



# Building Community

DURING  
COVID-19

We care. We fight.  
We show up. We vote.  
We are all in this together!



*A Union of Professionals*

Randi Weingarten

PRESIDENT

Lorretta Johnson

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

## **OUR MISSION**

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

## INTRODUCTION

As our country faces three crises—a health crisis, an economic crisis and a justice crisis—we will rise to the challenge together. It's on us, using our collective voices as we've done in past crises, to rewrite the rules to form a more just, equitable society and to insist that leaders truly value and invest in the public schools, public health infrastructure and public services that anchor our communities. This gets to the heart of who we are as a union: **we care, we fight, we show up and we vote.**

“I know that our students will need additional supports when we finally are able to return to our schools, classrooms and learning centers. To prepare for that day ... we’ve been working collaboratively with teachers and administrators to put together a plan to address the needs of our students.”

**JEFF WHITTLE,**

a 25-year veteran special education paraprofessional and president of the Macomb Intermediate Federation of Paraprofessionals.

**For guidance on safely reopening, visit [aft.org/reopen-schools](https://aft.org/reopen-schools).**

## BUILDING OUR COLLECTIVE POWER

Our collective action strengthens our democracy and ensures a better life for all. We build power by engaging members and communities around our shared values and aspirations—including an America free from systemic racism and inequality. We build power by creating community inside and outside the union, through coalitions, campaigns and connections. And together, we accomplish what is impossible to achieve alone.

Here are some ways you can boost the power of our collective actions.

- Spread the word about essential AFT member benefits: trauma counseling, available at **[aft.org/benefits/trauma](https://aft.org/benefits/trauma)**; and student debt relief, available at **[meetsummer.org/aft](https://meetsummer.org/aft)**.
- Get answers to your health, safety, workplace and financial questions by calling the AFT at 800-900-2343 or by emailing us at [outbreak@aft.org](mailto:outbreak@aft.org).
- Help guide your community's reopening plans using the AFT's *Plan to Safely Reopen America's Schools and Communities*, available at **[aft.org/reopen-schools](https://aft.org/reopen-schools)**.
- Stay informed by participating in the AFT's telephone town halls. Visit **[actionnetwork.org/forms/aft-tth-subscription](https://actionnetwork.org/forms/aft-tth-subscription)** to sign up.
- Make sure your network knows about the heroic work our frontline members are doing every day by sharing stories from **[voicesfromthefrontline.org](https://voicesfromthefrontline.org)**.
- Honor members, and their loved ones, who lost their lives during the pandemic. The Albert Shanker Institute's memorial site is a place for the whole AFT family to gather virtually: **[shankerinstitute.org/commemorations](https://shankerinstitute.org/commemorations)**.
- Ensure that your voice is heard as healthcare, education and other employers respond to the pandemic. Resources on collective bargaining, emergency personnel and memoranda of understanding are available at **[aft.org/covid19-leaders](https://aft.org/covid19-leaders)**.
- Join our network of activists to receive alerts on how your voice can help address everything from securing personal protective equipment to increasing economic supports for workers: **[aft.org/action](https://aft.org/action)**.
- Get involved in protecting immigrants, including supporting those who were brought to the United States as children, and calling for compassionate immigration reform, by visiting **[aft.org/our-community/immigration](https://aft.org/our-community/immigration)**.

- Multiply the AFT's power to continue initiatives like distributing books to children in homeless shelters. See **[aft.org/covid-19-response-fund](https://aft.org/covid-19-response-fund)** for details.
- Read about members' experiences and share your experiences at **[aftvoices.org](https://aftvoices.org)**.
- Protect America's people and values by helping elect Joe Biden and other leaders who will work with us to build a better, more equitable and just America. Resources to help you be active in the 2020 process are available at **[aftvotes.aft.org/2020-take-action](https://aftvotes.aft.org/2020-take-action)**.

# RESOURCES FOR OUR MEMBERS AND OUR COMMUNITIES

## AFT on the Pandemic

### **[aft.org/coronavirus](https://aft.org/coronavirus)**

The AFT's resources cover everything from face masks to free food for students. These also include webinars about how to convert classes to remote learning, and opportunities to influence coronavirus policy in Congress.

## Share My Lesson

### **[sharemylesson.com/coronavirus/remote](https://sharemylesson.com/coronavirus/remote)**

The AFT's Share My Lesson helps educators and parents access free resources, lesson plans and ideas on distance learning for all grades and content areas. It also has suggestions for reaching students with disabilities and English language learners, and for dealing with stress and mental health issues during this time.

## AFT e-learning

### **[aftlearning.org](https://aftlearning.org)**

Through this web-based platform, AFT members can access courses designed for educators, union leaders, nurses and health professionals, PSRPs and public employees. AFT members can receive a certificate of completion at the end of each course, and our facilitated and self-paced courses meet the needs of busy professionals.

## AFT Teacher Leaders Program

### **[aft.org/education](https://aft.org/education)**

The Teachers Leaders Program prepares educators to facilitate discussions of the issues that affect our profession—both locally and nationally. The program brings together a select group of teachers, and empowers them to assume active leadership roles in policy discussions in their schools, unions and communities.

## AFT Innovation Fund

### **[aft.org/bigbet](https://aft.org/bigbet)**

The AFT Innovation Fund, open to affiliates at the state and local levels, identifies, nurtures and brings to scale union and educator-led innovations in public education. The majority of the fund's resources are distributed as grants to affiliates, and AFT staff provide technical assistance through monthly calls, site visits and connections to experts and resources.

## **AFT Academics**

### **[aftacademics.org/covid-19](https://aftacademics.org/covid-19)**

Solidarity Academy webinars offer essential information and provide a forum for discussion on issues affecting higher education employees during the coronavirus pandemic.

These include how to quickly convert classes to high-quality remote learning, how the coronavirus is affecting adjunct and contingent faculty and how the pandemic is affecting international students.

## **First Book**

### **[firstbook.org/coronavirus](https://firstbook.org/coronavirus)**

First Book is a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that all children in need have books of their own. While schools are closed, it has focused on reducing inequities in learning opportunities by distributing 8 million books to children who don't have reliable access to online learning.

## **Wide Open School**

### **[wideopenschool.org](https://wideopenschool.org)**

Wide Open School is a free collection of online learning experiences and activities for preK-12, curated by the editors at Common Sense and organized by grade band and subject. Everything on Wide Open School centers around the schedule, which is programmed each "school" day for each grade band.

## **Colorín Colorado**

### **[colorincolorado.org/coronavirus](https://colorincolorado.org/coronavirus)**

It's important to create bonds to support both students and their families throughout the pandemic, especially for students who are learning English. Colorín Colorado is co-produced by the PBS station WETA and the AFT, and it serves educators and families of English language learners in grades preK-12.

## **Reading Rockets**

### **[readingrockets.org](https://readingrockets.org)**

Looking for free e-books, tips for helping children develop their writing skills or fun ways to build their knowledge of art, civics, science and more? Reading Rockets is a comprehensive website for families and educators on children's literacy development. The AFT has been a proud partner of Reading Rockets for over two decades.



## **Project Parachute**

### **[eleos.health/parachute](https://eleos.health/parachute)**

Healthcare workers across the country face unprecedented challenges as they deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Project Parachute is a network of licensed therapists, in cooperation with Eleos Health, that is matching frontline healthcare professionals with licensed therapists to provide pro bono therapy.

## **Turnaround for Children**

### **[turnaroundusa.org/coronavirus](https://turnaroundusa.org/coronavirus)**

Even at a distance during the pandemic, we need to maintain connections to our family, friends, teachers and peers. This curated list has resources for any adult who has a trusting, supportive relationship with a child—and for young people themselves.

## **American Psychological Association**

### **[apa.org/topics/covid-19](https://apa.org/topics/covid-19)**

The American Psychological Association's website is continually updated for psychologists, healthcare workers and the public. Resources include telehealth policies in all 50 states, strategies for students to reduce stress, ways to manage COVID-19 concerns for people with obsessive-compulsive disorder and more.

## **National PTA**

### **[pta.org/home/family-resources/coronavirus-information](https://pta.org/home/family-resources/coronavirus-information)**

The National PTA's priority during this crisis is to help people stay safe and healthy while meeting the educational, social and emotional needs of all students, educators and families. It has compiled resources to support families and teachers who are navigating working, teaching and learning at home.

## **AFL-CIO**

### **[aflcio.org/covid-19](https://aflcio.org/covid-19)**

The AFL-CIO has an extensive set of resources for workers impacted by the pandemic. It includes information on assistance available by state, immigrant workers, unions' responses in the U.S. and around the world and industry-specific issues (from airlines to emergency workers).

“Keeping up with our student debt situation seemed impossible. It was so hard to figure out the system—until I heard about Summer, an organization that helps borrowers with repayment and forgiveness options. As an AFT member, access to Summer is free as a member benefit.”

**SUE DAVIES,**

a professional artist, retired art teacher and member of the Elk River Education Association in Minnesota.

**Learn about Summer at**  
**[aft.org/benefits/summer](https://aft.org/benefits/summer).**



Randi Weingarten  
PRESIDENT

Lorretta Johnson  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



*A Union of Professionals*

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO  
555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-879-4400  
www.aft.org

