

**Request for Competitive  
Letters of Interest (LOIs)  
Overview and Questions**

**August 31, 2003  
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

- LOI Overview: Authority and Vision
- LOI Overview
  - Special Education Capacity
  - Child Find Early to Exit IEP Supports
  - Special Education Specialized Supports
  - Legal Framework
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- Questions and Answers

# LOI Overview: Authority and Vision

## Authority and Vision

- The Child Find and Early to Exit IEP Supports, Special Education Specialized Supports, Special Education Capacity, and the Legal Framework grants are allowed through
  - P.L. 108-446, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended, Part B, Section 611; 34 CFR 300.111
  - Funds were set aside for these specific initiatives to support special education services across Texas.
- Our vision: “Together, we are committed to high expectations and strong systems that achieve equitable outcomes for students in special populations.”
- The grant period runs from July 8, 2024, through August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.



# LOI Overview: Special Education Capacity



# SPED Capacity LOI Update

This LOI opportunity is no longer available and has been removed.



**LOI Overview:  
Child Find and Early to Exit IEP  
Supports**



## Purpose

- Support the dissemination and implementation of state-level technical assistance, professional development training, tools, and resources in the following areas of special education:
  - child find and evaluation;
  - transition planning for students ages birth to 21;
  - admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee processes; and
  - individualized education program (IEP) development that includes progress monitoring.



## Purpose

- This grant will support the targeted implementation of TEA's special education resources and trainings to scale their usage across the state.
- The audience for the technical assistance and professional development provided through this grant primarily includes local educational agencies (LEA) administrators, educators, and support staff with the ultimate goal of improving special educator practice and outcomes for students with disabilities.
- TEA and the grant awardee will be supported in their endeavors with the help of education service center (ESC) representatives from all 20 regions in Texas.

# Description

- This grant has been specifically designed to incorporate special education compliance and best practices and will build the capacity of educational professionals and support families to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.
  - Provide technical assistance to LEAs and ESCs
  - Provide training and follow-up support to LEAs and ensure fidelity of implementation over time
  - Maintain and implement an existing suite of diverse resources
  - Develop resources for early childhood special education (ECSE) and other emerging needs
  - Facilitate online existing courses

## Description

- A secondary goal of this grant is to increase stakeholder engagement which will assist in outreach and ultimately the scaling of this project across Texas.
  - Meet regularly with ESC representatives
  - Assist with logistics and facilitation of conferences
  - Ensure stakeholder engagement



# **LOI Overview: Special Education Specialized Supports**

# Purpose

- The purpose of this program is to support the dissemination and implementation of state-level technical assistance, professional development training, tools, and resources in the following areas of special education:
  - Services to students with significant cognitive disabilities and complex access needs
  - Services to students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing (DHH), deafblind, and visually impaired, and
  - Assistive technology.

# Purpose

- A robust ecosystem of resources and trainings in these areas was developed from 2019-2024; this grant will support the targeted implementation of these resources and trainings to scale their usage across the state.
- The audience for the technical assistance and professional development provided through this grant primarily includes LEA administrators, educators, and support staff with the ultimate goal of improving special educator practice and outcomes for students with disabilities.
- TEA and the grant awardee will be supported in their endeavors with the help of ESC representatives from all 20 regions in Texas.

# Description

- This grant has been specifically designed to incorporate special education compliance and best practices and will build the capacity of educational professionals and support families to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.
  - Provide technical assistance to LEAs and ESCs
  - Oversee training and follow-up support to LEAs and ensure fidelity of implementation over time
  - Maintain and implement an existing suite of diverse resources
  - Develop training and resources, including early childhood special education (ECSE) and other emerging needs
  - Facilitate online existing courses
  - Manage pass-through funds



# Description

- A secondary goal of this grant is to increase stakeholder engagement which will assist in outreach and ultimately the scaling of this project across Texas.
  - Meet regularly with ESC representatives
  - Assist with logistics and facilitation of conferences, communities of practice, and professional learning communities
  - Ensure stakeholder engagement

# Errata

- Posted 8/29/23 to include grantee responsibilities as they relate to the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD) Peer Reviews.

## Program Guidelines, Page 6, is updated to read:

- Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel: Partner with TEA to support the scope of work in this grant by employing a team of professionals who have a minimum of 5 years of experience overseeing and/or participating in the following areas of special education: services for students with significant cognitive disabilities and complex access needs, services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), visually impaired (VI), or deafblind (DB), assistive technology, and linking families to applicable agencies, including those who support students birth to 3 who are DHH, VI, or DB, including staff knowledgeable about Regional Day School Programs for the Deaf (RDSPDs). Provide a description of the qualifications key personnel in your organization have to fulfill the requirements of this grant and indicate how you will recruit qualified candidates if needed.

# Errata

Program Guidelines, Page 7, is updated to read:

- Budget: The costs detailed in the budget should demonstrate an exceptional plan inclusive of all aspects of the program, including personnel, materials, flow-through funds to various organizations and projects, and ongoing support. Additionally, the plan should detail how the program will utilize existing resources and systems. The budget should also address cost considerations for contingency plans. Provide a description of how you will ensure funds are used with fidelity for activities related to services for students who are DHH, VI, and DB, have a significant cognitive disability and complex needs, and assistive technology. Include costs detailing allocated funds to organize, update, and coordinate reviews for RDSPDs with a team from the grantee, including minimally one representative from the grantee, an RDSPD Supervisor, and a TEA representative (currently \$104,500 is allocated which includes a part-time coordinator out of flow through funds).

# Errata

Program Guidelines, Page 10, is updated to add a 6<sup>th</sup> bullet that reads:

- Grant staff must include an individual with knowledge and/or experience with RDSPDs

## For Applicants

Include within your application how you would implement and support the RDSPD Peer Review process. Include information in the following sections: Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel (#1) and Budget (#2).



# LOI Overview: Legal Framework

# Purpose

- The purpose of the project is to provide and maintain an updated web-based platform to assist stakeholders such as LEAs, advocates, and parents in learning about state and federal laws and regulations by providing rich resources regarding obligations and rights for the provision of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to students with disabilities.
- This grant has been specifically designed to maintain a system of support and webpage layout/design updates for the web-based Texas Legal Framework website, including hosting of local and virtual servers, the application, and the authoring system, which allows for linking or uploading LEAs' board policies and special education operating procedures.

## Description

- Examples of the types of activities that will be supported by this grant include but are not limited to:
  - Maintain and updating the Legal Framework website
  - Provide support to LEAs submitting assurance statements
  - Plan, develop, and implement training
  - Review, revise, and update specific resources





# LOI Materials



# Materials

It is recommended that applicants complete the *optional [Qualtrics Survey – Intent to Apply](#)* by September 8, 2023.

# LOI Process and Scoring

# Overview of the LOI Process

1. TEA publishes LOI application and supporting documents on the TEA Grant Opportunities webpage.
2. Eligible applicants submit LOI application and any required attachments to TEA by the specified deadline.
3. LOI applications reviewed and scored. Note: The highest-scoring applicants may be required to attend an oral interview or respond to questions regarding their LOI application.
4. TEA announces applicants selected for funding on the TEA Grants Awarded Data webpage.
5. For LOI applicants selected for funding, the LOI application will serve as the grant application. This eliminates the need for selected applicants to submit a separate grant application.
6. TEA staff conducts budget negotiations on the LOI application.
7. Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) issued upon successful completion of the negotiation process.

# Tips When Applying for an LOI

- Review the program guidelines carefully
- Adhere to the timelines
  - LOI Application **Due Date 11:59 p.m. Central Time, October 2, 2023**, submitted via email to [loiapplications@tea.texas.gov](mailto:loiapplications@tea.texas.gov).
- All of these grants require specific expertise (see program guidelines). Ensure you meet the listed requirements and fully detail how you meet each requirement – be as specific as possible.
- If you have questions while completing the application, email [sped@tea.texas.gov](mailto:sped@tea.texas.gov) with the subject line “FAQ for [insert grant name] LOI.”

# Overview of the LOI Process

If applicants have questions after September 15, 2023, the following TEA staff member should be contacted about the LOI, the grant program, or for assistance with the applicants' application:

## Child Find Early to Exit IEP Supports and Special Education Specialized Supports

- Mandy Young, Manager of Technical Assistance [Mandy.Young@tea.texas.gov](mailto:Mandy.Young@tea.texas.gov)  
Phone: (512) 463-9427
- Jerry Klekotta, Manager of Technical Assistance [Jerry.Klekotta@tea.texas.gov](mailto:Jerry.Klekotta@tea.texas.gov)  
Phone: (512) 463-9512

## Legal Framework

- Susan Bineham, Manager in the Special Populations Strategic Supports and Reporting Unit [Susan.Bineham@tea.texas.gov](mailto:Susan.Bineham@tea.texas.gov)  
Phone:(512) 463-9051



# LOI Scoring

- All LOI applications will be reviewed by a panel of TEA staff using the rubric in each program guideline.
- The applicant with the most points will be awarded the grant.
- If there is a tie, TEA administration will make the final decision.
- Each application is reviewed to determine the capability of the applicant to implement its proposed program.
- In reviewing the information submitted and in recommending competitive applications for funding, reviewers consider the ratings as per the specific grant program guidelines.
- When scoring each indicator, reviewers select a rating that has an appropriate point value assigned.

Child Find and Early to Exit IEP Supports

Criteria	Maximum Points Available
Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel (#1)	15
Budget (#2)	10
Summary of Training and Coaching Knowledge (#3)	20
Outreach and Scaling (#4)	10
Additional Requirements (#5)	10

Special Education Specialized Supports

Criteria	Maximum Points Available
Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel (#1)	15
Budget (#2)	10
Summary of Training and Coaching Knowledge (#3)	20
Outreach and Scaling (#4)	10
Additional Requirements (#5)	10

Legal Framework

Criteria	Maximum Points Available
Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel (#1)	15
Budget (#2)	10
Plan for Training, Resource Maintenance and Website Management (#3)	20
Outreach (#4)	10
Additional Requirements (#5)	10

# Questions and Answers

## Global Question-No LOI Indicated

Will grant be awarded to specific entity for one year only or is there an expectation to last for five years with the same organization?

*The grants are for 1 year, and TEA reserves the right to continue, recompete or sunset them at its discretion.*

# Special Education Specialized Supports

Is the \$2,000,000 budget negotiable? If the proposed budget stays at \$2,000,000, can reducing flow-through funds to ensure enough funding for other critical services be considered?

*No. Since this grant is competitive, all applicants are beholden to the same funding maximum amount and should submit their applications outlining their plan accordingly.*

# Special Education Specialized Supports

Page 7 mentions, “... creating resources and training based on needs assessment activities.” Who creates the needs assessment? Will this be one needs assessment for all stakeholders or a compilation of different assessments based on different areas of specialization?

*The Needs Assessment process is an internal TEA process where data is collected both within and outside of the Office of Special Populations and Monitoring (OSPM) to determine the scope of work prior to each grant year. This data comes in a variety of forms, and may include surveys, anecdotal feedback, customer service data, and/or federal and state compliance data. Data used for Needs Assessment may be collected through face-to-face meetings with departments across the agency, engagement with external stakeholders, via forms completed by stakeholders, or by pulling data from different sources (e.g., website analytics, TEALearn analytics, call and email logs). Once TEA has reviewed and discussed all the data, they develop the required activities grantees must complete in the following grant year.*

# Special Education Specialized Supports

Is the recipient of this grant expected to provide a level of AT support/technical assistance comparable to what the complete AT network provided in the past?

*The AT piece of this new grant will include:*

- *Continuation of the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) state subscription*
- *Quarterly meetings with AT ESC reps*
- *Support for the maintenance of the AT Tool as needed*
- *Collaborate with other TEA grantees as needed for AT topics*
- *Resource development as identified through needs assessment activities*

# Special Education Specialized Supports

Are there any limitations or restrictions on partnering with Institutes of Higher Education, non-profit organizations, industry experts, etc., to fulfill the grant's requirements?

*There will be 1 grantee awarded this grant; however, there are no limitations or restrictions on partnering with other entities to fulfill the grant's requirements. The General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds section of the Program Guidelines includes "professional and contracted services." Additionally, #6 in the Program Specific Assurances states that "Any personnel, agencies, or organizations subcontracted by the applicant must have the appropriate licenses, credentials, and skills to perform the services required (19 TAC §89.1131)." Applicants should include a detailed description of the qualifications and experience of key personnel, including subcontractors, in the application.*



# Legal Framework

Is this a stand-alone grant? Will it be under some other grant manager?

*The Legal Framework is a stand-alone grant.*

*Grant managers are subject to change at any time.*

# Legal Framework

Using the rubric provided, should the descriptions of the personnel, experience, etc. be specific to the framework or should it be all encompassing? What if we only want the legal framework, how would we proceed?

*Descriptions of personnel should be specific to the Legal Framework. Please provide any information concerning personnel you feel is relevant to the project.*

*To apply for only the Legal Framework grant, go to the TEA Grant Opportunities page, select 2024-2025 Legal Framework and find the section "Application and Support Information."*



**Thank you**