

Can multiple teachers lead one participating group?

Yes, multiple teachers can co-lead one participating group. However, we will only provide one \$1000 teacher stipend, which the teachers are responsible for splitting.

Funding And Invoicing

When will my group receive funding?

When your group receives funding depends on when the How-to Guide and invoice are submitted. See the following table for details:

Teacher Stipend + Project Funding Invoice Received by:	Funding Distribution Date: *or following business day	Final Program Report due by:
August 10, 2026	August 31, 2026	May 31, 2027
September 10, 2026	September 30, 2026	
October 10, 2026	October 31, 2026	
November 10, 2026	November 30, 2026	
December 10, 2026	December 31, 2026	
January 10, 2027	January 31, 2027	
February 10, 2027	February 28, 2027	
March 10, 2027	March 31, 2027	
April 10, 2027	April 30, 2027	

Where will the funds be sent?

The teacher stipend and the project funds are sent to the participating teacher’s school or organization. The school or organization will be responsible for distributing the teacher stipend and project funds appropriately. Funds are not sent directly to teachers individually.

How will the funds be sent?

The funds will be mailed or sent via a wire transfer, depending on what you select during the invoice submission process.

Reporting

What does the participating teacher need to submit?

Participating teachers are responsible for submitting a completed MOU with a student roster with all participating students' names and grade levels, a How-to Guide the participating students have completed, an invoice, and the Final Program Report.

Are the completed How-to Guides evaluated?

Groups should complete How-to Guides to the best of their ability. Walking Softer does not use the quality of the How-to Guide to determine funding, however Walking Softer will provide feedback in the required meeting after groups submit the How-to Guide and invoice, and in some cases may require groups to resubmit their How-to Guide based on feedback prior to receiving funds.

What is the purpose of the Final Program Report?

The Final Program Report is not an evaluation of the teacher, students, or project. It is intended for Walking Softer to get feedback on how to improve the program in the future, and asks questions about student outcomes, lesson implementation, project facilitation, program processes, and overall program quality. We estimate it will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Privacy And Data Collection

What data does Walking Softer collect about students?

The only student data we collect is each participating student's name and grade level. We collect this information to check for scholarship eligibility, and this data won't be shared externally.

We utilize a CRM called Apricot by Bonterra, which is used most often by social/caseworkers. Apricot uses usernames and passwords to prevent unauthorized access and to restrict user access within the application. Each unique user account is assigned access to programs and permission sets to restrict access to data and features in the system.

The software meets current HUD Domestic Violence, HMIS, and Social Security Administration data management and security protocols, as well as the minimum required FERPA and HIPAA standards. For more information, please see Apricot’s [Security and Hosting](#) page.

Thank you for your interest in Walking Softer Education. If you’d like to register for the program, the first step is to fill out the [intake form](#) on our [website](#). If you have any questions, we are happy to set up a virtual meeting! Please reach out to education@walkingsofter.org to arrange a time.