



**2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 2 Year 1  
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 5:00 p.m. CT, March 30, 2020**

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 **5:00 p.m. CT, March 30, 2020**.

Grant period from   
 Pre-award costs permitted from

Application stamp-in date and time

**Required Attachments**

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Applicants must submit the additional attachments as detailed in the Required Attachment section on p. 6 on the Program Guidelines found on [TEA's Grant Opportunities](#) page.

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN  Campus  ESC  DUNS   
 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  Date

**Shared Services Arrangements**

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. **Check the box below if applying as fiscal agent.**

The LEA or ESC submitting this application is the fiscal agent of a planned SSA. All participating agencies will enter into a written SSA agreement describing the fiscal agent and SSA member responsibilities. All participants understand that the "Shared Services Arrangement Attachment" must be completed and signed by all SSA members, and submitted to TEA before the NOGA is issued.

**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 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 2 Year 1 Program Guidelines.
  
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 2 Year 1 Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
  
- 5. The applicant provides assurance that they accept and will comply with [Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances](#) requirements.
  
- 6. The applicant assures they understand that 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 2 Year 1 applicants cannot request to be placed in the treatment or control group and should apply with the intent to complete the treatment requirements outlined in the LOI.
  
- 7. The applicant assures that the district plans to develop or expand a computer science or cybersecurity Program of Study.
  
- 8. The applicant assures the T-STEM blueprint components and artifacts as described in the Program Guidelines will be followed.

**Budget Narrative**

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

The proposed budget WILL MEET THE NEEDS AND GOALS of the program, because the charter is financially stable, as determined through fiscal review by the TEA’s Division of Financial Audits. Due to this proven history of stability, the charter can assure that they have the knowledge and capabilities to organize a successful budget that would account for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. Therefore, the charter will be able to increase the amount of high-quality STEM education opportunities and outcomes for high-need students in the 9-12 grades. The charter will have a particular focus on implementing programs of study that will help students gain the skills, post-secondary credentials, and experience necessary to embark on well-paying careers in STEM fields under the cybersecurity program of study. NEEDS OF THE PROGRAM: The expected increase of STEM jobs in Texas by 20%, as well as, the number of females (minorities) earning computer qualifications staying stagnant is a major need for the program (the charter ensures that the aforementioned statements will also be addressed in the treatment group of the grant.) SNAPSHOT OF FUNDS CURRENTLY ALLOCATED TO SIMILAR PROGRAMS: Currently funds are allocated from Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA), Title I, P-TECH Success Grant, CTE; and Compensatory Education. Funding from these programs, have been utilized to purchase varied software programs, computer equipment, electronic flat panels, and headphones. HOW ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE MADE IN THE FUTURE: In order to make adjustments in the future, the charter will utilize local funds if needed to continue staff development in the future, as well as, to pay for any material fees that are needed in cybersecurity. The Leadership Team that was developed for this grant will also be tasked with working on sustainability and the continuous monitoring and improvement of the Lone Star STEM Academy. Therefore, they will be responsible for ensuring that the correct adjustments are made in the future.

**Statutory/Program Requirements**

1. What type of College Career Readiness School Model (CCRSM) is the campus currently? (T-STEM, P-TECH, ICIA, or ECHS) If not a CCRSM, what model do you plan to operate during the Implementation Year?

Priority Charter School’s Cedar Park campus is currently classified as a P-TECH campus (1 Point). During the grant program, the charter plans to follow T-STEM blueprint artifacts. By doing so the charter would be able to align with the grant goals and objectives, as well as, follow all T-STEM Benchmarks 1 through 6 (School Design, Target Population, Strategic Alliances, etc.).

**Statutory/Program Requirements, (cont.)**

2. What CCRSM designation does your district plan to pursue through the Lone Star STEM grant?

During the grant program, the Priority Charter School's Cedar Park campus plans to continue to operate their P-TECH College Career Readiness School Model. By doing so, the charter will be aligned with the grant goals and objectives.

3. What process and information was used to determine which pathway was selected for the 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 2 Year 1 grant? Please include any relevant labor market data or documentation.

Priority Charter School is determined to expand their STEM pathway in Cybersecurity (1 point) during the 2020-2021 Lone Star STEM Cycle 2 Year 1 grant. The charter reviewed local market data (Texas Career Check, 2019) and noted Network and Computer System Administrators (\$70,437) is a high-demand, high-wage occupations occupation. This occupation is expected to grow by 13% within the next 6 years and is expected to have close to 250 jobs in the field. This data helped the charter staff determine the correct STEM pathways to select. (1 Point)



**Statutory/Program Requirements, (cont.)**

4. Describe plans for creating strategic alliances with industry partners and IHEs. What is the anticipated role for each IHE, business, and/or community partnership?

The charter plans to expand STRATEGIC ALLIANCES with an industry partner, an IHE, their local Boys and Girls Club, and its local workforce board. The charter will be partnering with a total of four (4) organizations. The four organizations would include: Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, Austin Community College, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Austin Area, and Hardi Technology Global. Each of the organizations would sign and submit a letter of commitment, as well as, a Memorandum of Understand (MOU) that are reviewed annually and clearly articulate the requirements outlined in this LOI. A list of the partnering organizations and their ANTICIPATED ROLES for the grant program (1 Point) include: Workforce Solutions of Central Texas- The development board will identify, create, and maintain a list of in-demand STEM occupations and programs of study that lead to these occupations to be used as a resource in creating structured pathways for students and updated as local needs change; Boys & Girls Clubs of the Austin Area – will support and guidance to the charter in resource acquisition, curriculum development, work-based learning, and student/community outreach to ensure a successful academic and career pipeline; Austin Community College – Will allow a student to combine high school courses and college-level courses towards credentials and certifications including associate and/or bachelor’s degree, as well as, having the opportunity to earn an industry certification or credential in a STEM focused field. The IHE will also give the charter a four-year crosswalk detailing how students will progress towards this goal including alignment of high school and college-level courses.; and Hardi Technology Global – Will provide real-world experiences to students through Project or Problem Based Learning (PBL) challenges. Teachers will also visit with employers to gain insight on teaching strategies to be implemented in the classroom. Also, Hardi Technology Global will provide documentation of entry-level knowledge, skills, and abilities of a student, as well as, capture and monitor student growth over the course of the grant program. Moreover, the charter will work with each of the aforementioned organizations and include a list of each member’s title and include a list of each member’s title and role on the charter’s website.

5. Identify the type of advanced courses (dual credit/AP/IB) currently implemented on the campus. Has the district identified what postsecondary credit will be available to students through the computer science, cybersecurity, and engineering programs?

Currently, the Charter offers advanced courses (dual credit/AP/IB) required for a Cybersecurity program of study (1 Point). A sample course crosswalk can be seen below:

- 9th Grade Fall: Health, English 1, Algebra 2, World Geography, Biology, Spanish I, Fine Arts, and AVID.
- 9th Grade Spring: College Readiness Study Skills (Monday (M), Wednesday (W), and Friday (F)), English 1, Algebra 2, World Geography, Biology, Spanish I, Fine Arts, and AVID.
- 10th Grade Fall: Business Information Management 1 (M and W), Introduction to Computing (M and W), Networking with Lab (T and Thursday (TH)), Fundamentals of Networking Technologies (T and TH) Geometry, English 2, Spanish 2, Advanced Science, HS Elective, and HS elective.
- 10th Grade Spring: Introduction to Security: Cybersecurity (M and W), College Algebra (M and W), Programming Fundamentals (T and Th), Geometry, English 2, Spanish 2, Advanced Science, HS Elective, and HS elective.
- 11th Grade Fall: Networking with TCP/IP (M & W), Personal Computer Hardware (T and Th), Introduction to Speech Communication (T & Th), Semester Course/Study Hall (M, W, & F), English 3, US History, Advanced Math, Advanced Science.
- 11th Grade Spring: UNIX Operating Systems (M and W), Implementing and Supporting Servers: Windows 2008 (T and Th), Routers (T and Th), English 3, US History, Advanced Math, and Advanced Science.
- 12th Grade Fall: Information Storage and Management: Cloud Computing (M and W), Firewalls and Network Security (T and Th), Operating Systems Security (M and W), Technical and Business Writing (T and Th), US Government (M and W), English 4, Advanced Math, Advanced Science.
- 12 Grade Spring: Computer Systems Forensics (M and W), Intrusion Detection: Ethical Hacking, Practicum – CIT (M and W), Humanities: Renaissance to Present, Economics (M and W), English 4, Advanced Math, Advanced Science.

Currently, Priority Charter School partners with Austin Community College (1 point) to offer these Cybersecurity post-secondary credits.

**Statutory/Program Requirements, (cont.)**

6. Describe any planned STEM-focused informal activities (field experiences, clubs, competitions, summer STEM camp, etc.) that will be offered to students, whether they are offered by the school or by a community partner.

Through their previously awarded P-TECH Success Grant, the charter has been able to establish partnerships with an IHE and business partner. These partnerships, along with the partnership created with the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Austin Area, will enable the charter to provide the following STEM-focused informal activities: field experiences (within the second phase of the grant), club competitions (During second phase of grant), and field experiences (During second phase of grant). (1 Point) These planned STEM-focused informal activities will ensure that student understands the connection with their work-based learning and academics. Furthermore, to ensure that students have a personalized learning environment, the charter will provide layered academic support, as well as, layered social and emotional support. To provide layered academic support, the charter will provide tutoring and/or Saturday school, college readiness and support time built into the program of study for all students, and dedicated student college application assistance. To provide social and emotional support, the charter will provide parent outreach and involvement opportunities, a program of community service to promote community involvement, and skill building instruction for students (i.e. time management, study skills, etc.).

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

7. Describe the Academy's plans for implementing an interdisciplinary approach to learning where academic concepts are coupled with real-world experiences through Project or Problem Based Learning (PBL) and/or Engineering Design Challenges that are offered regularly throughout the school year. Please include how the Academy will support and develop teachers in offering this, including considerations for scheduling, professional development, and structures for cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Priority Charter School will implement an interdisciplinary approach to learning by utilizing Hardi Technology Global to provide real-world experiences to students through Project or Problem Based Learning (PBL) challenges. (1 Point) This is a student-centered approach in which students learn about a subject by working in groups to solve an open-ended problem. This problem is what drives the motivation and the learning and may include: Working in teams; Managing projects and holding leadership roles; Oral and written communication; Self-awareness and evaluation of group processes; Working independently; Critical thinking and analysis; Applying course content to real-world examples; Researching and information literacy; and Problem-solving across disciplines.

Furthermore, to ensure that each individual student is ready to take on more rigorous classes, the charter will biannually implement a structured data review process designed to identify student strengths and weaknesses and develop instructional support plans. By strengthening each student's academics weaknesses, this would ensure that the students are ready to succeed in tests such as TSI, TSIA, SAT, and ACT. These tests would be included on a calendar posted on the charter's website and the students will be notified of when the test is schedule.

The charter will also implement an annual professional development plan for teachers and staff that focuses on research-based instructional strategies that teach about rigor, building college and career readiness, and STEM skills that are based on needs assessment of student data. These strategies can come up in some of the following activities: an externship program, summer research experiences, regularly scheduled peer observations/collaborations with focus groups, industry partners, and IHE partners, etc. Teachers will also visit with employers to gain insight on teaching strategies to be implemented in the classroom.

8. Describe how the district plans to recruit, retain, and support historically underrepresented populations in STEM (e.g, females, economically disadvantaged, at-risk, etc...).

5/2020-12/2021 - Online advertising through the charter's website, Region ESC website, and newspapers in English/Spanish. 12/2020–August 2021–Upon receiving Lone Star Academy Designation, marketing materials will be distributed to all stakeholders. The Counselor will meet with the 8th grade students to discuss the grant program. Any student interested will be provided an application & encouraged to apply. Campus administration will meet with each student's guardian, so they can be made aware of weighted lottery that will favor students who are females/minorities/AA/Hispanic.

9. Does the applicant plan to develop or extend an engineering program as well as a computer science or cybersecurity program?

The Charter (1 point), and its campus (1 point), do not plan to develop or extend an engineering program. The Charter only plans to expand their cybersecurity program.

10. Does the applicant have at least one teacher certified to teach computer science?

Priority Charter School currently has one (1) teacher certified to teach computer science (1 point).

11. Does the applicant have at least one teacher certified to teach cybersecurity?

Priority Charter School currently has one (1) teacher certified to teach Cybersecurity (1 point).

**Equitable Access and Participation**

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this program.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this program.
- Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group	Female	Barrier	A representation that is equal in STEM Field
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>



**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**