

The Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian (K-12)

Application for the Year 2024

The Coccia-Inserra Award honors a teacher of Italian at the K-12 level, and is generously donated by Coccia Foundation in the name and memory of its founder, Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr., and by Mr. Lawrence R. Inserra, Jr. Founded in 1994 by Joseph and Elda Coccia, and now under the leadership of President Elisa Coccia, Coccia Foundation aggressively pursues the preservation and promotion of Italian culture, in conjunction with its 'academic arm,' the Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America at Montclair State University. Mr. Inserra, Chairman and CEO of Inserra Supermarkets, Inc., also contributes significantly to the rich field of Italian American Studies, having instituted in 2011 the Theresa and Lawrence R. Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies, also housed at Montclair State University.

We are pleased to announce that our donors will be awarding a very generous prize of \$5000 as the monetary component of the *Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian (K-12)* for academic year 2024. These funds are to be allocated as follows:

- a) \$2500 is to be used exclusively to advance the Italian language and culture curriculum and programming within the recipient's classroom;
- b) \$2500 is to be dedicated to the professional development of the winning teacher (for direct payment of academic fees to an institution of professional development in Italian language and culture at home or abroad).

Eligibility

The award is open to teachers who currently are:

- a. Members in good standing of one of the following:
 - i. AATI (American Association of Teachers of Italian)
 - ii. AAIS (American Association of Italian Studies)
 - iii. ITANJ (Italian Teachers Association of New Jersey)
- b. The applicant must be a full-time language teacher who is certified as a teacher of Italian and who must be teaching a minimum of two classes of Italian at the K-12 level.
- c. Applicants from past years are encouraged to reapply. If the application was submitted more than two years ago, however, applicants will be required to submit new, updated materials (including the video). Otherwise, applicants will be permitted to submit most of the same materials, with some significant additions regarding their recent activities (that could include a new video).

Selection

A Blue Ribbon Panel of experts has been established to oversee the process and select the award recipient.

- Dr. Andrea Baldi, Professor of Italian, Rutgers University (New Brunswick, New Jersey) [*Panel Chair*]
- Maria Gloria Borsa, Bellaire High School, Houston, Texas; Recipient of the 2020 Coccia-Inserra Teaching Award
- Gina Gallo, Bristol Central High School, Bristol, Connecticut; Recipient of the 2016 Coccia-Inserra Teaching Award
- Dr. Mary Sisler, Visiting Professor of Italian, Drew University (Madison, NJ)

Application Submission Process

Applicants will submit all their supporting materials and video links via [this Google Form Application](#). Please note that you will not be able to submit the application until all required fields are fulfilled. Applicants may only submit ONE (1) Google Form submission.

Note: It is important that an email be sent to Coccia Institute Director, Professor Mark Rotella at: rotellam@montclair.edu, and the Coccia Institute Program Assistant, Cristina Latino at: coccia-assistant@montclair.edu notifying both of them of your submission of the application. They will confirm receipt and ensure materials have been submitted properly.

Supporting Material

It is the responsibility of the applicant to assemble the following supporting material in the order listed:

SECTION A: Nominee Application Form

SECTION B: Letters of Support – Attach a total of **three (3) letters** from the following individuals:

- one (1) letter from an administrator (preferably a supervisor of foreign languages) **OR** one (1) letter from a colleague (who can support in detail the nominee's exceptional qualities)
- two (2) separate letters from two students whom the nominee has taught (or is currently teaching).

Letters from administrators/colleagues should attest to your strengths as an educator. Letters from students are most helpful if they contain specific examples of the impact that the teacher's work had on them and on their classmates in learning Italian and/or appreciating the Italian language and culture. Letters from administrators/colleagues should attest to your strengths as an educator.

SECTION C: Nominee's Resume of no more than two (2) pages.

SECTION D: Personal Statement – A 1-2 page summary of candidate's teaching philosophy, including learning outcomes. Specific examples would be most helpful.

SECTION E: Lesson Plan Sample – The teacher's effectiveness as demonstrated in sample lesson plans that conform to the standards of the Department of Education or other such entity in the state in which the applicant teaches. The lesson plans should address oral and written communication. These plans should evidence:

1. goals and activities that inspire and engage students in their own learning
2. use of technology and 21st-century skills to enhance the students' learning experience
3. assessment that reflects current practice.

SECTION F: Involvement Outside the School – Please include any documentation that demonstrates your ACTIVE involvement with professional organizations and the promotion of the Italian language and culture (e.g., presentations, workshops, administrative duties, public relations work, Italian Honor Society or Italian club at your school, etc) that have benefited the Italian program and its students. Please also include if you have created opportunities for community and/or parent participation in your Italian program (e.g., film night, festival), where parents and other community members are invited.

SECTION G: Instructional Innovations – Provide evidence of effective instruction practice via supervisor and/or principal's classroom observation report, student comments/letters, and/or teacher's self-evaluation and reflections.

SECTION H: Any documentation (certificates, proof of participation) from Professional Development events, either as an attendee, and/or as a presenter, facilitator, workshop leader, etc.

SECTION I: Other documentation, e.g., copies of newspaper articles or other materials (including web sites

links), highlighting accomplishments of candidate, if available.

SECTION J: Video Submission – Teachers must submit a video-recorded lesson or part thereof that is between 10 and 15 minutes in length. Videos **must** be uploaded to YouTube and privacy setting must be set to Unlisted. The YouTube link must be attached in the corresponding field on the Google Form Application in a Word Doc along with your supporting documentation. If issues arise, please submit a Word Doc in the corresponding section with the text “Technical issues; will contact coccia.inserra.teaching.award@gmail.com with further information” and immediately email the video on an accessible Google Drive link. The video will not be shared with or distributed to anyone beyond the panel for the award. Permission forms must be sent home if the School or the Board does not already have in place a policy about students appearing in promotional materials.

- i. **Also include a description** (not to exceed one page) of the video lesson the panel is viewing. Please tell us about the students, their level, and the learning goals for the lesson we are watching. This information will help the panel contextualize what they are watching.
- ii. **The most successful video submissions display meaningful classroom interaction between the teacher and students.** It is important to note that the video is not supposed to be a scripted, “professional” recording, whereas it is intended to reflect the daily routine and organic teaching style of the applicant supported by attentive and positively reinforced student interaction. In all, it should allow the judging committee to briefly “sit” in the classroom to observe the effectiveness of the methods and strategies used by the instructor.
 - a. As a reference, [here is the video](#) of the 2021 Coccia-Inserra Teaching Award recipient, Antonietta Gliubizzi.

Please note: ONLY the above stated documents will be accepted in a completed nomination packet. No additional documents will be accepted.

IMPORTANT DATES

Application Deadline: Sunday, September 15, 2024

Note: All applications (text and video) must be submitted electronically via the Google Form application [found here](#). Applicants may only submit ONE (1) Google Form submission.

Award Presentation: **Friday, October 18, 2024** at the professional development symposium: *Teaching Italian: Symposium / Workshops for Instructional Materials Meeting XVII* (University Hall Conference Center, Montclair State University)
Please note: The recipient’s travel and lodging expenses will be assumed by the Coccia-Inserra Award committee.