

**Informal Discretionary Competitive (IDC
Grant)**

LASO 2026-2027 (Cycle 5)

**Learning Acceleration Support
Opportunities**

**Preparing and Retaining Educators
Program (PREP) Allotment: Grow Your
Own Program**



Allotment Application Due Date

December 1, 2026; 5:00 p.m. CT

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PREP Allotment: Grow Your Own Program Guidelines

Allotment Name: Preparing and Retaining Educators Program (PREP) Allotment: Grow Your Own Program

Application Due Date: December 1, 2026; 5:00 p.m. CT

Program Authority: House Bill 2 Texas Education Code (TEC) §§21.902, 21.906, 48.157.

Introduction

PREP Program Allotment Overview

The Preparing and Retaining Educators through Partnership (PREP) Program Allotment supports school systems in building and strengthening teacher talent pipelines from recruitment to preparation to mentorship. Together, PREP programs help school systems recruit aspiring educators, prepare them for successful entry into the profession, and provide the mentorship and support needed to develop and retain effective teachers.

The PREP Program Allotment includes five programs that support different stages of the educator pipeline: Grow Your Own (GYO), Residency Preservice, Traditional Preservice, Alternative Preservice, and Mentorship. Through LASO 5, school systems may apply for PREP Program Allotment funding to implement one or more PREP programs, each designed around strategic partnerships that strengthen teacher pipelines. School systems may also apply for the Texas Strategic Staffing for Residencies Grant to support implementation and increase the reach of the PREP Program Allotment.

These program guidelines focus specifically on the PREP Grow Your Own Program, which supports the recruitment stage of the teacher pipeline. Guidelines for other PREP programs are available on the LASO 5 website.

PREP Grow Your Own Program Overview

The PREP Grow Your Own (GYO) Program enables school systems, through partnering with qualified institutions of higher education (IHEs) and educator preparation programs (EPPs), to support current employees with earning their bachelor's degree and enrolling in an accredited educator preparation program to ultimately become certified teachers. School systems may also use funding to support high school students with developing interest and skills in teaching through career and technical education coursework. School systems participating in the PREP Grow Your Own Program must comply with the requirements outlined in Texas Education Code (TEC) §§21.906 and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §§153.1304.

Overview of the LASO Application Process

The following steps provide a high-level overview of the process for responding to an allotment opportunity, including submitting an application, and accessing allotment funding:

1. TEA publishes the LASO application and supporting documents on the LASO website. This will also include webinars that will cover key aspects of PREP and the PREP Grow Your Own Program.
2. Superintendents will receive a unique application link in an email on September 23, 2026.
3. Eligible school system applicants submit the allotment application via Qualtrics by the specified deadline in this document.
4. Allotment applications are reviewed for eligibility.
5. TEA announces preliminarily applicants selected for funding on the [LASO website](#).

6. Following notification of preliminary approval, applicants may be required to complete a confirmation of funding and submit additional requested documentation, which may include evidence of the partnership agreement(s) with the approved IHE(s) and additional agreements, if necessary, with an accredited Texas EPP(s). TEA will share dates and timelines for confirmation of funding in the preliminary approval notification.

Contact for Clarifying Information

The following TEA staff team should be contacted with questions:

Primary Program Contact: Ruth Ye, Manager of Teacher Apprenticeship.

Additional Program Contact: JoAnna Duncan Cleaves, Deputy Director, Educator Preparation Program Technical Assistance.

Program Email: GYO@tea.texas.gov.

Available Funding

All eligible school systems may receive the allotment.

***If a charter school closure is pending review, the award will be placed on hold pending a final determination regarding closure. If the final determination is to keep the charter open, the funding will be released. If the determination is to close the charter, making the charter ineligible, the award will be voided, and no funds will be disbursed.*

Timeline

If a report due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report will be due the following business day. All dates except the allotment program ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Date	Event
September 14, 2026	General Webinar Option #1 Registration link 1 . Webinar registration link can be found on the LASO website .
September 18, 2026	General Webinar Option #2 Registration link 2 . Webinar registration link can be found on the LASO website .
September 23, 2026	LASO application available.
September 28, 2026	FAQ Publishing. The FAQs for this grant program will be posted to the TEA Grant Opportunities page and LASO website no later than the date listed on the Grant Timeline. Applicants may email their questions to the LASO central inbox at LASO@tea.texas.gov . See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Frequently Asked Questions.
October 8, 10:30 a.m. CT	Program Specific Webinar #1. Registration links found on the LASO website .

October 19, 1:30 p.m. CT	Program Specific Webinar #2. Registration links found on the LASO website .
November 1, 2026	FAQ question submission deadline.
November 19, 1:30 p.m. CT	Office Hours. Registration links found on the LASO website .
December 1, 2026	Due date for the LASO Qualtrics application. The LASO application must be received by the TEA by 5:00 p.m. CT. See TEA Grant Opportunities , LASO Application Due Date and Time.
December 2, 2026- January 30, 2027	Application review period, including interviews if necessary. See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Review Process.
February 8, 2027	Anticipated award announcement.

Resources Available to Help Applicants Select the Most Appropriate Initiative(s)

An applicant that is eligible to apply for more than one initiative is encouraged to carefully review all available program information before submitting an application. To support applicants in determining which initiative or combination of initiatives best aligns with local needs, program goals, and eligibility requirements, the following resources are available:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Resource**
 Applicants may submit program-specific questions through the FAQ process to obtain clarification regarding eligibility requirements, allowable activities, program priorities, application expectations, and other grant-related topics. Responses to frequently asked questions may also provide additional guidance and interpretation of program requirements that can assist applicants in making informed decisions about which initiative(s) to pursue.
- Webinars**
 The Texas Education Agency (TEA) may offer informational webinars designed to provide an overview of available initiatives, application requirements, timelines, funding considerations, and program expectations. These live virtual presentations may include slide decks, demonstrations, and opportunities to address commonly asked questions. Recordings and presentation materials may be made available for later reference.
- Office Hours**
 TEA program staff may conduct designated office hours to provide technical assistance and support to prospective applicants.
- Additional Best-Fit Guidance Resources**
 TEA has developed supplemental resources to assist applicants in selecting the initiative or combination of initiatives that best aligns with local needs and strategic priorities. These resources include initiative-specific one-pagers, best-fit guidance presentations, and initiative coherence supports designed to help applicants understand program distinctions, identify complementary funding opportunities, and make informed application decisions. Resources can be found via the [LASO Cycle 5 website](#).

Note: Programmatic support is only available via webinars and the FAQ process. Office hours are for technical

support only regarding application submittal prior to the application deadline.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize these resources prior to submitting an application. Participation in webinars, review of FAQ guidance, and engagement during office hours can help ensure a clear understanding of program requirements and assist applicants in identifying the funding opportunity that best supports their intended outcomes.

Allotment at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the allotment program.

Authorizing Legislation

This allotment program is authorized by House Bill 2 TEC §§21.902, 21.906, 48.157.

Where to Submit the Allotment Application

LASO individual application links will be emailed to Superintendents on September 23, 2026. Please see the [LASO website](#) for more information.

Purpose of Program

The purpose of the PREP Program Allotment, as a whole, is to support school systems in strengthening teacher talent pipelines along the continuum of recruitment, preparation, and mentorship. The PREP Grow Your Own Program supports the recruitment component of that continuum by reducing barriers to becoming a degreed, certified classroom teacher. The PREP GYO Program supports (1) school system employees in completing a bachelor's degree and enrolling in an accredited educator preparation program to enable them to become a certified classroom teacher while employed by the school system and (2) high school students in completing career and technical education courses that help prepare the students to develop interest and skills in becoming classroom teachers. At minimum, school systems must implement programming for school system employees, with the option to also support high school students. Funding will be determined by each participating employee (TEC §48.157(b)(4)) and can be used to pay tuition and fees for both high school students and employees participating in the program.

For a more detailed description of the PREP Grow Your Own Program, see the Description of Program section later in these guidelines.

Eligible Applicants

School systems, which include school systems and charter schools as defined below, are eligible to apply for the PREP Grow Your Own Program.

For the purposes of these program guidelines, a charter school is defined as a Texas public school that meets one of the following criteria:

- is operated by a charter holder under an open-enrollment charter granted either by the State Board of Education or commissioner of education pursuant to Texas Education Code (TEC), §12.101, identified with its own county school system number.
- has a charter granted under TEC, Chapter 12, Subchapter C*.
- has a charter granted under TEC, §12.256, and Human Resources Code, §221.002; or.

- has a charter granted under TEC, §11.157(b).

Each eligible applicant is subject to PREP Program Allotment funding caps described in each of the program's guidelines.

*SB 1882 Operating Partners (OP) are eligible applicants and subject to the funding caps described in each of the PREP Program's guidelines in the following sections. However, PREP Allotment funding will flow to the partner school systems in which the participating 1882 campuses are located. The SB 1882 OP must have a written agreement with the partner school systems to document how allotment funds generated through the partnership will be spent.

**Note: Given Texas Education Code, §21.901(a) requires partnerships to "provide preservice practice opportunities in a prekindergarten through grade 12 classroom for teacher candidates," charters with a charter granted under TEC, §12.256, and Human Resources Code, §221.002 are ineligible applicants for the PREP Grow Your Own Program.

Any school system, which includes open-enrollment charter schools, and SB 1882 Operating Partners who read and agree to the requirements in relevant sections of the Texas Education and Texas Administrative codes cited in these guidelines is eligible for the PREP Allotment.

Eligible IHE Partnership: Per TAC 153.1304(b)(2), participating school systems must have a written partnership agreement with a Texas bachelor's degree conferring public IHE or a bachelor's degree conferring private IHE authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to operate in Texas, and an accredited Texas EPP if not included within the IHE.

To be eligible for the PREP Program Allotment, applicants must read and agree to program-specific assurances in addition to relevant sections of the Texas Education Code (TEC) and Texas Administrative Code (TAC):

- TEC §21.906 (PREP Grow Your Own Program).
 - Per TEC §21.906(c), school systems may participate in the PREP GYO Program only if they have been approved to participate in a partnership preservice program. For the LASO 5 application cycle, school systems must apply for and participate in at least one of the following: PREP Residency Preservice, Traditional Preservice, or Alternative Preservice Program.
- TEC §48.157 (PREP Allotment).
- TAC §153.1301 (PREP Definitions).
- TAC §153.1302 (General Provisions for PREP).
- TAC §153.1304 (PREP Grow Your Own Program).

***If a charter school closure is pending review, the award will be placed on hold pending a final determination regarding closure. If the final determination is to keep the charter open, the funding will be released. If the determination is to close the charter, making the charter ineligible, the award will be voided, and no funds will be disbursed.*

Additionally, school systems must follow the guidance in the PREP Guidebook, posted to the [PREP webpage](#). Education Service Centers (ESCs) are not eligible to apply.

Allotment Funding

All school systems that meet eligibility requirements shall receive \$8,000-12,000 per participating school system employee with a cap of up to 40 employees annually. A base allotment and multiplier rate is assigned

to each school system based on the number of employees and high needs and rural factor as defined in TEC §48.157(c). School systems are entitled to receive 50% of funding up front and the remaining 50% upon the employee's successful completion of a bachelor's degree and enrollment in an accredited Texas EPP within three years.

Selection of Applicants for Funding

All eligible applicants that meet eligibility requirements and agree to the assurances will be funded per the funding formula and parameters in TEC §48.157 (PREP Allotment) and TEC §21.906 (PREP GYO Program).

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

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

Allotment Application

This section identifies the types of requirements in which applicants must comply to be eligible for funding:

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

TEA Application Required Responses (Note: Application Required Responses)

Applicants must provide the following information in their application.

1. Contact information including name, email, phone, and title for the school system representative appointed as the primary point of contact (Program Manager*) for all PREP Grow Your Own Program-related activities.
2. Contact information including name, email, phone, and title for the school system representative appointed as the secondary point of contact for all PREP Grow Your Own Program-related activities.
3. The PREP GYO Program is designed to form partnerships that support (1) school system employees in completing a bachelor's degree and enrolling in an accredited Texas educator preparation program to enable them to become a certified classroom teacher while employed by the school system and (2) high school students in completing career and technical education courses that help prepare the students to develop interest and skills in becoming classroom teachers. At minimum, school systems must implement programming for school system employees, with the option to also support high school students. Funding will be determined by each participating employee (TEC §48.157(b)(4)) and can be used to pay tuition and fees for both high school students and employees participating in the program.

Which programming is your school system aiming to support through the PREP GYO Program?

- a. Supporting school system employees with completing their bachelor's degree and enrolling in an accredited Texas educator preparation program.
 - b. Supporting school system employees with completing their bachelor's degree and enrolling in an accredited Texas educator preparation program and **high school programming**.
4. How many school system employees do you anticipate participating in the PREP GYO Program?
Maximum of 40 employees per TEC §48.157 (f)(1).
 5. Per TAC 153.1304(b)(2), school systems must have a written partnership agreement with an [eligible institution of higher education \(IHE\)](#). Which of the eligible IHE programs do you have a written partnership agreement with? At least one selection is required.

6. The school system leadership and IHE's designees must sign an online Partnership Agreement Form sent by TEA after the LASO application submission. As a reminder, if the school system is partnering with an IHE and an additional EPP outside of that IHE partnership, they must retain evidence of a partnership agreement with that EPP locally. Will your school system and IHE partner(s) sign the online Partnership Agreement Form agreeing to engage in the PREP Grow Your Own program? TEA will send out these forms after the LASO application submission.

Statutory and Program-Specific Assurances

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program.

1. The applicant assures 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.
2. The applicant assures to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the Program Guidelines.
3. The applicant assures to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
4. 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.
5. The applicant acknowledges that Per Section 22.0834 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives Allotment funds administered by TEA (i.e., an Allotment recipient) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding Allotment 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.
6. Equal Treatment of All Persons: Consistent with Article I, Section 3a of the Texas Constitution, the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, federal and State law, and Executive Order No. GA-55, awardee represents and warrants that: 1. All conduct under this award shall be administered and performed in a neutral manner without regard to race of persons; 2. awardee shall not, in the specific performance of this award, elevate one individual person over another, or advantage any one person over another, due to race; 3. awardee shall not, in the specific performance of this award, employ practices or engage in any advancement of the programs known as DEI, critical race theory, affirmative action, or other similar, divisive agendas; 4. Awardee's staff, agents, contractors, and subcontractors that are selected and employed in the specific performance of this award shall be selected and employed solely on merit and the ability to perform; and 5. awardee shall ensure that any awardees, contractors and their subcontractors participating in the specific performance of this award represent and warrant to the provisions of this clause.
7. Biological Sex and No Preferred Pronouns: awardee represents and warrants that it shall ensure that all actions in specific performance of this award shall comply with federal and state law and reflect that there are only two sexes. Awardee's employees, officers, representatives, contractors, subcontractors, and agents shall not, in performance of this award, present, direct, request, or suggest the use of preferred personal pronouns in professional correspondence or presentations.
8. The school systems will maintain current contact information in AskTED to ensure timely communication.

Assurances specific to the PREP Grow Your Own Program:

1. Read and abide by TEC [§21.901](#), [21.908](#), [§21.909](#), [§48.157](#) (PREP Program Allotment).
2. Read and abide by TAC [§153.1301](#), [§153.1302](#), and [§153.1304](#) (PREP Definitions, General Provisions, and Grow Your Own Program).
3. Read and abide by the guidelines in the PREP Guidebook, posted to the [PREP website](#).
4. Form a written agreement partnership with an [eligible institution of higher education](#) and accredited educator preparation program by school year (SY) 2027-28 that supports (1) school system employees in completing a bachelor's degree and enrolling in an educator preparation program to enable them to become a certified teacher while employed by the school system, and if applicable (2) high school students in completing career and technical education courses that help prepare the students to develop interest and skills in becoming classroom teachers.
5. Appoint a PREP Grow Your Own Program Manager (PM) to engage in all required PREP GYO Program communications. This PM manages the program at the school system level and may or may not be the same person as the PREP Allotment Lead. As a best practice for ensuring the program's success, the PM's duties should include:
 - a. Serve as the primary point of contact for implementation of a PREP GYO program within the school system.
 - b. Coordinate implementation activities, partners, participants, and stakeholders for the PREP GYO program.
 - c. Monitor and manage PREP GYO-specific deadlines, requirements, and deliverables.
 - d. Collaborate with program partners, campuses, and internal stakeholders to support successful implementation of the PREP GYO program.
 - e. Identify and address implementation challenges within the PREP GYO program.
 - f. Monitor program progress and identify opportunities to strengthen implementation and outcomes within the assigned PREP program.
 - g. If applicable, leverage supports and resources accordingly from the optional in-kind technical assistance.

Program Elements

Description of Program

As one of five partnership programs in the PREP Program Allotment, the PREP Grow Your Own program provides funding through which participating school systems support (1) school system employees in completing a bachelor's degree and enrolling in an accredited Texas EPP to ultimately become a certified teacher while employed by the school system and (2) high school students in completing career and technical education courses that help prepare the students to develop interest and skills in becoming classroom teachers. Per TAC 153.1304f(2), funding may be used to implement the PREP Grow Your Own Program such as implementation of the high school education and training program, tuition for aspiring teachers, wrap-around and transition supports, strategic staffing training and implementation, costs associated with employee preparation in a PREP Preservice Program, and local salaries for program implementation support.

The PREP GYO Program serves as the first step of a school system's long-term talent pipeline strategy as an intentional recruitment approach leading to quality preparation through an approved partnership preservice program. Per TEC 21.906(c), school systems must be approved to participate in a PREP Preservice program (Residency, Traditional, Alternative) to participate in the PREP GYO program.

Performance and Evaluation Measures

The applicant agrees to collect and report data requested by TEA as required in TEC §21.909 and TAC §§153.1302 and 153.1304. For additional information, see the PREP Guidebook posted to the [PREP website](#).

Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- A school system must comply with the spending requirements in TEC §§21.906, 48.157 and TAC §153.1304.
- A school system shall use money to implement the PREP GYO program, such as implementation of the high school education and training program, tuition for aspiring teachers, wrap-around and transition supports, strategic staffing training and implementation, costs associated with employee preparation in a PREP Preservice Program, and local salaries for program implementation support.