

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

Application Guidelines

Abbreviated Program Guidelines

2018-2019 Charter School Improvement Technical Assistance Grant

Authorized by General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 44, 85th
Texas Legislature

Application Closing Date—5:00 p.m., Central Time
August 17, 2018

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

**Division of Charter School Administration
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Austin, Texas 78701**

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Subgrantee Clarification

TEA, as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the US Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities³ such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees⁴. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

Contacts for Clarifying Information

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¹ Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

² Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term "grantee" does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

³ Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

⁴ Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

US Department of Education and/or State Appropriations

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

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project (total budget shall not exceed this amount)	\$1,000,000
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	0%
Amount of federal funds	\$0
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	100%
Amount of nonfederal funds	\$1,000,000

Grant Timeline

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. If a report due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report will be due the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Attachments

Attach this program guidelines document to the Standard Application System (SAS). These program guidelines are incorporated by reference into the approved SAS and the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

Any additional attachments required to be submitted with this grant application are listed in Schedule #2—Required Attachments and Provisions and Assurances of the SAS.

Program Elements

Program Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

The purpose of the Charter School Improvement and Technical Assistance Grant is to provide high-quality support to the Texas charter school portfolio, ensuring effective launch of new schools and access to resources necessary to continuously improve school performance. The grant activities will provide additional levels of support to strengthen the development and continuation of quality charter schools in the state of Texas beginning with their pre-operational (year 0) year. The focus of

grant activities will be improving charter school operations, fulfilling managerial and business office functions/requirements, and meeting academic accountability.

Shared Services Arrangement

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

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed.

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Cost Share/Match Requirement.

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

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division's [Administering a Grant](#) page.

The supplement, not supplant provision does apply to this grant program.

Indirect Costs

For this state-funded grant, the grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to **the lesser** of their current, approved restricted indirect cost rate or 15%.

Use the Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet, posted on the Federal Fiscal Compliance and Reporting Division's [Indirect Cost Rates](#) page, to calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant.

Limitation of Administrative Funds

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Administrative Costs.

TEA limits the amount of funds that may be budgeted to administer the program to no more than 15% of the total grant awarded.

NOTE: Administrative funds include **both** direct administrative costs **and** allowable indirect costs.

Pre-Award Costs

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

Pre-award costs are not permitted for this grant.

Statutory Requirements

Per Section 22.0834 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding grant

funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Fingerprinting Requirement.

1. Pursuant to the statutory requirement of the Texas Education Code (TEC) §12.104 (b-1), during the first three years an open-enrollment charter school is in operation, the agency shall assist the school as necessary in complying with requirements under Subsection (b)(2)(A) which requires an open-enrollment charter school to be subject to the requirements of PEIMS to the extent necessary to monitor compliance with the provisions of TEC, Subchapter D.

TEA Program Requirements

1. ESC Region 11 will coordinate the Operator Launch Academy (OLA) to provide launch supports to charter schools in the pre-operational year (year 0). Supports and activities will include the following:
 - **Talent Support:** Six-month stipend/salary for Superintendents to facilitate participation in required activities (January 1 through July 1);
 - **Administrative Support:** to include at a minimum PEIMS 101 training in Austin, Human Resources Training, and Student-Records Training; and
 - **Leadership Development and Support:** to provide for mentoring through the Charter School Mentor Program (CSMP) for Generation 23 charter superintendents to include one-on-one commitment hours (26 hours, one hour per week), participation in observation visit (eight hours), mentee job shadowing visits of a two-day minimum (travel and per diem) to glean best practices from four, high-performing charter school campuses determined by TEA (Feb-May); to provide for a three-day Leadership Training (i.e. Courageous Principals); and to provide for attendance at the annual Charter School Summer Summit.

A standard evaluation form must be developed and provided to TEA program staff for input and approval prior to use. ESC Region 11 will collect evaluations from participating charter superintendents in their pre-operational year on the effectiveness of the OLA program in general and each separate component of the program. The evaluations will also include the proposed number of students to be served at the charter school. Upon completion, all evaluations will be provided to TEA program staff. Results will also be reflected in the annual report to the TEA.

ESC Region 11 will fulfill all OLA deliverables as outlined in the ESC Region 11 Letter of Interest (LOI) Response submitted to the agency on July 20, 2018.

2. ESC Region 11 will coordinate the CSMP for Generation 22 charter school superintendents in the first year of operations (year one) to provide contracted CEO/Superintendent mentors to new charter school superintendents (mentees) during year one. The CSMP will include an assigned mentor approved by the TEA program staff to provide support through:
 - onsite visits,
 - teleconferences, and
 - phone conferences.

The supports will include a focus on Public Education Information Management System/Texas State Data System (PEIMS/TSDS), Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST), academic accountability, and curriculum standards and requirements. Each mentor will provide between 56 and 96 hours (for a period of 10 months) of one-on-one commitment hours during their operational year (year 1) to each assigned mentee at a minimum rate of \$85 per hour, dependent upon availability of funding. Each mentor will receive training by a provider contracted through the ESC and approved by TEA on best practices for mentoring/coaching school leaders.

A quarterly, standard evaluation form must be developed and provided to TEA program staff for input and approval prior to use. ESC Region 11 will collect quarterly evaluations from participating charter superintendents on the effectiveness of the assigned mentors. The evaluations will also include the number of students served at the charter school and a description of how the mentoring is or has impacted students. Upon completion, all evaluations will be provided to TEA program staff. Results will also be reflected in the annual report to the TEA.

ESC Region 11 will provide contracted mentor training prior to the superintendent mentors working with their assigned charter superintendents. A list of mentor training contractors must be provided to TEA program staff for approval prior to ESC Region 11's scoring of contractors.

A standard evaluation form must be developed and provided to TEA program staff for input and approval prior to use. Following every mentor training session, ESC Region 11 staff will have mentor participants complete evaluations. Compilation and analyses of results should be sent to TEA program staff within one month of the completed mentor training. Results will also be reflected in the annual report to the TEA.

ESC Region 11 will fulfill all CSMP deliverables as outlined in the ESC Region 11 LOI Response submitted to the agency on July 20, 2018.

3. ESC Region 11 will provide charter schools with access to resources and supports aimed at continuous improvement. Resources and supports will include evidence-based school improvement surveys and tools that can be used to plan and execute continuous school improvement strategies (i.e. UChicago 5 Essentials). These resources and supports will be available to up to 25 superintendents and leadership teams per year, dependent upon availability of funds. Priority will be given to those operators and campuses in their first year of operation, smaller operators (fewer than five schools at the start of the project), and schools in need of improvement (those in the bottom half of charter sector performance, using a scaled score). All superintendents and leadership teams must be pre-approved by TEA program staff prior to notification of selection. The selected resources and supports must provide evidence that the use of the resources result in improvements in school performance as evidenced by subsequent accountability ratings.

A standard evaluation form must be developed and provided to TEA program staff for input and approval prior to use. ESC Region 11 staff will collect, analyze, and summarize the data. The analyses will be submitted to the TEA in quarterly reports. The results should be collected in a manner that identifies each charter school that received training. The results must clearly indicate

the total number of students served at each charter school that received training and a description of how the services may impact students. Results will also be reflected in the annual report to the TEA.

ESC Region 11 will fulfill all deliverables pertaining to School Improvement resources and tools as outlined in the ESC Region 11 LOI Response submitted to the agency on July 20, 2018.

4. ESC Region 11 will coordinate professional development activities for new and operating charter schools to include the creation/revision of professional development training modules, including but not limited to PEIMS, student records, fingerprinting, curriculum, etc., to be housed on a designated Charter School Network webpage hosted by the grantee.

A standard evaluation form must be developed and provided to TEA program staff for input and approval prior to use. Following any training module session, participants will be directed to complete an online evaluation. ESC Region 11 staff will collect, analyze, and summarize the data. The analyses will be submitted to the TEA in quarterly reports. The results should be collected in a manner that identifies each charter school that received training. The results must clearly indicate the total number of students served at each charter school that received training and a description of how the services may impact students. Results will also be reflected in the annual report to the TEA.

ESC Region 11 will fulfill all deliverables pertaining to professional development activities as outlined in the ESC Region 11 LOI Response submitted to the agency on July 20, 2018.

5. ESC Region 11 will work in conjunction with TEA program staff in planning, coordinating, and hosting the annual Summer Summit which will be held in Austin, Texas for three days with a goal of at least 400 attendees to include:
 - Two nationally recognized key-note speakers;
 - Various break-out sessions;
 - Breakfast and lunch for two days;
 - Refreshments;
 - All required technology;
 - Travel and registration reimbursement for up to 5 attendees from each new charter (Gen 23s) that will open for the first time;
 - A minimum of 8 hours of charter school board training offered with credit given (may contract for services by TEA approved vendor);
 - An electronic system that tracks the number of attendees for each session;
 - Promotional items; and
 - Any and all materials and items deemed necessary to host a successful, state-wide professional development conference.

All Summer Summit deliverables including but not limited to venue, speakers, agenda, session development, and menu items are to be coordinated with and pre-approved by TEA program staff.

A standard evaluation form must be developed and provided to TEA program staff for input and approval prior to use. Following every Summer Summit session, ESC Region 11 staff will have

participants complete evaluations. The results should be collected in a manner that can be disaggregated by charter schools that have yet to open and charter schools in operation. Additional disaggregation will include the individual role of participants (i.e. teacher, principal, PEIMS Coordinator, superintendent, etc.). The results should include the total number of students served through the respective charter's participation in the Summer Summit and a description of how summit participation has impacted students. The results should be compiled, analyzed and provided to the TEA Program staff within one month of the Summer Summit's conclusion.

ESC Region will fulfill all deliverables pertaining to the Annual Summer Summit as outline in the ESC Region 11 LOI Response submitted to the agency on July 20, 2018.

6. ESC Region 11 will provide for various promotional activities regarding the Charter School Network and the Summer Summit including, but not limited to:
- A booth at the TCSA annual conference;
 - Save the Date fliers for the Summer Summit;
 - Promotional items with the Network logo;
 - Promotional video for the Summer Summit;
 - Emails sent to previous attendees; and
 - Monthly newsletters.

ESC Region 11 will fulfill all deliverables pertaining to the promotion of the Charter School Network and Annual Summer Summit as outline in the ESC Region 11 Letter of Interest (LOI) Response.

7. ESC Region 11 will provide PEIMS/TSDS technical assistance/support to charter schools statewide, dependent upon availability of funding. Priority will be given to charter schools in the first, three years of operation. Training and supports to include:
- PEIMS 101 Training in Austin;
 - PEIMS staff designated to accompany TEA on initial visits;
 - General on-site visits.

ESC Region 11 will be required to have a designated PEIMS staff (full time, part-time, or contracted and approved by TEA program staff) for the express purpose of the grant. Information and resources created are to be made available to all ESCs and all open-enrollment charter schools.

A standard evaluation form for technical assistance/support visits must be developed and provided to TEA program staff for input and approval prior to use. The results of this evaluation should be sent to TEA to be included in the follow-up report provided to all charters receiving visits.

The results will be reflected in the annual report provided to TEA. The results should be collected in a manner that identifies each charter school receiving training disaggregated by charters that have yet to open, charters in their first year of operation, and charters operating for more than one year.

ESC Region 11 will fulfill all deliverables pertaining to providing statewide PEIMS/TSDS supports to charter schools as outlined in the ESC Region 11 LOI Response submitted to the agency on July 20, 2018.

8. Region 11 will house and maintain the Charter School Network webpage through the ESC website for the duration of the grant. The website will include general information applicable to charter schools including grant opportunities, access to Summer Summit registration, professional development modules, and information about deliverables, as applicable.

ESC Region 11 will fulfill all deliverables pertaining to housing the Charter School Network webpage for the duration of the grant as outlines in the ESC Region 11 Letter of Interest (LOI) Response.

9. ESC Region 11 will meet/conference with TEA program coordinator on the status of deliverables. The ESC Region 11 point of contact will schedule monthly conferences, prepare a corresponding agenda, and provide follow-up summarization of meeting/conference call.

ESC Region 11 will fulfill all deliverables pertaining to participation in regular status meetings with TEA program staff as outlined in the ESC Region 11 LOI Response submitted to the agency on July 20, 2018.

10. ESC Region 11 will provide a final report to the TEA program staff within one month of the completion of the grant. The final report should be inclusive of all grant activities and should contain a compilation and analysis of data obtained during the life of the grant including how the activities impacted students at participating charter schools. Additional analyses should include how the grant activities met the goals of the grant.
11. ESC region 11 will continue the work of the Charter School Technical Assistance Network and must dedicate space, equipment, and all other necessary resources to maintain it successfully.
12. ESC Region 11 staff must work collaboratively with staff at other Regional Service Centers and TEA to support and improve the Texas charter school portfolio.
13. ESC Region 11 will submit all amendment requests to TEA program staff for approval prior to submission to grants administration staff.
14. ESC Region 11 will certify that all staff going onsite to a charter school campus have met the fingerprinting requirement.
15. ESC Region 11 will submit the following as outlined in the ESC Region 11 LOI Response:
 - a list of staff responsible for each grant deliverable including titles and qualifications;
 - milestones and timelines for each grant deliverable;
 - itemized budget delineated by deliverable and activity.

Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

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

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

Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences

Conferences may be hosted or sponsored under the grant program. Conferences must be managed to minimize costs to the grant award. The following types of conference are allowable:

- Annual Charter School Summer Summit to provide professional development opportunities to all state charter personnel, new and currently operating charter schools.

Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Cost of Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences Justification form, refer to the [Administering a Grant](#) page.

Out-of-State Travel

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

Out-of-State Travel will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Out of State Travel Justification form, refer to the [Administering a Grant](#) page.

Travel Costs for Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

The cost of travel costs for officials such as the executive director, superintendent, or board members may be funded under the grant program. Only the following travel costs are allowable for these positions:

- Travel to and from charter schools;
- Travel to Austin, as needed; and
- Travel to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers Leadership Conference.

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- Salaries and benefits of current and new ESC Regional staff, proportionate to the amount of time dedicated to grant activities
- Salaries and benefits for new full-time or part-time employees, and/or contract costs for consultants, with whom ESC Region 11 contract to perform grant activities
- Building use, associated with the grant activities, at the ESC Regional Service Center
- Services for grant activities, including, but not limited to phone, fax, email, and/or web services
- Expenses to maintain necessary equipment

- Travel to and from charter school and in-state charter events
- Travel necessary to conduct and oversee the annual Summer Summit
- Travel necessary to conduct and oversee the superintendent mentor program including mentor training
- Travel necessary to conduct and oversee the Operator Launch Academy (OLA) program and all associated trainings
- Travel necessary to conduct and oversee leadership training activities
- Fees to attend in-state charter events
- Rent for facilities to be used for charter events
- Other supplies and equipment necessary to fulfill the grant requirements
- Reimbursement of certain participants for the annual Summer Summit
- Items of nominal cost to be used in the promotion of the annual Summer Summit

Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

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

Field Trips

Field trips may not be funded under the grant program.

Advisory Council

An advisory council may not be funded under the grant program.

Cost of Membership in Any Civic or Community Organization

The cost of membership in any civic or community organization may not be funded under the grant program.

In addition, unallowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

- Debt service (lease-purchase)
- Audit services for state-funded grants
- Travel for students to conferences

Performance Measures

The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance measures:

1. 85% of charter schools in the first three years of operation will submit their PEIMS data on time and without errors.
2. 75% of new charter schools in the first year of operation will submit their PEIMS data on time and without errors.

3. 85% of participants in any professional development activity offered through the grant including training modules will rate the training as highly effective and impactful.
4. 85% of superintendents receiving mentoring support through the CSMP will rate the mentoring as highly effective and impactful.
5. 50% of new charter schools at the end of their first year of operation will receive a performance reporting rating of Met Standard at the campus level, A, B, or C at the charter school LEA level.
6. 85% of the Charter School Summer Summit attendees will rate the training as highly effective and impactful.
7. 85% of OLA participants will rate the program as highly effective and impactful.
8. 85% of charter school superintendents or leadership teams that are provided access to evidenced-based school improvement surveys, resources, and/or tools to implement school improvement strategies will rate the resources and supports as highly effective and impactful to their school improvement goals.
9. 100% of charter school board members will report on their annual governance reports they are current on the required board training.
10. 100% of Quarterly Reports will be submitted to Texas Education Agency program staff on the quarterly due date established at the onset of the grant
11. 85% of charter school superintendents or leadership teams that are provided access to evidenced-based school improvement surveys, resources, and/or tools to implement school improvement strategies will rate the resources and supports as highly effective and impactful to their school improvement goals.
12. 100% of Project Status Agendas will be submitted one week prior to the monthly conference with Texas Education Agency program staff.