



# Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Midwestern Region Read to Succeed (RTS) Initiative Application & Approval Guide

This document outlines the application process, procedures, guidelines, and evaluation rubric for the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Midwestern Region Read to Succeed (RTS) Initiative.

## I. PURPOSE OF THE RTS INITIATIVE

The Read to Succeed Initiative is a signature Midwestern Region effort designed to:

- Promote early and sustained literacy development
- Strengthen school–community partnerships
- Provide visible, permanent investments (reading benches) that support long-term literacy engagement
- Align literacy efforts to school and organizational strategic plans, reading initiatives, and efforts to close opportunity and achievement gaps for students

## II. ELIGIBILITY & GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### Eligible Applicants

- Individual Brothers
- Undergraduate Chapters
- Alumni Chapters
- Districts (collaborative or multi-chapter projects)

### General Requirements

- Projects must align with the core goals of the RTS Initiative
- Each application requires:
  - A non-refundable \$200 application fee
  - A \$1,000 project deposit (see refund policy below)
- Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to execute both the bench dedication and ongoing literacy programming

***NOTE:** Any approved chapters hold the sole responsibility to adhere to all mandated Risk Management requirements related to chapter activities while undertaking this project.*

### III. APPLICATION WINDOWS & PROJECT TIMELINES

Applications are accepted during the following annual windows:

<b>Application Window</b>	<b>Submission Dates</b>	<b>Anticipated Project Delivery</b>
Window 1	January 1 – January 15	April
Window 2	May 1 – May 15	August
Window 3	September 1 – September 15	December

- All applications will be reviewed and scored by the last day of the submission month
- Applicants will receive written notification of:
  - Approval
  - Conditional Approval (with revisions required), or
  - Non-Approval with feedback

### IV. PROJECT CRITERIA (REQUIRED COMPONENTS)

Each proposed RTS project **must include all components below**:

1. **Reading Bench Dedication Ceremony**
  - A formal dedication involving Alpha Phi Alpha members and community stakeholders
  - Documentation (agenda, photos, or program outline) required upon completion
2. **Long-Term Literacy Programming Plan**

Projects must move beyond a one-day event and include a sustained literacy strategy, such as:

  - Adults reading to school-aged youth
  - Book donation or literacy resource drives
  - Greeting, mentoring, or literacy-focused engagement programs
  - English as a Second Language (ESL) or family literacy initiatives

### 3. **School/Organization Letter of Agreement**

- Signed by an authorized representative
- Must confirm:
  - Acceptance of the RTS project in full
  - Approval of the literacy programming plan
  - Approval of bench placement
  - Verification that **no union, contractual, or organizational conflicts** exist
  - Ownership of the property where the bench will be installed

### 4. **Bench Site & Specifications**

- The final site must include a cleared 6 ft x 6 ft concrete slab or sidewalk
- The bench will be permanently bolted to the ground for safety
- Bench specifications:
  - Welded steel construction
  - Colored powder-coat finish
  - Dimensions: 52” tall x 22” deep x 90” wide

## **V. APPLICATION & APPROVAL PROCEDURES**

### **Step 1: Submission**

Applicants must submit:

- Completed RTS Application Form
- Project narrative (separate attachment)
- Required letters (See IV subsection 3 above)
- Application fee and deposit
- 

### **Step 2: Initial Compliance Review**

RTS Committee reviews for:

- Completeness
  - Fee submission
  - Required documentation
- Incomplete applications will not advance to scoring.

### **Step 3: Evaluation & Scoring**

Complete applications are evaluated using the RTS Approval Rubric (Section VIII).

### **Step 4: Determination**

Applications receive one of the following outcomes:

- **Approved** – Project advances to contract phase
- **Conditionally Approved** – Revisions required before final approval
- **Not Approved** – Feedback provided for resubmission in a future window

### **Step 5: Contract Phase**

- Final project costs are determined
- Contract issued
- Remaining balance due upon execution of the contract

## **VI. APPLICATION FEE & REFUND POLICY**

- **Total due with application: \$1,200**
  - \$200 non-refundable application fee
  - \$1,000 project deposit

### **Refund Policy**

- If an application is not approved, the \$1,000 deposit may be refunded minus the \$200 application fee
- No refunds will be issued after:
  - Project approval
  - Contract execution
  - Full payment submission

The estimated total project cost is approximately  $\pm$  \$8,000, subject to change based on materials, delivery, and market conditions.

## VII. APPLICATION GUIDELINES (WHAT STRONG APPLICATIONS DEMONSTRATE)

Strong RTS applications clearly demonstrate:

- Alignment to RTS literacy goals
- Connection to the school or organization’s strategic plan
- Intentional focus on closing literacy and opportunity gaps
- Sustainability beyond the dedication event
- Clear roles, timelines, and accountability
- Active involvement of Alpha Phi Alpha members

## VIII. RTS PROJECT APPROVAL RUBRIC

Each application is evaluated on a **100-point scale**:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
Alignment to RTS Mission	Clear connection to literacy, youth engagement, and community impact	20
Strategic Use of Reading Bench	Bench integrated into school/community literacy efforts	15
Long-Term Literacy Programming	Sustainable, ongoing programming beyond one-time events	20
School/Community Partnership	Strength and clarity of partner commitment	15
Implementation Readiness	Feasible timeline, roles, and logistics	15
Sustainability & Impact	Evidence of lasting benefit and scalability	15
<b>Total Possible Points</b>		<b>100</b>

### Scoring Outcomes

- **85–100:** Approved
- **70–84:** Conditional Approval (revisions required)
- **Below 70:** Not Approved (feedback provided)

## IX. APPLICATION FORM

*(Original form preserved with no structural changes — can be inserted here exactly as written.)*

## X. AGREEMENT & SIGNATURES

By signing below, the applicants affirm that all information submitted is accurate and that they agree to comply with all RTS Initiative requirements and procedures.

<b>Signature</b>	<b>Name (Print &amp; Sign)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Applicant Signature	_____	_____
School/Organization Representative	_____	_____
MWR President / Representative	_____	_____
RTS Committee Chair or Secretary	_____	_____