



Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership (R-PEP)

October, 2026



Introductions



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[R-PEP webpage](#)



Agenda

Overview of LASO Cycle 5
Application Process and Timeline

Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership
(R-PEP) Deep Dive

Next Steps

FYIs



Submit questions during the webinar using the Zoom Q&A



Webinar slides and recordings will be posted on the [LASO website](#) after all webinars have been completed



Email LASO@tea.texas.gov with follow-up questions

Overview of LASO 26-27 (Cycle 5)

Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities (LASO) is a **single, consolidated application that combines grants, in-kind supports and services, and allotment opportunities**, bundled around a few key initiatives to accelerate academic gains.

~\$400M

In supports and services

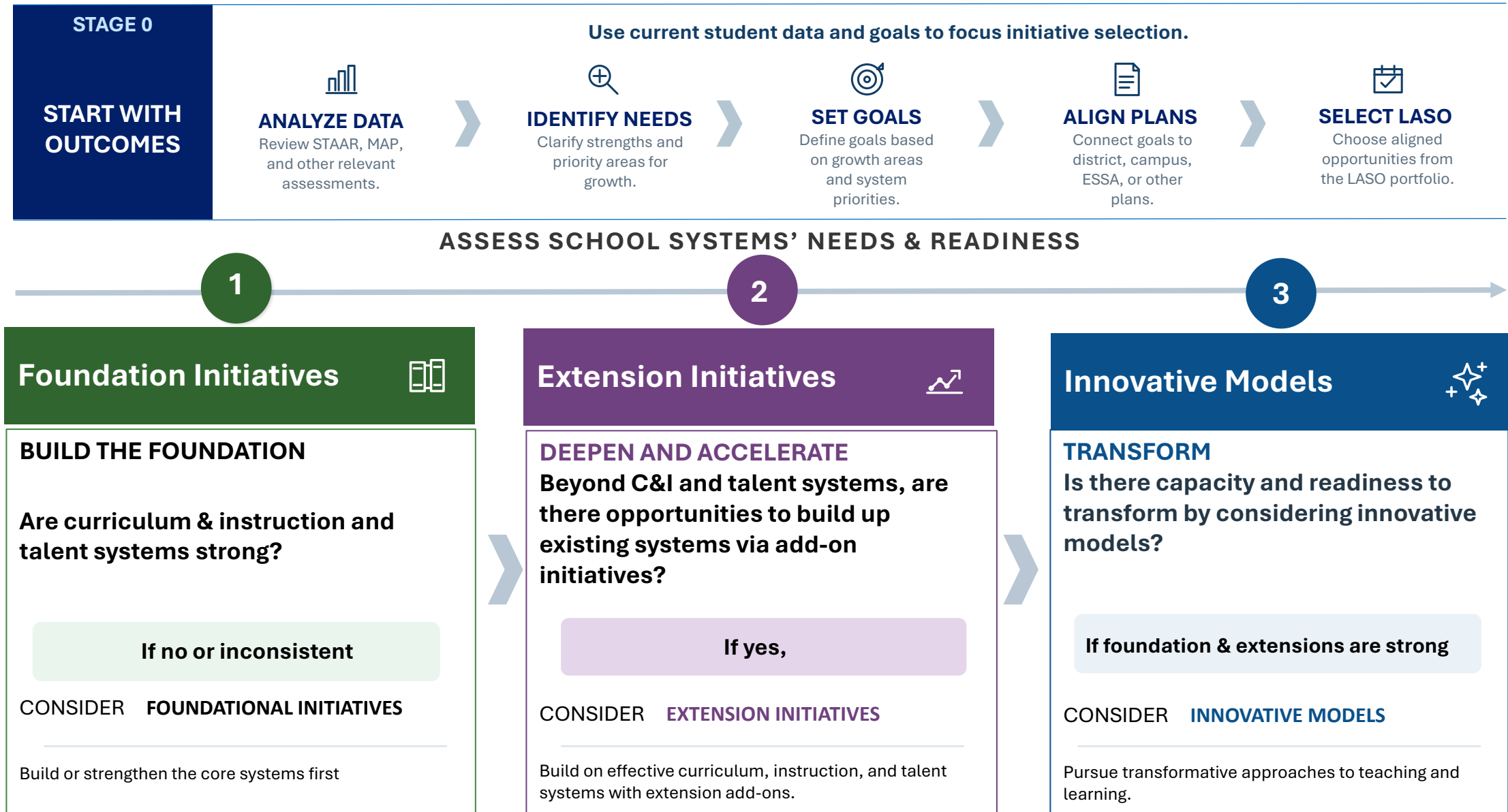
21

TEA initiatives to support school
systems in achieving student
outcomes

1

Application to access direct
grants, in-kind supports,
and state allotments

Schema to Determine Best- Fit Initiatives



Select the Best-Fit Initiatives Based on Needs and Readiness

Initiative

Local Accountability System Planning Grant (LAS)

Leadership & Instructional Foundations for Texas (LIFT)

LIFT School Improvement Accelerator (LIFT SI A)

School Improvement C&I Support Grant (SICISG)

Blended Learning Grant (BLG)
2 Pathways: Coherent Systems, Strategic Operations

AP Computer Science Principles (APCSP)

Early Literacy Intervention Tool (ELIT)

Math Supplemental Curriculum for School Improvement (MSC for SI)

PREP Programs:
•PREP Grow Your Own (GYO)
•PREP Residency
•PREP Traditional
•PREP Alternative
•PREP Mentorship

Texas Strategic Staffing (TSS)

Strategic Compensation Cohort for Enhanced TIA (SCC for ETIA)

Additional Days School Year (ADSY) PEP Grant
2 pathways: Summer Learning, Full Year Redesign

School Action Fund (SAF)

Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership (R-PEP)

Early College High School (ECHS)

Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH)

Virtual and Hybrid Program Accelerator (VHPA)
2 Pathways: Program, Campus

FOUNDATION

Curriculum & Instruction + Talent

Leadership & Instructional
Foundations for Texas (LIFT)

PREP Programs: GYO,
Residency, Traditional,
Alternative, Mentorship

Texas Strategic Staffing (TSS)

Strategic Compensation Cohort
for Enhanced TIA (SCC for ETIA)

EXTENSION

Build, deepen, and accelerate

LIFT School Improvement
Accelerator (LIFT SI A)

School Improvement C&I
Support Grant (SI CISC)

Blended Learning Grant (BLG):
Coherent Systems + Strategic
Operations

AP Computer Science
Principles (AP CSP)

Early Literacy Intervention Tool
(ELIT)

Math Supplemental
Curriculum for School
Improvement (MSC for SI)

Additional Days School Year
PEP Grant (ADSY): Summer
Learning + Full Year Redesign

INNOVATIVE MODELS

Transform the learning model

Local Accountability System
Planning Grant (LAS)

School Action Fund (SAF)

Rural Pathway Excellence
Partnership (R-PEP)

Early College High School
(ECHS)

Pathways in Technology Early
College High School (P-TECH)

Virtual and Hybrid Program
Accelerator (VHPA): Program
+ Campus

Get Ready to Apply for LASO 5

APPLICATION OPENED

September 23, 2026

APPLICATION CLOSES

December 1, 2026 · 5 p.m. CT

- 1 Explore the offerings** Visit the [LASO 5 website](#) to review available initiatives.

Review Resources

Learn more about each grant and their coexistence:

2

[Best Fit
Guidance](#)

[Initiative
One-Pagers](#)

[Eligibility &
Prioritization](#)

[Master
Calendar](#)

- 3 Align with your teams** Share information with school system teams to identify needs and best-fit initiatives.

Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership (R-PEP) Deep Dive

Multi Year Funding Deep Dive for R-PEP



Full Grant and In-Kind Estimated Award Range

\$200K-\$280K

1

Year 1 and 2 • LASO 26-27

\$200K-\$280K

Apply for LASO 26-27 (Cycle 5)

Application opens September 23, 2026

Contact Information: R-PEP@tea.texas.gov

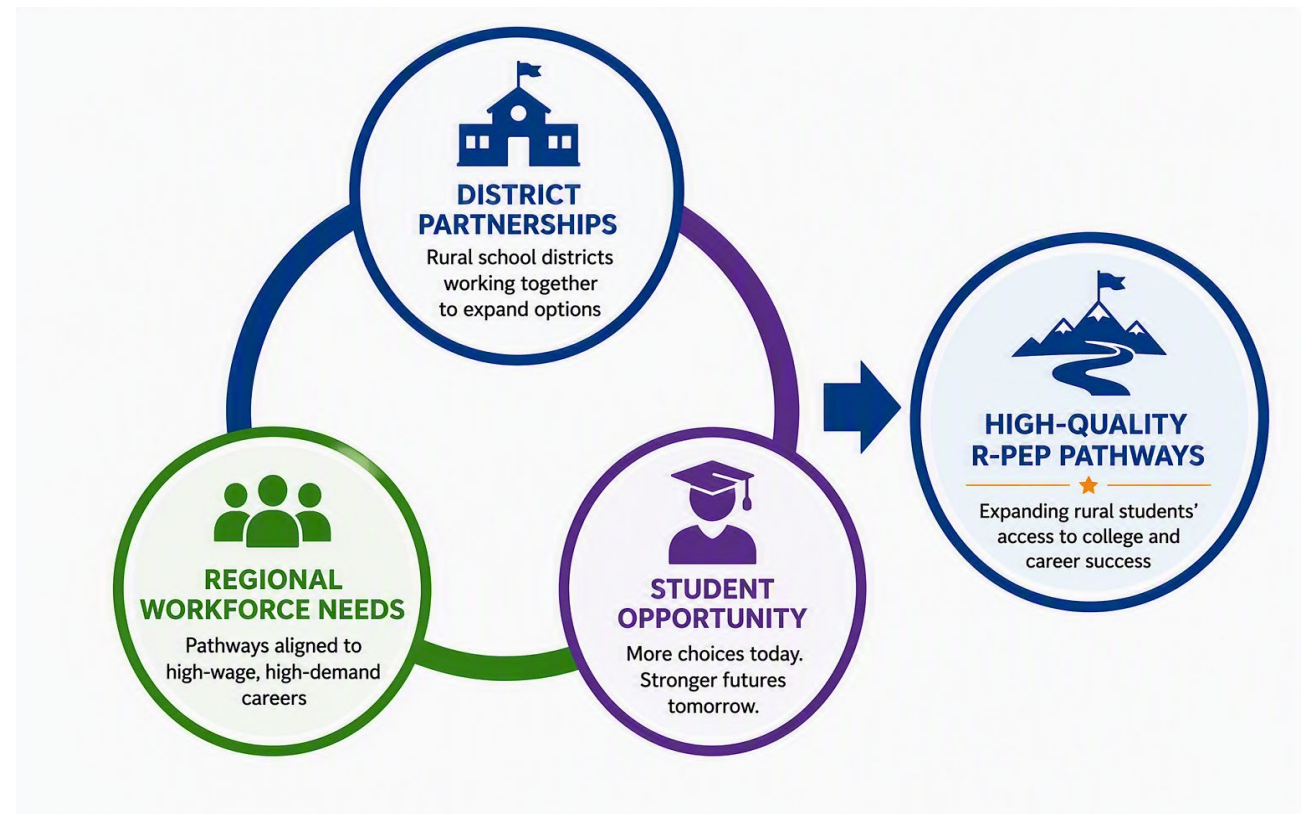
Webpage link: [LASO 5 Website](#) and [R-PEP Website](#)

Purpose – R-PEP

The Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership, or R-PEP, expands rural students' access to **high-quality, high-wage, high-demand college and career Pathways** through structured, multidistrict partnerships.

R-PEP brings together eligible school districts, coordinating entities, and postsecondary and workforce partners to:

- Expand Pathway opportunities that individual rural districts may not be able to offer independently
- Align programs with regional labor market needs
- Support successful student transitions beyond high school
- Build long-term regional capacity, accountability, and sustainability



What grantees receive

Direct Grant Funding

- Planning Grant: up to **\$200,000**
- Expansion Grant: up to **\$80,000**

Approved Technical Assistance

- Planning grantees may use up to **\$50,000** for an approved provider
- Expansion grantees may use up to **\$30,000** for an approved provider
- Support includes an in-person kickoff, regular planning check-ins, implementation planning, and other grant-specific assistance

What grantees will produce

- Labor market analysis and aligned Programs of Study
- Governance and organizational structures
- One-year and five-year budgets
- Performance agreement
- Operational and implementation plans
- **Complete R-PEP designation or expansion application**

Planning Grant applicants

- Eligible applicants include:
 - An institution of higher education
 - A tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
 - A governmental entity, including an Education Service Center
 - A partnership of at least two eligible school districts, with one serving as the fiscal agent for the grant

Expansion Grant applicants

- Eligible applicants for the Expansion Grant must be a coordinating entity of a current R-PEP in good standing.

****If applying as a coordinating entity not on the list, this Letter of Intent Form must be submitted in order to receive the application link.***

Awardees must agree to:

- Use grant activities to support partnership development, operational readiness, and future R-PEP designation or expansion
- Include at least two eligible school districts in the partnership
- Offer Pathways aligned to regional projections for high-wage, high-demand careers
- Select an eligible coordinating entity no later than the spring 2027 designation application
- Establish a governing board or advisory body that includes participating districts and regional higher education and workforce representatives
- Develop a performance agreement approved by each participating district's board of trustees
- Submit implementation evidence and expenditure reports at the required cadence
- Provide performance data and comply with all applicable program requirements

Time Commitment

Role	Commitment
Coordinating Entity or fiscal agent lead	Lead implementation, maintain the project plan, coordinate partners, and oversee deliverables
District leaders	Participate in regular planning sessions and assist developing schedules, calendars, transportation, recruitment, and instructional plans
Board and advisory representatives	Review governance documents, performance agreements, regional needs, and proposed Pathways
Technical Assistance Provider	Facilitate kickoff, conduct regular planning check-ins, and support designation or expansion readiness

*Specific meeting dates, deliverable deadlines, and reporting schedules will be communicated through the grant implementation calendar.

Award Methodology

1. TEA verifies **eligibility and completeness**.
2. Eligible applicants receive applicable **Priority Points**, up to 20 points.
3. Applicants with the highest Priority Point totals may be invited to an **oral interview**.
4. Interviews are worth up to **25 points**.
5. Applicants are ranked using Priority Points and Interview Points, for a maximum of **45 points**.
6. Planning Grants are funded first, followed by Expansion Grants, subject to available funding.

Priority Points

Five points are awarded for each applicable criterion:

- Participating in a College and Career Readiness School Model, including **P-TECH or ECHS**
- Participating in the **Texas Regional Pathways Network**
- For Planning applicants, the **Coordinating Entity has been selected and secured**
- No currently designated R-PEP is located in the partnership's ESC region

Priority Points encourage early readiness and are not minimum eligibility requirements

Finalists may be invited to an interview

Oral interviews are used to:

- Validate information included in the application
- Assess program vision and design
- Evaluate operational readiness
- Review partnership capacity and governance
- Consider anticipated student impact and scale
- Assess sustainability and continuous improvement planning
- Applicants pursuing multiple LASO initiatives may also be asked how they will coordinate implementation across awards

Recommended participants

Planning Grant

- Lead-district superintendent or authorized designee, if applying through a district
- Proposed coordinating entity leader or individual who will oversee implementation

Expansion Grant

- Current R-PEP coordinating entity executive director or designee

Awardees must select a technical assistance provider from the **State Approved Provider List in effect at the time of contracting.**

Planning Grant support may include:

- In-person planning kickoff with district leadership and board members
- Development of the implementation project plan
- At least weekly planning check-ins
- A learning visit to an existing R-PEP

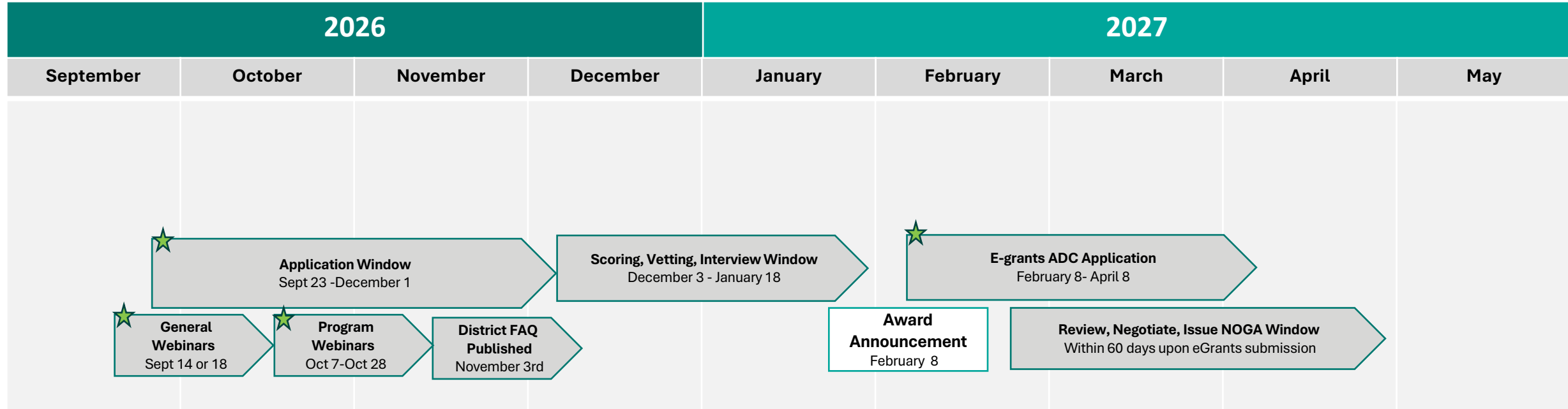
Expansion Grant support may include:

- In-person expansion kickoff
- Planning for onboarding new districts or Pathways
- At least weekly planning check-ins
- Support with expansion readiness and required artifacts

Awardees contract directly with their selected provider and must follow applicable local or state procurement requirements.

Path Forward

LASO 26-27 (Cycle 5) Timeline



Major Milestones

- **Application Window** | September 23, 2026 to December 1, 2026 (closes at 5:00 pm CT)
- **Application Office Hours** | Recurring Mondays, September 28-November 30 at 10:00 AM CT ([register here](#))
- **Program Specific Webinars** | October 7, 2026 to October 28, 2026 ([register here](#))
- **Estimated Award Announcement** | February 2027
- **Estimated NOGA Release** | March 2027 to May 2027



**School systems
must submit
LASO Cycle 5
applications by
December 1 at
5:00pm CST**



TEA emailed unique application links to school system superintendents on September 23 (if needed, LEAs can complete a [Request for Application Link Form](#) to receive a new link)



PDF of the application is posted on the [LASO Cycle 5 website](#); however, school systems must submit the application through Qualtrics using the unique application link



Applications must be signed by the superintendent to be accepted

Change Requests and Declines in LASO

LASO has an informal discretionary competitive grant process

- Declines and change requests are not advisable in typical competitive processes
- If declines are requested, they will be considered on a case-by-case basis for the school systems and could raise the school systems federal grant risk level in the coming year

Questions?



Office Hours

Attend office hours for technical assistance or discussion with program teams

- Wednesday, November 4, 11:30 AM CT | [Registration Link](#)



FAQs

Review the general FAQ (updated FAQs will be posted by November 8)



Email

- For questions about the application process or technical assistance with the application, contact LASO@tea.texas.gov
- For questions about Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership (R-PEP), contact R-PEP@tea.texas.gov

Thank you!