

IDEA B Discretionary Technical Assistance and Support Grant Opportunity for 2019-2020

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is actively seeking Letters of Interest (LoI) from potential grantees to provide opportunities for specific work toward statewide supports for ***Students with Intensive Needs***. Interested Regional Education Service Centers (ESC) and/or Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) should submit an LoI in the template included in Attachment A to TEA **by September 1, 2018 at 5 pm CDT**. Potential grantees are encouraged to seek cooperative partnerships or collaborative agreements to successfully meet all goals and objectives of the grant. Funding is allocated from IDEA B Discretionary funds and scheduled for implementation in the 2019-2020 school year.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to the 20 regional education service centers and all institutions of higher education located in Texas. Other nonprofits or for-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply; however, they may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner (encouraged, as applicable).

1.1 Program Description

For the purpose of this grant, students with intensive needs are defined as those students with significant cognitive disabilities, severe developmental disabilities, and/or severe challenging behaviors associated with a disability. The ***Students with Intensive Needs*** grant is designed to provide evidence-based practice resources, guidance, and support to parents, caregivers, and educators to equip them with the tools necessary to implement instructional practices that are proven to be highly effective in meeting the diverse academic and functional needs of these students. Examples of these may include assistive technology or other assistive devices, communication support, settings and services to support the academic and functional goals, and other tailored services and supports that may meet the student's unique educational needs.

The content of all resources and professional development materials produced through this grant must be firmly grounded in current literature and policy on special education best practice with explicit citations. All resources must be made available and accessible to all stakeholders.

Additional considerations for materials and resources produced through this grant:

- TEA maintains the right to final approval on all materials and resources before publication or presentation.
- All materials and resources will carry the TEA logo in addition to the logo of the grant awardee.
- All materials and resources are the property of TEA and must be provided to TEA at the end of the grant period or upon request.
- All materials or resources intended for use with parents and families will be made available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese at minimum.

Grant awardees will make formal quarterly reports to TEA on identified outcomes-based, quantifiable lead measures with lag measure reporting at the end of the grant period. These measures must be mutually approved by the grantee and TEA and should be clearly proposed in the LoI response. Additionally, budget proposals and final budget tables must include line-item/deliverable-based pricing.

1.2 Program Goal

The primary goal of the *Supports for Students with Intensive Needs* grant is to support a statewide culture of high expectations for all students, including those with intensive needs. The grant will increase capacity of LEAs through the creation and dissemination of professional development and resources intended for families, educators, and school leaders to effectively implement evidence-based practices that meet students' intensive needs, resulting in the students' academic and functional advancement, and progress on challenging individualized goals.

1.3 Program Activities

Strong applications will demonstrate a solid framework of resources that target needs from across the state. Applications should include an innovative and robust plan for dissemination of resources and emphasize a plan for collaboration and networking with other grantees who have overlapping or related goals.

It is required that the proposed programs contain at a minimum, the following:

- A comprehensive plan to increase the understanding and implementation of evidence-based practices for students with intensive needs. This plan should reflect:
 - Knowledge of instructional practices recognized in the field as highly effective for students with intensive needs
 - Knowledge of evidence-based practices for educator support/professional development
 - Consideration of principles of adult learning
 - Innovative use of technology to increase educator access
 - Plan for follow-up and ongoing coaching/training
 - A plan for periodic and consistent fidelity checks among stakeholders
 - Quantitative and/or qualitative methods, including lead and lag measures for evaluating effectiveness of network and trainings
 - A budget that is commensurate with goals and does not duplicate current efforts
 - A plan for communication and collaboration with other relevant and/or related proposed grant initiatives

- Activities that will support learning opportunities and improvements across the state including:
 - Identification and implementation support for evidence-based practices to address academic, social, emotional, communication, and/or behavioral needs of students with intensive needs
 - Development or adoption of tools LEAs may use to evaluate fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices
 - Instructional supports for students with significant cognitive disabilities, severe developmental disabilities, and/or severe challenging behaviors associated with a disability
 - Assistive technology for meaningful communication, access, and involvement
 - Guidelines for education of students with traumatic brain injury
 - Support and maintenance of previously developed training modules for low incidence disabilities (e.g. Guidance for STAAR ALT 2 Test Administrators, Supporting Students with Down Syndrome, Aligning the Curriculum)

- Projects identified to meet federal regulations must include a continuum of alternative placements (34 CFR §300.115)

1.4 Program Budget
\$1,000,000

1.5 Timeline

Lols must be submitted electronically to sped@tea.texas.gov by 5pm (CDT) on September 1, 2018, in order to be considered. Hard copy mailed or delivered Lols will not be accepted. Applicants should combine all attachments and documents into one PDF to include a cover sheet and table of contents. Grant awardees will be notified by October 1, 2018, with the grant period to begin July 1, 2019. This is a one-year grant that may be extended for additional years at TEA discretion.

1.6 Closing and Next Steps

Strong applications with a likelihood of award will be innovative in nature, demonstrate clear planning toward stated goals, and focus on producing desired outcomes rather than simply activity completion.

A virtual applicants' conference will be held the week of July 16, 2018. Questions submitted to sped@tea.texas.gov prior to July 13, 2018, will be answered at that time and an FAQ will be published. When submitting questions, applicants should include the name of this grant in the subject line. Applicants should refer to www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED for details and updates regarding the applicants' conference and this request for Lol generally.