REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

Application Guidelines

Program Guidelines

2016-2017 TITLE I FOCUS SCHOOL SUPPORT

Authorized by TEC – Chapter 8; P.L. 107-110, Title I, Part A
School Improvement Program

Application Closing Date—5:00 p.m., Central Time
Application due date November 14, 2016

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

**Enforcement and Support Division
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701**

Contents

Introduction to the Program Guidelines

TEA, as the pass-through entity[1], is the grantee[2] from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities[3] such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees[4]. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

This part of the request for application (RFA), Program Guidelines, is to be used in conjunction with the General and Fiscal Guidelines and the schedule instructions. The Standard Application System (SAS) consists of all schedules (i.e., forms) to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding.

For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The General and Fiscal Guidelines provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs. Throughout the Program Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines. **It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines when preparing your application.**

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[1] Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

[2] Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term "grantee" does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

[3] Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

[4] Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

US Department of Education and/or State Appropriations

The following is provided in compliance with the US Department of Education Appropriations Act:

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project	$1,032,928
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	$1,032,928
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	$0

Grant Timeline

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the TEA Grant Opportunities page. If a report due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report will be due the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Grant at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

Authorizing Legislation

This grant program is authorized by TEC – Chapter 8; P.L. 107-110, Title I, Part A School Improvement Program.

Where to Submit the Application

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Where to Submit the Application.

Number of Copies

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Number of Copies.

Three complete copies of the application are required to be submitted, printed on one side only. All three copies must have an original signature (blue ink preferred) of the person authorized to bind the applicant in a contract.

Purpose of Program

At the close of 2015, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which brings about the first major overhaul to federal education policy in almost 15 years. The ESSA provides our state an opportunity to leverage new flexibilities that bring greater emphasis to Texas' priorities in educating our more than five million schoolchildren.

Due to new transition requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), Texas will maintain our current list of priority and focus campuses during the transition school year 2016-2017. Given the short time frame and inability to run data during the current school year assessment results, maintaining our current list is the best, and least disruptive, action during this time.

The purpose of this grant is to increase the capacity of Education Service Centers (ESCs) to facilitate work with identified Focus schools in their region. Specific to this grant, "focus schools" are the identified Title I serving schools with the widest gaps in reading and math performance, as compared to safeguard targets examined across seven federal student groups.

Eligible Applicants

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Eligibility Requirements.

Eligible applicants are Education Service Centers (ESCs).

Eligibility List

An eligibility list will not be posted with the RFA.

Shared Services Arrangement

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed.

Application Funding

See the following sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines:

- Grant Funding
- Continuation Funding
- Fund Management
- Use of Funds

It is anticipated that approximately 20 grants will be awarded.

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Cost Share/Match Requirement.

There is no cost share or matching requirement for this grant program.

Limitation of Administrative Funds

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Administrative Costs.

TEA limits the amount of funds that may be budgeted to administer the program, including direct administrative costs and indirect costs, to no more than 8% of the total grant awarded.

NOTE: Administrative funds include **both** direct administrative costs **and** allowable indirect costs.

Pre-Award Costs

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Pre-Award Costs.

Pre-award costs are permitted from September 1, 2016, to stamp-in date.

Applicant Assistance

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

Contact for Clarifying Information

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, TEA Contacts.

The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions about the RFA, the grant program, or for assistance with the applicants' conference:

Program Contact

Leticia Govea, Enforcement and Support Division
Leticia.Govea@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-7582
Fax: (512) 936-6474

Funding Contact

Eleanor Blais, Grants Administration Division
Eleanor.Blais@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8525
Fax: (512) 463-9811

Errata Notices

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Errata Notices.

Email Bulletins

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Email Bulletins.

Program Elements

This section provides detailed information about the grant program.

Program Description

This project is a component of Texas initiatives designed to meet the desired outcomes established in the approved ESEA flexibility waiver. The following target outcomes are established with the

objective that schools currently identified would not meet the criteria and thresholds to be identified as focus schools in the future.

- Participating schools will decrease the gaps existing within all seven federal student groups between actual performance and Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) targets in Reading/ELA and Mathematics, as compared to baseline 2014 gaps.

- Participating schools will meet or exceed current year AMOs established in the waiver for state proficiency rates. Current, operational AMOs can be reviewed here: Texas NCLB-ESEA Waiver Information.

- Participating schools will not rank in the lowest performing schools in the state when measuring gaps in performance between actual performance and AMO target within the seven federal student groups. In essence, they would no longer be identified as focus schools in Texas, using the same methodology for identification used at the project onset.

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Division of Grants Administration Administering a Grant page.

The supplement, not supplant provision does apply to this grant program.

Indirect Costs

The grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to their current approved restricted indirect cost rate for this federally funded grant.

Refer to the Indirect Cost Handbook, posted in the Handbooks and Other Guidance section of the Division of Grants Administration Administering a Grant page for more information on indirect costs and the correlation to the supplement, not supplant provision.

Use the Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet, posted on the Division of Federal Fiscal Compliance and Reporting Indirect Cost Rates page, to calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant.

Application Requirements and Assurances

This section describes the two types of requirements that applicants must address in the application (such as with a narrative description, an activity timeline, or a checklist) to be eligible to be considered for funding:

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)
- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

> **IMPORTANT NOTE:** All requirements must be properly addressed in the application. Failure to address a requirement can result in ineligibility for scoring and review. For details, refer to the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Completing the Application.

Statutory Requirements

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Statutory Requirements.

Per Section 22.0834 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding grant funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Fingerprinting Requirement.

TEA Program Requirements

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Program Requirements.

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

1. Deliver a region-wide Focus School Support project activity plan that offers appropriate training, services, and events to support the needs of both focus and focus progress schools.

2. Collect and maintain data related to: district and campus contacts for each focus school in the region, focus school progress in performance related to their reason for identification, and focus school progress in implementing selected targeted interventions to address achievement gaps.

3. Verify presence of selected targeted interventions related to reason for focus school identification in each school's annual campus improvement plan.

4. Offer ongoing, continuous training/support around the TAIS process to focus schools.

5. Offer training/support around ESEA turnaround principles and Critical Success Factors (CSFs) to focus schools.

Program-Specific Assurances

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Provisions and Assurances.

The program-specific assurances for this grant program are listed in the SAS. Refer to Schedule #2—Required Attachments and Provisions and Assurances, Part 3: Program-Specific Provisions and Assurances.

Activities and Use of Funds

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

See the Administering a Grant page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

General Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

In general, refer to the Budgeting Cost Guidance Handbook on the [Administering a Grant](#) page for unallowable costs.

Field Trips

Field trips may not be funded under the grant program.

Advisory Council

An advisory council may not be funded under the grant program.

Cost of Membership in Any Civic or Community Organization

The cost of membership in any civic or community organization may not be funded under the grant program.

Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences

Conferences may not be hosted or sponsored under the grant program.

Out-of-State Travel

Out-of-state travel costs are not allowable.

Travel Costs for Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

The cost of travel costs for officials such as the executive director, superintendent, or board members may not be funded under the grant program.

In addition, unallowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

- Capital Outlay
- Debt service (lease-purchase)
- Audit services for state-funded grants

Program Evaluation

By submitting this application, the applicant agrees to comply with any evaluation requirements that may be established by TEA and agrees to submit the required evaluation reports in the format and time requested by TEA. TEA will collect and analyze relevant data from PEIMS if it is available.

Specific critical success factors and milestones will be developed in a manner determined appropriate by TEA.

Performance Measures

The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance measures:

1. Successful contacts made during the reporting period

2. Major activities delivered in the reporting period

3. Progress-to-date to program requirements the campus has completed and the ESC has been able to verify

4. Impact/Outcome of activities listed on Schedule 5: Program Executive Summary; ESC Focus School Support Program 2016-2017 Activity Plan

Critical Success Factors

Critical success factors are generally observable behaviors that are believed (and supported by research) to be critical to achieving the goals and outcomes of the grant program. Each critical success factor is monitored using measurable indicators, and these indicators enable TEA to determine whether grantees are proceeding appropriately to achieve the desired outcomes. For example, if a program has a goal of increased student participation in more rigorous college preparatory courses, one should measure at the beginning of the following school year that more students are actually enrolled in such classes than previously. Student participation in these rigorous college preparatory courses is a critical success factor that is measured through enrollment figures.

Milestones

Milestones are key processes or structures that need to be in place before the critical success factor is likely to occur. Using the previous example, before a school can demonstrate increased enrollment in rigorous college preparatory courses, it probably needs to offer a greater variety of these classes and hire or assign qualified teachers to teach them. A school would also want to develop a student recruitment plan. All such factors that are precursors to increased enrollment are called milestones.

Limits on Contracted Evaluators

When a grantee chooses, or is required under a grant, to hire a contracted evaluator, TEA believes that the evaluator must have the capability to remain independent and objective in carrying out the evaluation. "Independent and objective" implies that there is no influence or control, real or perceived, exerted on the evaluator by any person who is involved in the provision of program services. Therefore, the only way in which a contracted evaluator can be truly independent and objective is not to be involved in any manner with the provision of program services or activities. Otherwise, the evaluator is, at least in part, evaluating its own services.

In addition, TEA is aware that some grant writers develop and design the grant program, write the entire grant application, and then wish to evaluate the grant program. TEA also believes that this scenario poses a conflict of interest for the evaluator, in that the evaluator is evaluating the grant program that he or she designed, developed, and wrote. Again, it is not possible for the evaluator to function independently and objectively if the evaluator performed in this capacity. It is certainly acceptable for the grant writer to receive some information from a potential evaluator to include in the evaluation section of the grant application with regard to an appropriate evaluation plan or design, but communication between the grant writer and evaluator should be limited to that specific topic.

Applicants should make every effort to ensure that contracted evaluators be independent and objective.

Federal Grant Requirements

Equitable Access and Participation

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Equitable Access and Participation.

This requirement does apply to this federally funded grant program.

Private Nonprofit School Participation

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Private Nonprofit School Participation.

This requirement does not apply to this federally funded grant program.

Maintenance of Effort

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Maintenance of Effort.

This requirement does not apply to this federally funded grant program.

Application Elements

This section describes the requirements and attachments that must be addressed in and included with the application.

Required Attachments

See the following sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines:

- Fiscal-Related Documentation Required to Be on File
- Required Fiscal-Related Attachments
- Required Program-Related Attachments

This section describes the two types of attachments that may be required to be submitted with the application: fiscal-related attachments and program-related attachments.

Required Fiscal-Related Attachments

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Required Fiscal-Related Attachments, for a general description of fiscal-related documents that can be required as attachments to the application.

For a list of the fiscal-related attachments required for this grant application, refer to the SAS, Schedule #2—Required Attachments and Provisions and Assurances.

Required Program-Related Attachments

No program-related attachments are required for this grant program.