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Four Virginia School Divisions Receive Federal Teaching American History Grants

The U.S. Department of Education is awarding Teaching American History grants totaling \$4,448,914 to four Virginia school divisions to improve American history instruction by expanding the content knowledge of teachers and promoting effective teaching strategies.

“The projects supported by these grants will enhance the instruction of history in our classrooms,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said. “While the focus of these grants is professional development for our teachers, the ultimate beneficiaries are the students who will receive instruction from these educators.”

In applying for funding from the Teaching American History grant program, school divisions agreed to partner with one or more public or private institutions with expertise in American history, such as universities, museums, libraries, historical societies and foundations. The Virginia school divisions receiving grants are as follows:

- Chesterfield County Public Schools — \$1,449,457 over five years to implement a “Learners to Leaders Institute” that will provide 30 to 40 teachers to become content experts and teacher-leaders through mentoring opportunities with professional historians, study trips to historic sites, and other professional development. The program is being developed in partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Historical Society, University of Virginia and numerous historic venues.
- Frederick County Public Schools — \$999,547 to develop and implement a multi-state project called “Building Bridges: Connecting Citizenship through American History” that will provide 96 hours of history instruction and 74 hours of history-related activities for 75 to 100 teachers in an 11-division consortium. The consortium includes eight Virginia divisions — Frederick County, Clarke County, Warren County, Shenandoah County, Rockingham County, Rappahannock County, Page County and Winchester — and three West Virginia divisions — Berkeley County, Jefferson County and Morgan County. The consortium is partnering with Virginia’s James Madison University and West Virginia’s Byrd Legislative Center at Shepherd University.
- Loudoun County Public Schools — \$999,910 for the “Exceptional Americans, Everyday Americans” program designed to provide experiences at Mount Vernon, Library of Congress, National Archives, National Museum of American History, and United States Supreme Court for more than 150 teachers. George Mason University’s Center for History and New Media and the Department of History and Art History are partnering to support the exploration of topics including war and society, understanding freedom and America on the world stage.
- Wythe County Public Schools — \$1 million to create a “My History Partner” program of individualized professional development and instructional improvement for 40 teachers in a 16-division consortium. The Southwest Virginia Public Education Consortium — comprising Bland County, Bristol, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Galax, Grayson County, Lee County, Norton, Russell County, Scott County, Smyth County, Tazewell County, Washington County, Wise County and Wythe County public schools — is partnering with the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education to adapt the My Teaching Partner Consultancy model.

Nationwide, 124 school districts were selected to receive 2010 Teaching American History awards totaling \$115.3 million. Virginia school divisions have received more than \$44.5 million since the Teaching American History grant program began in 2002.

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