



LASO Strong Foundations Planning Grant Approved Provider List Application Guide

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Strong Foundations Planning Grant Approved Provider List Application Guide

Purpose

The purpose of this application is to establish a list of technical assistance (AP) approved providers that can support a local education agency (LEA) through developing a math or literacy framework and lead a collective learning series on the research of how students learn by content area. An instructional framework provides a structured plan to exhibit what teaching and learning should look like in a specific content area. It can also define what a student’s ideal classroom experience looks like within that area and allows for a variety of pieces to align to bring this framework to life. Leaders who make decisions that are driven by the district or charter’s framework have a better chance at combating learning losses and providing equitable instructional practices.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will be developing a **Strong Foundations Planning Grant Approved Provider List** to support districts in the creation of research-based math or literacy frameworks. Approved providers will be approved through this application process *in addition to* completing a series of trainings offered through TEA. Approved providers will be required to provide evidence of aligned experience, expertise, capacity/scale, and results associated with one or more categories in this application. This application process does not represent a procurement action by TEA and approval does not guarantee providers will be awarded contracts from LEAs. Eligible respondents are nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and private or public companies.

Background

TEA is launching a new grant opportunity, the LASO **Strong Foundations Planning Grant**, for **school year 2023-2024** to support districts and charters in creating and implementing a **math or literacy instructional framework**. This grant opportunity was created from the **Strong Foundations Grant Program** (TEC Sec. 29.0881) established through House Bill 4545. TEA is offering this grant based on feedback from numerous districts about the importance and urgency of this work for the following reasons:

- Districts who have found success in supporting student growth post-COVID cited that aligning on a strong, research-based instructional framework was a crucial step. It provided a unified vision of success and served as a rallying point for stakeholders around the universal “why” behind initiatives adopted to support student growth.
- Districts with strong instructional frameworks can more easily increase alignment in other critical areas related to curriculum and instruction, such as:

- **Curriculum and Instructional Materials:** Districts are using the key research concepts identified in new frameworks to evaluate the quality of instructional materials.
- **Instruction:** Districts are using their framework to reevaluate how they train, observe, and coach teachers.
- **Assessment:** Districts are observing how new frameworks are directly connected to changes in the STAAR Redesign and how they can drive their overall district assessment strategy.

Project Description

Approved Providers will assist districts or charters in creating a math and/or literacy framework through following the outline below, working with LEAs to complete deliverables and key milestones, delivering a collective learning series, and creating a case study to document the district or charter process. LEAs typically complete the development of an instructional framework in 4-6 months, but timelines may be customized based on the LEA’s local context and with approval from TEA.

Step 1: Build A Roadmap	Step 2: Build A Communications Plan	Step 3: Develop Collective Learning	Step 4: Develop Framework	Step 5: Implement Framework	Step 6: Plan for Instructional Materials
Build a math and/or literacy committee	Determine who are the larger stakeholder groups	Develop a collective learning scope and sequence focused on research in math and/or literacy	Based on learning, draft vision and framework	Use final framework to assess existing district resources and supports, including curriculum and instructional materials	Provide customized supports for district, such as: Develop a process for adoption of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM)
Plan framework development process	Develop customized communication plan for each group	Complete collective learning with committee	Collect feedback and iterate upon the draft with the committee	Assess professional learning focus and design	OR Plan for the implementation of previously adopted HQIM
Create and norm on decision-making process	Set up systems of coaching for stakeholders throughout the process	Stamp key collective learning take-aways	Vote on final framework	Assess coaching structures and tools	

Image 1: District framework development process during the LASO Strong Foundations Planning Grant

Approved Providers will be responsible for adhering to the process above by:

- (1) helping with project management and stakeholder engagement required across the entire process
- (2) helping LEAs turn-key exemplars to fit their local context
- (3) facilitating collective learning series on the research of how kids learn in math and/or literacy (depending on what the LEA has applied and been granted for)
- (4) assisting LEAs in creating, editing, and finalizing framework
- (5) providing additional approved services to support with implementation of the framework
- (6) developing a case study outlining the districts process from start to finish and highlighting

successes and challenges in the process

General Instructions and Requirements

To be considered an approved provider, organizations will need to:

- Submit a **completed application** by **October 28, 2022**, including any attachments and provide a minimum capacity of school systems your organization can support in this grant
- Appoint a primary point of contact for all grant related activities
- Complete all required trainings offered through TEA by **March 31, 2023**, to be an eligible Strong Foundations Planning Approved Provider

Important Dates

- October 19, 2022: Approved Provider Informational Webinar (recording to be posted on Strong Foundations website) - [Register here to join](#)
- Approved Provider Application Window: October 14-October 28, 2022
- **October 28, 2022, at 5:00 PM CT: Application Deadline**
- **November 7, 2022:** TEA Response Deadline & Posting of Strong Foundations Approved Provider List
- **March 31, 2023:** Strong Foundation Approved Providers Must Complete All Training Requirements

Training Requirements

In addition to completing the application, all prospective approved providers must complete a series of trainings and show competency in supporting LEAs in this work. Approved providers will apply and be approved by subject area. Approved providers may apply to support LEAs in only math, literacy, or both math and literacy but will be required to complete trainings associated with each subject area. The trainings are as follows for each subject area:

Math Framework Development Approved Provider Training Requirements

Training	Description	Recommended Attendees	Date	Duration
Research Based Instructional Strategies (RBIS) in Math (Required by 3/31/2023)	Learn math research based instructional strategies that lead to strong student academic outcomes. This training will provide an in-depth look at the most up-to-date research in how kids learn math. The training will go over the current research in the first two days and will spend the third day going over re-delivery best practices for those seeking certification.	Any personnel involved in redelivering Math RBIS must go through the full three-day ToT session. Staff who are supporting a district in math framework development can go through the full three days, or just the first two.	Option 1: December 2022 Option 2: February 2023	3-day in-person or virtual training*
Launching Development of an Instructional Framework	Learn how to guide districts in the planning process (roadmap) as they prepare to build an instructional framework based on research. This training will cover how to guide districts on building a roadmap that includes important milestones, stakeholders, data collection and tasks. The roadmap will be used throughout the entire framework and materials adoption process if	All staff who are supporting a district in the math framework development process.	TBD	4-hour virtual training

	needed.			
Development of an Instructional Framework	Learn how to use data and research to guide the building of an instructional framework unique to each participating district. This training will cover how to guide districts in the framework creation and through a structured decision-making process.	All staff who are supporting a district in the math framework development process.	TBD	4-hour virtual training
Using an Instructional Framework to Select HQIM	Learn how to guide districts to use an instructional framework as a tool to analyze the current instructional materials. This training will cover how the right instructional materials will support strong student achievement aligned to the instructional framework.	All staff who are supporting a district in the math framework development process.	TBD	3-hour virtual training
Leading an Effective Review & Decision-Making Process	Learn the components of an effective materials review process and how to guide participants through them. This training will cover how to use an effective materials review process to make a final decision on the HQIM that districts determine to adopt.	All staff who are supporting a district in the math framework development process.	TBD	3-hour virtual training
Procuring, Ordering, and Preparing for HQIM Implementation	Learn the components of an effective instructional materials procurement and distribution process and how to guide participants through them. This training will cover how to ensure these steps are understood and carefully planned.	All staff who are supporting a district in the math framework development process.	TBD	3-hour virtual training

*TEA will offer both an in-person and virtual option for the RBIS Trainer of Trainers (TOT) session for TA providers to attend

**Additional training may be required in the future to maintain status on the Strong Foundations Approved Provider List.

Literacy Framework Development Approved Provider Training Requirements

Training	Description	Recommended Attendees	Date	Duration
Research Based Instructional Strategies (RBIS) in RLA (Required by 3/31/2023)	Learn literacy research based instructional strategies that lead to strong student academic outcomes. This training will provide an in-depth look at the most up-to-date research in how kids learn literacy. The training will go over the current research in the first two days and will spend the third day going over re-delivery best practices for those seeking certification.	Any personnel involved in redelivering Literacy RBIS must go through the full three-day ToT session. Staff who are supporting a district in literacy framework development can go through the full three days, or just the first two.	Option 1: December 2022 Option 2: February 2023	3-day in-person or virtual training*
Launching Development of an Instructional Framework	Learn how to guide districts in the planning process (roadmap) as they prepare to build an instructional framework based on research. This	All staff who are supporting a district in the literacy framework development process.	TBD	4-hour virtual training

	training will cover how to guide districts on building a roadmap that includes important milestones, stakeholders, data collection and tasks. The roadmap will be used throughout the entire framework and materials adoption process if needed.			
Development of an Instructional Framework	Learn how to use data and research to guide the building of an instructional framework unique to each participating district. This training will cover how to guide districts in the framework creation and through a structured decision-making process.	All staff who are supporting a district in the literacy framework development process.	TBD	4-hour virtual training
Using an Instructional Framework to Select HQIM	Learn how to guide districts to use an instructional framework as a tool to analyze the current instructional materials. This training will cover how the right instructional materials will support strong student achievement aligned to the instructional framework.	All staff who are supporting a district in the literacy framework development process.	TBD	3-hour virtual training
Leading an Effective Review & Decision-Making Process	Learn the components of an effective materials review process and how to guide participants through them. This training will cover how to use an effective materials review process to make a final decision on the HQIM that districts determine to adopt.	All staff who are supporting a district in the literacy framework development process.	TBD	3-hour virtual training
Procuring, Ordering, and Preparing for HQIM Implementation	Learn the components of an effective instructional materials procurement and distribution process and how to guide participants through them. This training will cover how to ensure these steps are understood and carefully planned.	All staff who are supporting a district in the literacy framework development process.	TBD	3-hour virtual training

*TEA will offer both an in-person and virtual option for the RBIS Trainer of Trainers (TOT) session for TA providers to attend

**Additional training may be required in the future to maintain status on the Strong Foundations Approved Provider List.

Assurances

Once your organization is approved to support LEAs through this grant, your organization must commit to meeting the LASO Strong Foundations Planning Grant 2023-24 approved provider assurances. Your organization commits to meeting all assurances and submitting all requested artifacts and deliverables listed below on behalf of the LEA and for your organization. The timing outlined below is recommended for technical assistance providers engaging in supporting LEAs building a framework in Spring 2023-Fall 2024.

Interested approved providers must meet the following assurances to be an eligible Strong Foundations Approved Provider

1. Complete the Strong Foundations Approved Provider List Application and include the minimum capacity of districts your organization can commit to serving in the school year 2023-24.
2. Appoint a primary point of contact in the application. The identified primary point of contact must be responsive and attend all grant-related updates.
3. TA providers must complete all required TEA trainings by the set deadlines and show mastery of TEA-defined competencies prior to redelivery of collective learning series to school systems (see section 4.2 for training requirements).
4. TA providers must contract directly with awarded LEAs requesting services and in alignment with the capacity your organization committed to in the application and in alignment with the services your organization was approved to provide.

Strong Foundations Approved Providers must meet the following assurances while supporting LEAs in the LASO Strong Foundations Planning Grant

The assurances during the grant period are aligned to the district experiences outlined in **Image 1** (see above). Approved providers will be responsible for supporting districts from start to finish and TEA will hold approved providers accountable for the deliverables submitted for the district’s approved providers are supporting.

Grant Phase for LEAs	Description	Assurance
Step 1: Build a Roadmap	In coordination with their approved provider, LEAs must complete a roadmap that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An overview of the selected committee including committee size, personnel roles, and process to develop and finalize committee ● An overview of the framework development process including LEA goals, milestones, and norms. Note: approved providers should support LEAs in backwards planning from future TEA grant applications ● An overview of how the LEA will make decisions on getting to a final math or literacy framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approved providers must submit a final LEA roadmap in the appropriate TEA provided template that includes all the components outlined in the description and required by TEA
Step 2: Build a Communications Plan	In coordination with their approved provider, LEAs must complete a robust communications plan that include the follow key components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification of larger stakeholder groups in the school system and community ● A customized communications plan for those larger stakeholder groups in communicating updates and the final framework ● Plans outlining communications to committee members throughout the process to ensure a closed feedback loop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approved providers must submit a final communications plan on behalf of the LEA that includes all components and key criteria defined by TEA
Step 3: Conduct a Collective Learning Series	Design and deliver a collective learning scope and sequence aligned to the research for math and/or literacy. Approved providers and LEAs have flexibility to adjust scope and sequence of collective learning however underlying research must still be covered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approved providers must submit the final scope and sequence of the collective learning series with LEAs and confirm it is aligned with the TEA requirements ● Approved providers must create exit tickets for all sessions in alignment with TEA guidelines, as well as submit exit tickets and results to TEA ● Approved providers must submit an attendance tracker of the LEA’s committee members collective learning attendance
Step 4: Develop a Math or Literacy Framework	Approved providers must support LEAs in creating, editing, and finalizing a math or literacy framework aligned to the research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approved providers must evaluate LEA final frameworks against the provided

	of how students learn and the TEKS. The level of support an LEA request may vary and approved providers should customize supports depending on what the LEA requests. TEA will provide a rubric to evaluate final frameworks so approved providers can effectively evaluate framework quality. TEA will audit framework scores submitted by approved providers and use results to evaluate TA provider performance (See metrics below).	<p>rubric and submit results in a TEA provided tracker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved providers must attend TEA held focus groups on supporting LEAs in a framework development process upon TEA's request
Step 5: Implement Framework	Approved providers must support LEAs in identifying a set of implementation priorities based on the final framework in a one-page memo. TEA will provide a template for the memo and key criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved providers must support creation of and submit LEA's implementation framework memos Approved providers must complete the TEA provided summary tracker of what LEAs plan to implement/change based on completion of the framework
Step 6: Develop A Plan for Instructional Materials Adoption or Implementation	Approved providers must support the LEA in developing a plan for instructional materials adoption or support the LEA in implementation of previously adopted HQIM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved providers must submit evidence of LEA's process for adoption or plan for implementation of materials.
General Support	In an effort to continuously improve support and learn from LEAs, approved providers will be responsible for submitting exemplars and creating a case study outlining LEA's processes taken to develop their math or literacy frameworks. TEA will provide guidelines to the buildout of a case study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved providers must submit LEA exemplars of each deliverable in a tracker with a summary of deliverable strengths and opportunities for improvement Approved providers must submit a completed case study that is designed in a format that allows LEA leadership to share out their development process and results

To stay on the Strong Foundations Approved Provider List, TA providers must meet the following assurances:

- Approved providers must attend any future TEA required trainings related to the framework development process. TEA will continue to improve the research-based instructional strategies (RBIS) over time as well as improve the framework development process based on lessons learned and additional trainings may be required.
- Approved providers must show ability to serve LEAs with a broader set of Strong Foundations Planning supports in alignment with the larger Strong Foundations bundle. TEA seeks to transition to a future state where districts work with the same vendor for all supports and additional training may be required over the next 2-3 years.

Metrics for Approved Providers

In addition to the assurances, approved providers must be able to perform the following duties to the satisfaction of the LEA and the TEA. The specific measures will be set through the LEA.

- % of districts strongly agree/agree TA provider effectively supported district in developing its math/literacy framework
- % of districts served with final framework meeting requirements of TEA rubric
- % of districts adopting high quality instructional materials in math and literacy (defined by materials currently being used and/or district's that sign up ongoing adoption supports and/or sign up to use OER products)
- % of district complaints resolved in expected time frame

Conflict of Interest

An entity will not be selected if it has a conflict of interest that will or may arise during the performance of its obligations under the document. The respondent must disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest or issues that might create appearances of impropriety relative to the submission of a response by the entity and its proposed subcontractors. The respondent must complete the Disclosure of Interested Parties Form in [Attachment A](#). **TEA will not accept information provided in other areas of the response as satisfaction in lieu of full completion of the form *with required attachments*. Failure to furnish this information will result in disqualification from further consideration.**

As part of this disclosure requirement, each response must include all past and present contractual, business, financial, or personal relationships between the respondent or respondent's staff and TEA and between the Respondent's planned subcontractors or such subcontractor's staff, if any, and TEA.

For purposes of this disclosure requirement: (i) "past" is defined as within the two calendar years prior to the deadline for submission of responses in response to this document; (ii) TEA is defined as the statewide elected official who heads TEA, as well as TEA's employees or recent former employees; (iii) "recent former employees" is defined as those TEA employees who have terminated TEA employment within the two calendar years prior to the deadline for submission of responses in response to this document; (iv) "personal relationship" is defined as a current or past connection other than a clearly contractual, business, financial, or similar relationship and includes family relationships or other connections outside simply providing a response to this document; and (v) for this purpose, "family relationship" means a relationship within the third degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity (see TGC Chapter 573) which defines these degrees of consanguinity and affinity.

Connections other than such family relationships fall within this definition and must be disclosed, if a reasonable person could expect the connection to diminish the respondent's independence of judgment or effectiveness in the performance of its responsibilities to TEA or the State under the contract; OR if a reasonable person could expect the connection, within the overall context of the respondent's submission of a response, possible selection for an award, or its performance of the contract, to create an issue for TEA's consideration relative to a potential appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest.

For each item, respondent must provide a detailed explanation as to why the entity does or does not believe such item poses a conflict of interest, potential conflict of interest, or appearance of impropriety relative to submission of a response, selection as contractor, or its performance of the contract.

Disclosure of Application Content

After application is approved, applications are subject to release under the [TGC, Chapter 552, Public Information Act](#). The applicant should indicate on the application if their submission contains proprietary information and identify the specific sections within the application that are proprietary.

Applicants are required to make any information created or exchanged with the State pursuant to this application, and not otherwise exempt from disclosure under the Texas

Public Information Act, available to the public if requested under the Texas Public Information Act.

Standard Response Requirements

Interested organizations will submit their application responses electronically through the online application. Responses that address only part of the requirements of this document and the associated application document may be considered non-responsive. TEA reserves the right to reject any and all responses. The respondent shall furnish clarifying information to TEA if requested. Failure to provide requested material or information may disqualify the response.

Response Content

Response Format and Content

Response Checklist: This checklist is provided to assist the respondent in ensuring that all required information is included in their response and to assist the evaluation team during their review of the response. The respondent should refer to the appropriate section of this document for detailed information on the items listed in the checklist.

Failure to provide the required information may result in disqualification of the response from consideration.

All submissions must include the following completed sections:

1. Displayed Understanding of the Strong Foundations Math and Literacy LASO Strong Foundations Planning Grant
2. Duration and Relevant Experience Doing Similar Work Nationally and/or in Texas
3. Building Internal Capacity to Scale to Support this Grant Program
4. Approach to High-Quality Professional Learning
5. Project Management and Project Monitoring
6. Evidence of Impact
7. References
8. Sample Contract Task Plan with Districts or Charters

Required Application Content

Organizations will be approved to support districts in development of a literacy framework, a math framework, or both subject areas. Relevant experience must be displayed for one or both content areas, depending on which subject area(s) your organization is applying for.

1. Understanding of the Initiative

- **1.1:** Communicate your organizations understanding of the following:
 - Purpose and intended outcomes of the LASO Strong Foundations Planning Grant
 - Importance of the research of how students learn in math and literacy and the connection to high-quality instructional materials

2. Duration and Relevant Experience Doing Similar Work Nationally and/or in Texas

Please provide the following:

- **2.1:** Brief description of your organization, services provided in Texas (current or past), and duration of work in Texas
- **2.2:** A description of your organizations expertise in providing services and high-quality professional development in math and/or literacy

3. Building Internal Capacity to Scale to Support this Grant Program

- Describe your organization's:
 - **3.1:** Relevant qualifications of any staff members who may work with a potential district or charter on this project and ability to hire and train staff on the unique educational landscape of Texas. Be sure to identify content experts in math and/or literacy dependent on which subject area your organization is applying to support.

4. Approach to High-Quality Professional Learning

- **4.1:** Please submit 1-2 artifacts that demonstrates similar trainings and services of this grant delivered by your organization
- **4.2:** Responsive Training & Coaching for Districts or Charters
 - Please describe your organization's feedback structures
 - Ability to adapt to the specific needs of the district or charter being served

5. Project Management and Project Monitoring

- **5.1:** Please share your organization's approach to project management and monitoring as well as submit or describe 1-2 examples of managing large projects in the past (in Texas or otherwise)

6. Evidence of Impact

- **6.1:** Please share any program evaluation outcomes demonstrating your program/ service's positive impact on curriculum, instructional materials, professional learning, and/or student outcomes.

7. References

- **7.1:** Please submit two school or district references that can speak to your prior work and partnership with them. Describe the capacity in which your organization partnered with and supported the school/district

8. Sample Contract Task Plan

- **8.1:** Please submit a sample contract or task plan that can be customized when contracting with interested LEAs for this grant.

Review of Responses and Scoring

Review of Responses

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. The recommendations of the evaluation team will be presented to TEA senior executive staff that will approve (in whole or in part), disapprove, or defer action for further evaluation.

TEA reserves the right to request more information prior to deciding on any proposal.

TEA reserves the right to contact past clients. TEA reserves the right to conduct

independent research on the organization.

Evaluation Criteria

TEA will base its selection on the ability of the applicant to demonstrate the necessary capacity, experience, expertise, and results. From the list of respondents, TEA will select organizations who meet or exceed the minimum qualification requirements. After initial selection, TEA will review and update the Strong Foundations Approved Provider List on an as needed basis. TEA will monitor training requirements and performance to determine the continued status of an approved provider.

Approved providers will be scored in nine separate domains and within each domain is at least one specific criterion. Each criterion has a maximum of four points possible; there are 10 criteria equaling a total of 40 points that can be earned. A score of 28 or higher will guarantee approved providers access to the summer learning series without reservation. Scores will fall into one of four categories:

- Highly Qualified Score Range: 34 - 40 (85%+)
- Qualified Score Range: 28 – 33 (70% -84%)
- Qualified with Reservations Score Range: 24 – 27 (60% - 69%)
- Not Qualified Score Range: below 23 (59% or less)

[The scoring rubric for each criterion above is linked here.](#)