

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

Program Guidelines 2017-2018 Title V, Part B Rural and Low-Income School Program

Authorized by Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
(ESEA), as amended by P.L. 114-95, Every Student Succeeds Act
(ESSA)

Application Closing Date—5:00 p.m., Central Time
October 31, 2017

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

**Standards and Support Services
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701**

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Introduction to the Program Guidelines

TEA, as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities³ 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 subgrantees⁴. 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. The application to which these instructions refer must be submitted electronically through the eGrants system.

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

Requirement for User Name and Password

To access eGrants and apply for this grant, you must have access to the Texas Education Agency Secure Environment (TEASE). In the near future, eGrants access will migrate from TEASE to the new secure environment, TEA Login (TEAL). Follow these steps to apply for user names and passwords on both TEASE and TEAL:

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.

1. Visit the [TEASE—Request Access Online](#) page of the TEA website. Select [Request New Account](#) to begin the process of applying for a TEASE account online.
2. Visit the [TEA Login \(TEAL\)](#) page of the TEA website. Select [Request New User Account](#) to begin the process of applying for a TEAL account online.
3. To apply for eGrants access once you have been assigned a TEASE account, log on to [TEASE](#) and select "Add/Modify Application Access" from the Application List page.

The [Applying for a Grant](#) page of the TEA website includes links to guidance on applying for TEASE, TEAL, and eGrants access.

Application Submission through eGrants

Submit the application for this grant program electronically through the TEA eGrants system. Refer to the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) for more specific information about accessing eGrants and obtaining the required TEASE user ID and password.

Applications must be submitted as follows:

- Those submitted by public LEAs must be signed electronically by the superintendent of the school district or a designee.
- Applications submitted by regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) must be signed electronically by the executive director or a designee.
- Applications submitted by open-enrollment charter schools must be signed electronically by the chief operating officer of the school.
- Campuses and campus charter schools must apply through their public school district, and the application must be signed electronically by the superintendent or designee.

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.**

US Department of Education Appropriations

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

| Category | Amount |
|---|-------------|
| Total funds available for this project | \$6,543,782 |
| Percentage to be financed with federal funds | 100% |
| Amount of federal funds | \$6,543,782 |
| 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 the Public Law (P.L.) 114-95, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Sections 5221-5224.

Purpose of Program

This program is designed to address the unique needs of rural school districts that frequently (1) lack the personnel and resources needed to compete effectively for federal competitive grants, and (2) receive formula allocations in amounts too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes.

Title V, Part B, Subpart 2 Rural and Low-Income School Program assists eligible LEAs in addressing local academic needs more effectively by giving them greater flexibility in the use of limited federal resources.

The intended program beneficiaries are all students and teachers at eligible LEAs.

Eligible Applicants

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Eligibility Requirements.

Organizations in Texas eligible to apply for a grant under Rural and Low-Income Schools are the following:

- LEAs in which 20% or more of the children served, ages 5 through 17 years, are from families with incomes below the poverty line.
- all of the schools served by the LEA are designated with a School Locale Code of 32, 33, 41, 42 or 43, as determined by USDE, or SEA determines the LEA is located in an area defined as rural by the state

The following eligibility requirements also apply:

- TEA reserves the right not to award a grant to a district or charter school that is identified by TEA as a high-risk grantee.
- An open-enrollment charter school shall become ineligible for grant funding (or, if a campus has applied for and received funding for this grant, will have its grant funding placed on hold) if the Commissioner notifies the campus's charter holder of his intent to (1) revoke or nonrenew the charter under TEC Chapter 12, or (2) close the campus under TEC Chapter 39, for any of the reasons set forth in either statutory provision. If the Commissioner ultimately revokes or denies renewal of an open-enrollment charter of a charter holder or closes a campus that has been awarded funds under this grant program, grant funding shall be discontinued.
- The applicant must be in compliance with submitting the annual audit to TEA, as described in Part 1: General and Fiscal Guidelines.

Eligibility List

A list of districts eligible for the grant is posted at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/eligibility.html>. The entitlement list is posted on the [Entitlements, Grants Administration Division](#) page.

Shared Services Arrangement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are allowed.

There are no limitations on the size of the SSA membership or the fiscal agent.

Application Funding

See the following sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

Grant Funding

Continuation Funding

Fund Management

Use of Funds

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.

The authorizing statute limits the amount of funds that may be budgeted for direct administrative costs to administer the following programs:

- Title III, Part A, to no more than 2%
- Title IV, Part A, to no more than 2%

Pre-Award Costs

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Pre-Award Costs.

Pre-award costs are permitted and may be requested for the period between July 1, 2017, and the date the application is certified and submitted to TEA.

Applicant Assistance

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

Contacts for Clarifying Information

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), TEA Contacts.

Program Contact

Didi Garcia, Manager, Standards and Support Services
didi.garcia@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-9147
Fax: (512) 463-9811

Funding Contact

Karyn Gukeisen, Grant Manager, Grants Administration Division
karyn.gukeisen@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8525
Fax: (512) 463-9564

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

The Rural and Low-Income School program assists eligible LEAs in addressing local academic needs more effectively by giving them greater flexibility in the use of limited federal resources. It is designed to address the unique needs of rural school districts that frequently (1) lack the personnel and resources needed to compete effectively for federal competitive grants, and (2) receive formula allocations in amounts too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes.

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division [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 in the Handbooks and Other Guidance section of the Grants Administration Division [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 Federal Fiscal Compliance and Reporting Division [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)

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.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program. The applicant must address each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
2. Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction
3. Title III – Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
4. Title IV, Part A – Student Support and Academic Enrichment
5. Parental Involvement Activities

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. Increase Student Academic Achievement; or
2. Decrease Dropout Rate

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 CS7000—Provisions, Assurances, and Certifications.

Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

See the [Administering a Grant](#) page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

Field Trips

Field trips may be funded under the grant program. The following conditions must be met:

- is identified in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA);
- is included in the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP);
- is allocable, reasonable, and necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of the grant program;
- includes an instructional activity or activities that cannot be conducted through interactive activities in the classroom or on campus;

- will result in a positive impact on student achievement;
- includes instruction that addresses the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); and
- includes an evaluation of the field trip that measures the impact on student achievement.

If you plan on using grant funds for field trips, you will be required to complete the appropriate [TEA justification form\(s\)](#) and retain the documentation at the local level. You must keep and maintain this form so that it may be provided to your independent auditor or to TEA monitors if your LEA is selected for a review.

Out-of-State Travel

Out-of-state travel costs are allowable. Out-of-state travel costs should be minimal. Travel costs are allowable as long as the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items are only incurred by employees on official business of the grantee and follow the grantee's regular business operations and written travel policy.

If you plan on using grant funds for out-of-state travel, you will be required to complete the appropriate [TEA justification form\(s\)](#) and retain the documentation at the local level. You must keep and maintain this form so that it may be provided to your independent auditor or to TEA monitors if your LEA is selected for a review.

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
 - Example: A school district develops an entrepreneurial education program to supplement its civics curriculum.
- Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction
 - Example: A school district pays the stipend for a prospective teacher to work alongside an effective teacher, who is the teacher of record, for a full academic year.
- Title III – Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
 - Example: A school district offers an afterschool enrichment program for English learners.
- Title IV, Part A – Student Support and Academic Enrichment
 - Example: A school district purchases a bully prevention program for all schools.
- Parental Involvement Activities
 - Example: A school district plans a back to school night at a Title I, Part A, schoolwide campus.

You should be able to respond appropriately to and maintain documentation for each of the following to determine whether an expenditure is allowable:

- How is the expenditure reasonable and necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of the grant program?

- Provide the description, as identified in the comprehensive needs assessment, the expenditure addresses.
- Explain how the expenditure addresses this need.
- How will the expenditure be evaluated to measure a positive impact on student achievement?
- How is the expenditure supplemental to other nonfederal programs?

Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

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

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.

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:

- Audit services for state-funded grants
- Construction, remodeling, or renovation costs are not allowed unless specifically authorized in the authorizing program statute and unless specifically approved by TEA in the applicable grant application.

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 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 Program Information section of the main eGrants page for this grant. Required attachments are notated “Attachment” in the list of RFA documents provided in the Program Information section.

Required Program-Related Attachments

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

Adding Attachments

The instructions in the following sections describe how to attach files to an eGrants application.

General Instructions

The size of each attachment cannot exceed 10MB. If you have a larger file, use a different scanning setting or zip the file to make it take up less space.

The only supported browser is Internet Explorer. If you are using another browser, please change to Internet Explorer before attaching files.

Documents only need to be attached once. Do not attach duplicate documents with each amendment. Only attach more than once if the attachment is being revised.

Naming Attachments

Name the files you are going to attach with no spaces (for example, 501C3letter.doc or 5013C_letter.doc). Use a meaningful name that identifies the specific document.

Make sure that each attachment has a file extension (.pdf, .doc, .rtf, .xls, .bmp, .zip, .txt).

Note that attachments with very long names may not be able to be uploaded. If you have difficulty, try renaming the file and starting over.

Scanning Documents

If a document must be scanned to create an electronic copy, use the following hints to ensure that the document size is as small as possible:

- Use an OCR or DPI setting of 200 DPI.
- Try to avoid creating .jpg files. If possible, create PDF documents with the scanner.

Zippping Files

If your files are too large, add them to a zip file to save space ([download a free version of WinZip and find instructions on creating zip files](#)).

Attaching Files to an eGrants Application

1. Ensure that the security level for your internet browser is set to Medium (Tools > Internet Options, Security tab).
2. Ensure that the document is saved on your computer, using the naming instructions above.
3. On the Grant Menu page, select Attach File. The required attachments are listed and described at the top of the dialog box. If you are attaching a document that is not listed, check Other.
4. In the Add Attachments pane, select the title of the attachment from the list, or if you selected Other above, type in the title.
5. Select the Browse button. A standard Windows browser appears. Find the file.
6. Select Attach.
7. Select Refresh to see the name of the document in the Documents Submitted in This Version pane. If the attachment does not appear, you may have to rename your document with a shorter name and start over.
8. Repeat this process to attach all your documents.