



## 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant for Regional Conveners

### Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, January 13, 2023

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

This LOI application must be submitted via email to [loiapplications@tea.texas.gov](mailto:loiapplications@tea.texas.gov).

The LOI application may be signed with a digital ID or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, January 13, 2023**.

Grant period from

Pre-award costs permitted from

Application stamp-in date and time

#### Required Attachments

- Application Part 2: Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
- Attachment A: Regional Convenir Reference Form (Submit up to three forms with Application)

#### Application Information

Which [workforce development area](#) are you located in and applying to represent as a regional convenir?

Select your organization type:

#### Amendment Number

Amendment number (For amendments only; enter N/A when completing this form to apply for grant funds):

#### Applicant Information

Organization

CDN

Address

City

ZIP

Vendor ID

Primary Contact

Email

Phone

Secondary Contact

Email

Phone

#### Certification and Incorporation

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the LOI application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the LOI application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

LOI application, guidelines, and instructions

Debarment and Suspension Certification

General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances

Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name

Title

Email

Phone

Signature

DocuSigned by:

*Luis Rodriguez*

Date

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**Shared Services Arrangements**

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are NOT permitted for this grant.

**Statutory/Program Assurances**

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

- 1. The applicant provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this LOI will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.
- 2. The applicant provides assurance that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.
- 3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant to Regional Conveners Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant to Regional Conveners Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.
- 6. The applicant assures to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a regional convener for a geographic region with boundaries identical to those of the workforce development area.
- 7. The applicant assures to identify at least one staff person, who meets the qualifications and experience of a regional convener lead as outlined in these guidelines, with adequate time allocated to the work of this grant project and who will serve as the regional convener lead.
- 8. The applicant assures to identify multiple staff at the regional convener organization to engage in the work and participate in the designation process. This includes someone in an executive leadership position who has decision-making authority on behalf of the regional convener organization.
- 9. The applicant assures to complete all grant activities and deliverables in a timely manner, as described in the description of program and performance and evaluation measures.
- 10. The applicant assures to coordinate with their assigned coach, to be provided by TEA for technical assistance, and meet with their coach frequently throughout the project, including within the first month to align on program priorities and requirements.

**Statutory/Program Assurances cont'd**

- 11. The applicant assures to convene and engage a cross-sector pathways leadership team in the strategic planning process within the first three months of the grant project.
- 12. The applicant assures to develop an asset map and gap analysis within six months of the grant start date under the direction and guidance of their assigned coach. In addition, the applicant will keep this landscape analysis updated throughout the grant project.
- 13. The applicant assures to develop, in collaboration with members of the cross-sector leadership team, a strategic plan and supporting action plans within the first 12 months of the grant project.
- 14. The applicant assures to plan and execute work-based learning that will address K-12 gaps and will expand upon existing work-based learning within their region.
- 15. The applicant assures to participate and engage in statewide training and convenings during the grant period.

**Statutory/Program Requirements**

**1. Current Regional Landscape** - Describe the key career and education pathway initiatives and/or programs currently underway in your region, including those funded by TEA, THECB, and/or TWC, and your current level of involvement in those initiatives. Please also describe the current staff you have in place to support these initiatives and/or programs who will continue to be involved in this project and any new staff you would like to use grant dollars to hire to support this work. Describe the qualifications and experience of the staff person who will serve as the regional convener lead for this grant project.

There are many career and education pathway initiatives currently underway in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). The mission of RGV LEAD is to foster partnership between education and industry to equip students with college and career readiness that meets the region's highly skilled workforce demands. As such, we are heavily involved in many local initiatives. One example is the TEA Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) grant program. A number of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the local area were awarded funds from TEA to develop and implement career and education pathways through this program. RGV LEAD is executing the role of convener for 12 LEAs in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), 6 of which are located in the Lower RGV Workforce Development Area. We are heavily involved in the development and implementation of these initiatives, under a regional TRPN vision and strategic plan. RGV LEAD is responsible for aligning regional pathway education and workforce development programs, encouraging pathway partnerships between secondary/postsecondary educators and employers, and reinforcing the key components of effective pathways. This initiative also involves THECB and TWC, as do other TEA-funded active programs in the region, such as Summer Career and Technical Education (CTE), Early College High School (ECHS) Planning and Implementation, P-TECH Planning and Implementation, and T-STEM Planning and Implementation. RGV LEAD is involved in all of these initiatives and more, such as TWC's Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) program. RGV LEAD does a great deal of work in facilitating these initiatives by establishing and growing relationships between different stakeholders. One example of this is our State of Education and Industry in the RGV Conference, where we convene a Tri-Agency Panel and an RGV Industry Panel of experts. A further example can be seen in our Labor Market Information Report, where we analyze pathways in the RGV and advise organizations on best practices for improving pathway initiatives. RGV LEAD has a strong team of dedicated professionals, who have facilitated the delivery of outstanding services to almost every school district in the RGV. This team includes the executive director, Mr. Luis Rodriguez, who will serve as the regional convener lead for this grant project. Mr. Rodriguez earned his Bachelor of Science from the University of Texas at Brownsville and has been in nonprofit leadership for more than 15 years. In this role, Mr. Rodriguez has been outstanding in expanding the reach of the organization, growing partnerships with multiple stakeholders, and driving financial sustainability planning. Ms. Eliza Groff is a full-time employee of RGV LEAD and serves as Program Coordinator. In addition, RGV LEAD capitalizes on the knowledge and expertise of two extremely qualified education professionals: Dr. Norma Salaiz and Ms. Janie Lopez. If awarded funding, we would hire a data-clerk and two more full-time coordinators to assist in growing our reach, fostering new initiatives, and impacting the lives of more young people in the RGV.

**2. Regional Convener Priorities** - What are your priorities for strategic alignment across current state, regional, and local pathways initiatives in the WDA? What would be necessary for that alignment to take place?

RGV LEAD has developed a 5-year strategic plan for the organization from 2022-2026. This plan is in direct alignment with the purpose of this grant, and moreover, it highlights the extent to which RGV LEAD has both the vision and expertise required to execute the role of regional convener. RGV LEAD not only understands the need for strategic alignment across current state, regional, and local pathway initiatives in the WDA, but exists for this purpose. This point is highlighted in our organization's mission statement: "To foster partnership between education and industry to equip students with college and career readiness that meets the region's highly skilled workforce demands." Our first priority and overarching goal for strategic alignment is to support and enhance regional partnerships focused on education and workforce development. Within this priority, we have identified two primary objectives. Each objective contains initiatives, strategies, and performance measures. The first objective we identified was to strengthen communication and engagement between educators and employers. Our first initiative identified was to develop an industry advisory committee model based on best practices. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the landscape, we identified the need to conduct a systematic assessment of regional stakeholders, by gathering key stakeholders, such as Superintendents, Workforce Development Boards, and Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), and conducting surveys and interviews to identify best practices across the region, before developing a model handbook of these best practices. The next initiative identified was to develop a Regional Industry Council to identify workforce needs, strengthen communication, and support collaboration between educators and employers. Given the somewhat complex nature of cross-agency communication, we have outlined a plan which involves the following steps: (1) Create three industry councils composed of employers, associations, district leaders, post-secondary education institutions, and workforce boards; (2) Finalize meeting calendars for the three industry councils and the strategic objectives; (3) Facilitate these meetings, with an emphasis on strengthening communication and prioritizing internship dialogue; (4) Develop a guide for student internships; (5) Develop a finance plan for a student internship pilot program; and (6) Launch the internship pilot program. We, as an organization, feel strongly that the steps described above are necessary and sufficient to develop strategic alignment across current state, regional, and local pathways initiatives in the WDA. Moreover, RGV LEAD has already taken steps to put this plan into place.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**3. Regional Alignment Experience** - Describe your organization's experience leading strategic planning to support regional career and education pathways (or related education and training initiatives) in collaboration with stakeholders representing a mix of industry, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development entities.

RGV LEAD has extensive experience leading strategic planning to support regional career and education pathways. This has been an integral function of the organization since it was first formed, and the importance of this role has continually grown over time. In our efforts to lead strategic planning, RGV LEAD has collaborated with a vast array of individuals and organizations, across multiple career and education pathway initiatives, which encompass industry, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development entities. One such example of collaborative strategic planning is the State of Education and Industry in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Conference. This event was recently created and hosted by RGV LEAD and brought together a panel of key individuals in education and industry. In creating this event, RGV LEAD brought together a Tri-Agency Panel and an RGV Industry Panel. The Tri-Agency Panel included expert representatives from TWC, TEA, and THECB. Bringing together these individuals has enhanced cross-agency communication and facilitated strategic planning which is tightly aligned to the goals of each respective agency. In this event, RGV LEAD also convened an RGV Industry Panel, which featured CEOs, Presidents, and Managers from a range of business sectors in the local community. Expert representatives attended this panel from the healthcare sector, construction, manufacturing, and engineering. RGV LEAD has discovered that convening these panels and including these core stakeholders in the strategic planning process is not only helpful, but essential, in ensuring deep and long-lasting consensus to support regional career and education pathways. A further example of RGV LEAD's collaboration with multiple stakeholders is our hosting of Regional Meetings of the P-16 Council with the Regional Counselors' Network. Through these meetings, RGV LEAD captures the perspectives of all stakeholders mentioned above, as well as those of educators and administrators of K-12 and higher ed. organizations.

**4. Regional Data Experience** - How do you currently monitor progress and measure quality of career and education pathway programs or initiatives? What do you currently use as metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) to understand the strength of your region's pathway programming?

RGV LEAD monitors progress and measures quality of career and education pathway initiatives through both qualitative and quantitative means. Many of these means are demonstrated in our Labor Market Information Report. This is a report that we write and publish every two years based on latest data from TEA, TWC, THECB, and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. When considering the effectiveness of career and education pathways programs in a broad sense, we look at the overarching purpose of these initiatives. As such, we have outlined the following overall Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): the number and percentage of high school students who graduate college-and-career ready and transition into higher education and/or the workforce. Our Labor Market Information Report shows the number and percentage of RGV high school graduates who are, and who are not, enrolled in higher education one year after they graduate high school. Of those who are not enrolled, we also calculate the number and percentage who are working and who are not working. These quantitative KPIs are very useful in giving a broad perspective of the cumulative utility of pathway initiatives in the region and by evaluating these measures each year, we can track overall progress over time. However, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of progress and quality, we must evaluate the effectiveness of each individual initiative and we must also employ qualitative measures. RGV LEAD makes use of TEA TRPN Progress Reports. RGV LEAD analyzes these qualitative reports in order to gain a more in-depth perspective of the successes achieved and challenges faced by each local school district participating in the program. These achievements and areas for improvement are framed within the seven components of high-quality pathways and contain information from the perspective of each school district/charter school. RGV LEAD then uses this information to guide best practices and to improve on weaknesses, not only for the role of regional convener, but by advising all involved stakeholders of the feedback. RGV LEAD also creates, conducts, and analyzes a number of questionnaires to capture the feedback of different stakeholders in the various pathway initiatives underway in our region. In initiatives such as our Young Entrepreneurs of the RGV Challenge, we ask participating local business leaders about the career-readiness levels of students and any overall areas for improvement among the skillsets of participants. In events such as our Education and Career EXPO, we interview student participants in order to gauge the quality of informational interviews and interactions with employers. We also consider additional metrics such as the number of students engaged in Work-Based Learning. By monitoring quality and progress through methods such as these, we are able to make informed decisions and strive for continual improvement across career and education pathway initiatives.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**5. Regional Work-Based Learning Experience** – Using the Tri-Agency WBL Continuum attachment available on the TEA Grant Opportunities webpage, describe your experience planning, implementing and/or monitoring work-based learning activities aligned within each of the following categories: a. “Learning about Work”; b. “Learning through Work”; and c. “Learning at Work”

RGV LEAD has planned, implemented, and monitored Work-Based Learning (WBL) activities through a variety of initiatives and across the Tri-Agency WBL Continuum.

(a) Learning About Work.

Students in the RGV have been able to Learn About Work thanks to a number of initiatives established and implemented by RGV LEAD. One such initiative is the RGV LEAD Annual Education and Career EXPO. In the latest edition of the EXPO, RGV LEAD brought together 16 businesses from the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) which encompass four counties (Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy) and serve thousands of RGV students. There were 43 programs of study from educational institutions who came together to help RGV high school students prepare for college and career success. These businesses and programs of study encompassed 12 different career clusters, from Health Science to Manufacturing and from Education and Training to Energy. At the EXPO, students were given the chance to meet and talk with employers and learn about work through informational interviews. RGV LEAD is responsible for planning these events, which involve extensive outreach and ongoing communication with representatives from local businesses, IHEs, and school districts. In implementing in-person and virtual conferences, RGV LEAD has selected and set-up hosting locations, facilitated online communication, and conducted all logistic work required to ensure seamless delivery of presentations and adequate representation from all participants in attendance. RGV LEAD gathers feedback from participants through surveys and questionnaires and monitors the reach of these events by recording attendance and tracking changes from year to year. By monitoring activities in this way, RGV LEAD is able to evaluate the effectiveness of delivery methods and improve them each year, while simultaneously measuring engagement and ensuring continual growth.

b) Learning Through Work.

RGV LEAD has facilitated Learning Through Work in the business sector through establishment and development of the Young Entrepreneurs of the RGV Challenge. The target participants of this initiative are innovative students from 9th through 12th grades who are enrolled in a Career and Technical Education program of study. They are challenged with generating business ideas that are aligned with the team’s or individual’s CTE training program. Successful RGV entrepreneurs and college instructors serve as mentors for teams progressing to the finals. Individual benefits for contestants are that they will develop leadership skills, teamwork, communication skills, critical thinking, and soft skills necessary for success. They are able to do all of this in an entrepreneurial work-based setting and with interaction from local business leaders. RGV LEAD has planned this event, alongside the UTRGV Center for Innovation and Commercialization, by coordinating meeting times and facilitating communication between relevant partners. We conducted all logistical operations in order to effectively implement the presentations and we monitored success levels by conducting questionnaires and surveys.

c) Learning At Work.

RGV LEAD’s role in the TRPN initiative has been influential for a number of partnering school districts, charter schools, IHEs, and businesses. Serving as intermediary, RGV LEAD has facilitated planning and implementation of several activities characterized on the WBL Continuum as Learning at Work. One example of many is the class of senior students from Vanguard Academy who were enrolled in the Health Therapeutic, Healthcare Diagnostics, and Nursing Programs of Study. These students were not only able to earn their industry based certifications through the TRPN initiative; they were also able to perform their clinical rotations and venipunctures at assigned field sites tending to actual patients. Some of these students were offered paid part time employment at a doctor’s office as a result. The partnerships required to facilitate this Learning At Work were established as a result of continued efforts from RGV LEAD to grow and develop relationships between educators and employers. RGV LEAD hosted meetings each month between charter schools such as Vanguard Academy, IHEs such as South Texas College, and partnering businesses such as the Doctor’s Hospital at Renaissance and Mission Regional Hospital. These meetings were essential for effective planning and implementation. This activity epitomizes Learning At Work, by giving TRPN participants the chance to gain work-based skills, through paid work, in conjunction with classroom instruction in the high demand occupation of nursing. To monitor the effectiveness of programs such as this one, RGV LEAD considers survey responses from students and employers, who are asked to evaluate one other and the experience as a whole. This feedback is used to inform RGV LEAD as we move forward with similar initiatives and maintain the goal of ensuring continual improvement.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**6. Regional Convener Responsibilities** - Describe any current work your organization performs related to the additional functions of regional conveners listed below. If there are functions you do not perform, describe how a partner organization performs the function and your working relationship with them. If there are functions that are not currently performed by either your organization or a partner, provide context for why it has not been a focus of your organization's work to date. a. Analyze labor market information and work on an ongoing basis to ensure career and education pathways are aligned to in-demand industries in the region; b. Convene a cross-sector leadership team made up of education, workforce, and industry stakeholders to develop and implement a regional vision and strategy; c. Engage employers and broker relationships with education and training providers; d. Streamline communicating information across the region; and e. Drive sustainability planning, including coordinated funding strategies, across education and workforce development entities.

(a) Our organization analyzes labor force information, and uses it to create and publish the RGV LEAD Labor Market Information Report. The report creates awareness of the various careers available, and helps students learn about RGV LEAD's Targeted Occupations that can be linked to programs of study at their schools. Our report is used by chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and other community leaders working to improve the South Texas economy. The report combines data from TEA, THECB, TWC, and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, and is broken down into three sections. The first describes the educational landscape of the region and discusses college and career readiness, industry-based certifications and pathway initiatives that are underway in schools. The second revolves around post-secondary institutions. General education information about the region is provided, as well as accountability data, licensure and certification pass rates, and a detailed description of each Institution of Higher Education (IHE) in South Texas. The last section of the report focuses on Targeted Occupations. We describe our selection criteria, primary data sources, and methodology for identifying targeted occupations in the region. Information and resources are provided, as well as descriptions of high school programs, CTE pathway initiatives, and licenses and certifications, and how each of these can be linked to specific, high-demand occupations. (b) RGV LEAD regularly convenes cross-sector leadership teams made up of education, workforce, and industry stakeholders. Our organization recently hosted the State of Education and Industry in the RGV. In this event we convened two panels of experts to develop and implement a regional vision and strategy. The first panel featured representatives from TEA, TWC, and THECB and was appropriately named the Tri-Agency Panel. The second, the RGV Industry Panel, featured CEOs, Presidents, and Managers of successful businesses offering high demand occupations in the local community. We have also convened cross-sector leadership teams through our work as intermediary for the TEA TRPN initiative. (c) RGV LEAD has made great strides in engaging employers and brokering relationships with education and training providers. A prime example of this work is found in the Academic Leadership Alliance (ALA). Through this alliance, RGV LEAD has partnered with Workforce Solutions Lower Rio, Workforce Solutions Cameron, Region One ESC, numerous school districts and charter schools, and a vast number of businesses from the local area spanning a range of different sectors. Through ALA, new relationships have been developed and existing ones have been strengthened between education and training providers and local employers. One aspect of ALA is educator externships. These externships give teachers, counselors, and administrators the chance to spend time as employees at local businesses to learn first-hand about employer needs. Armed with this information, they can better prepare their students for the real-world working environments they will face. Not only does this initiative improve the quality and depth of lesson plans and career counseling, but it strengthens relationships across agencies. (d) Streamlining communicating information across the region is another function at the heart of RGV LEAD's mission. Through various mechanisms, RGV LEAD has facilitated straightforward, open, productive dialogue between all stakeholders of career and education initiatives. One example is the Regional Meeting of the P-16 Council with the Regional Counselors Network, hosted and facilitated by RGV LEAD. Another example is found in our role as intermediary for the TEA TRPN initiative, where we serve 12 School Districts/Charter Schools and numerous District Leadership Teams, Employers, Post-secondary Organizations, and Workforce Board partners. A principal component of this role is streamlining communication across these entities. Each month, RGV LEAD hosts and facilitates meetings between these partners to ensure that communication is effective and is targeted toward the success of the TEA TRPN initiative. (e) RGV LEAD is also at the forefront of driving sustainability planning, including coordinating funding strategies, across education and workforce development entities. The topic of financial sustainability is highlighted in our 5-year strategic plan and is the coordination of fundraising strategies frequently discussed at cross-agency meetings. Of primary importance is the need to sustain the role of regional convener. As such, RGV LEAD has established a resource development task force, and is working toward completion of a 3-5 year resource development plan that includes strategies for individual, multi-year funding, corporate sponsorships, and grants. RGV LEAD has also increased the frequency and reach of fundraising activities and will continue this strategy in years to come.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

7. **Partnerships** - Describe your current partnership(s), including the specific activities involved, with the following: a. Industry partnerships or specific employer partners (by sector); b. Postsecondary education; c. Secondary education; and d. Workforce or economic development.

As has been described throughout this narrative, RGV LEAD has a vast array of partnerships with various stakeholders of career and education pathway initiatives.

(a) RGV LEAD has formed industry partnerships with many employers in the RGV. These employers span many sectors and include, but are not limited to, AT&T, Doctors Hospital at Renaissance, Magic Valley Electric Cooperative Texas Gas Services, Texas National Bank, and Titan Fuel. All of these employers were involved in our Virtual Teacher Summer Externship program. These partners provided expert representatives to speak at this event and engage in dialogue and training between educators and employers. RGV LEAD recruited these partners, along with many school district representatives, to facilitate this dialogue. We also scheduled the event and conducted all logistics and planning required to ensure seamless communication. Titan Fuel, mentioned above, also partnered with us in the Student Ambassador Fall Leadership Workshop which we hosted in October 2022. Titan Fuel provided a guest speaker in the form of Ms. De La Garza Putegnat, Executive Director of Marketing and Public Relations. This event was highly successful in engaging RGV students in business and entrepreneurship and encouraging increased participation in career and education pathway initiatives.

(b) RGV LEAD has built and grown relationships with all postsecondary education providers in our local area, and we have even attracted interest from some outside of the RGV. These institutions include, but are not limited to Laredo College, South Texas College (STC), Texas Southmost College (TSC), Texas State Technical College (TSTC), Texas A&M International University (TAMIU), and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). In one specific example, we recently partnered with STC in presenting the Student Ambassador Fall Leadership Workshop. STC not only provided the venue for this event, but also provided the valuable input of Dr. Adame, Assistant Dean of the Business, Public Safety, and Technology Division, and Dr. Rodriguez, Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Economic Development in speeches and interactive discussions. We have also seen strong representation from our postsecondary partners in other events we have hosted, such as the Education and Career Expo and the State of Education and Industry in the RGV Conference.

(c) Our list of secondary education partners is extensive, as we work with almost every school district and charter school in the RGV. To provide one example, we serve as convener for 12 school districts and/or charter schools engaged in the TEA TRPN initiative. In this role, RGV LEAD has conducted virtual Regional Leadership Meetings every other month for the Donna ISD, Raymondville ISD, and Vanguard Academy District Leadership Teams, Employers, Postsecondary, and Workforce Board partners. This model has worked well for bringing in the critical stakeholders to discuss overall grant requirements requiring support from top district leaders. We have also conducted face-to-face Campus Working Team meetings to address unique district and campus pathway needs. Our role in this initiative has provided us the opportunity to further strengthen our relationships with secondary education partners, and we have developed plans to increase involvement of Vanguard Academy students in our mentorship training in preparation for Work-Based Learning (WBL) internship placements.

(d) Given that a critical component of our organization's mission is to equip students with college and career readiness that meets the region's highly skilled workforce demands, it is imperative that we work closely with workforce and economic development entities. RGV LEAD has worked hard to cultivate and develop relationships with local workforce development boards and EDCs. The strength of our partnerships with these organizations is highlighted in our Educator Externship program. RGV LEAD partners with Workforce Solutions Lower Rio, Workforce Solutions Cameron, Region One ESC, and the McAllen Economic Development Corporation in delivering this innovative initiative. By facilitating discussion, strategic planning, and framework development with these organizations, and with local schools and IHEs, RGV LEAD has established a platform through which educators can spend time with employees at local businesses and learn first-hand about opportunities and employer needs. A further example exists in the form of our organizational role in the Regional Meetings of the P-16 Council, which promotes communication and collaboration of leaders from secondary education, higher education, workforce development, economic development, and the employer community.

The specific examples mentioned above serve to illustrate the strength of the partnerships we have cultivated with multiple stakeholders throughout our region.



**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

8. **Budget narrative** - Describe how the proposed budget will support the goals of the program. Please include justification for the specific funding allocations in the proposed budget, including how costs are connected to the grant activities described in this solicitation. Please also describe how each item in the proposed budget will support the needs of the regional team, beyond any one specific regional partner. In addition, include a description of other funding sources the region will leverage, if any, to support implementation of this project and future work.

**PAYROLL:** • 2 Regional Pathway Coordinators will be hired. Salary of \$60,000 each and benefits at 20%. Total = \$144,000. • 1 Data Program Specialist will be hired. Salary of \$40,000 and benefits at 20%. Total = \$48,000. • 2 \* \$10,000 extra-duty stipends (including benefits) for full-time employees who will take on increased workloads, above and beyond their current duties, as a result of grant activities. Total = \$20,000.

All budgeted payroll costs will support grant activities that align to the goals of this program. The work carried out by grant-funded employees and those receiving stipends will be in direct alignment with the purpose of this grant program and will benefit not only the regional convener, but students, P-16 organizations, and workforce/industry partners.

**PROFESSIONAL AND CONTRACTED SERVICES:** • Rental or lease of buildings, or space in buildings, to host additional workshops and events aimed at growing pathway initiatives. These events will feature representatives from all stakeholders and thus many individuals will benefit from this use of grant money. Event Centers and other hosting venues will be utilized. \$5,000 per event \* 3 events. Total = \$15,000. • Design and development of communications and outreach materials to recruit more students and organizations and increase participation in pathway initiatives. Recruiting more students to engage in college and career-readiness activities is an essential activity in achieving the overall goals of the grant. Total = \$5,000. • Hiring keynote speakers for conferences and conventions to develop partnerships across different organizations and enhance career and education pathway initiatives. We understand the impact of keynote speakers in increasing recruitment and engagement of participants, strengthening relationships, and enabling productive dialogue between stakeholders. 10 speakers at \$5,000 per speaker. Total = \$50,000. • Software Development to expand RGV LEAD website to create a centralized hub for streamlining communications. The platform will collate and distribute important information to improve communication channels and ultimately grow and improve regional pathway programs. Total = \$10,000.

Specialized Professional Development and Trainers for regional conveners and staff to increase knowledge of working with at-risk students, and to improve accessibility of pathway initiatives for underrepresented groups. Industry-related professionals will also be contracted to help with curriculum advisement and assist in promoting industry careers and certifications. Various trainers will be contracted to provide assistance and training to RGV LEAD staff, including Mr. Mario Lozoya, who will provide valuable insight from his experience creating the 'We Grow Our Own' and 'Toyota Back Yard Strategy' workforce initiatives, and serving on local JET, P-TECH, UTRGV Workforce Advisory boards. Total = \$60,000. • Professional and contracted services that do not require specific approval, but that will be used to support grant activities described in the program guidelines. Total = \$30,000.

**SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS:** • Supplies and Materials to be used for the following allowable activities: (1) To increase recruitment/participation in pathway initiatives by purchasing regional communication and outreach materials such as brochures and infographics; (2) Educational resources, such as training workshop supplies and materials; and (3) Costs related to supporting K-12 student participation in WBL, such as materials to prepare for or enhance the work-based learning experience. Total = \$87,500.

**OTHER OPERATING COSTS:** • Travel costs for students to conferences. This will cover the costs of hiring buses to transport local students to the additional conferences that will be hosted by RGV LEAD and will involve participation from all stakeholders of career and education pathway programs. This covers 8 bus hires at \$2,500 each. Total = \$20,000. • Travel cost for officials such as Executive Director to attend conferences, convenings, or trainings that are specifically related to the grant program activities. The activities that this transportation will facilitate will benefit many participants beyond just the regional convener, including at-risk student participants and partnering organizations. Total = \$2,000. • Hosting conferences for non-employees which support program goals and will be provided for K-12 and post-secondary organizations, workforce development, and local industry partners. Technology equipment, training materials, and incidentals associated with hosting large conferences with 150+ attendees will be purchased. Total = \$50,000.

**INDIRECT COSTS** will be used to support grant activities. Total = \$58,500. **GRAND TOTAL OF BUDGETED COSTS = \$600,000.**

RGV LEAD will continue to make great strides in financial sustainability planning, by working with cross-agency team to pool funds, host fundraising activities, and pursue more grant opportunities. Administrative staff, board members, and volunteers will be utilized to sustain efforts and strides made through this grant.

CDN

Vendor ID

Amendment #

**Appendix I: Amendment Description and Purpose** (leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding)

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the [Administering a Grant](#) page. The following are required to be submitted for an amendment: (1) Page 1 of the application with updated contact information and current authorized official's signature and date, (2) Appendix I with changes identified and described, (3) all updated sections of the application or budget affected by the changes identified below, and, if applicable, (4) Amended Budget Request. Amendment Instructions with more details can be found on the last tab of the budget template.

*You may duplicate this page*

**Amended Section**

**Reason for Amendment**