

IDEA B Discretionary Technical Assistance and Support Grant Opportunity for 2019-2020

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is actively seeking Letters of Interest (LoI) from potential grantees to provide opportunities for specific work toward statewide supports for serving ***Students with Sensory Impairments***. Interested regional Education Service Centers (ESC) and/or Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) should submit an LoI in the template included in Attachment A to TEA **by October 1, 2018, at 5 pm CDT**. Potential grantees are encouraged to seek cooperative partnerships or collaborative agreements to successfully meet all goals and objectives of the grant. Funding is allocated from IDEA B Discretionary funds and scheduled for implementation in the 2019-2020 school year.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to the 20 regional education service centers and all institutions of higher education located in Texas. Other nonprofits or for-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply; however, they may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner (encouraged, as applicable).

1.1 Program Description

TEA coordinates the provision of services to children with sensory impairments through collaboration with appropriate agencies and organizations throughout the entire state. TEA is required to develop and administer comprehensive statewide plans for the education of children under 21 years old who are blind, deafblind, or deaf or hard of hearing. Working closely with families and students, the ***Students with Sensory Impairments*** grant will provide information and strategies for development of communication, mobility, tactile skills, environmental adaptations. Additionally, the grant will address diagnosis, evaluation and educational programs for services to students in their home communities whenever possible in support of the comprehensive statewide education plan for this student population.

The content of all resources and professional development materials produced through this grant must be firmly grounded in current literature and policy on special education best practice with explicit citations. All resources must be made available and accessible to all stakeholders.

Additional considerations for materials and resources produced through this grant:

- TEA maintains the right to final approval on all materials and resources before publication or presentation.
- All materials and resources will carry the TEA logo in addition to the logo of the grant awardee.
- All materials and resources are the property of TEA and must be provided to TEA at the end of the grant period or upon request.
- All materials or resources intended for use with parents and families will be made available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese at a minimum.

Grant awardees will make formal quarterly reports to TEA on identified outcomes-based, quantifiable lead measures with lag measure reporting at the end of the grant period. These measures must be mutually approved by the grantee and TEA and should be clearly proposed in the LoI response. Additionally, budget proposals and final budget tables must include line-item/deliverable-based pricing.

1.2 Program Goal

The goal of the *Students with Sensory Impairments* grant is to provide nationally exemplar supports to families and schools through the creation of resources and strategies designed to overcome barriers to academic and functional success for students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have other single or multi-sensory impairments that impede the development of functional vision and/or hearing.

1.3 Program Activities

Strong applications will demonstrate the ability and structure for foundational and logistical support to achieve the program goal. The applications will also demonstrate a solid foundation in evidence-based practices for improving outcomes for students with sensory impairments. Additionally, strong applications will include robust plans for thoughtful planning toward program scaling across the state.

It is required that the proposed programs contain, at a minimum, the following:

- Resources and guidance to ensure that students with sensory impairments have equitable access to rigorous coursework such as Pre-AP, AP, and IB
- Resources for increased community access and lifelong living skills, including social, recreational, and employment opportunities such as:
 - Community access through transition fairs in two regions for the deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) as well as a weekend for DHH students to participate in Imagination Texas
 - Collaboration with the Transition Network on innovative courses, transition guidelines, TWC opportunities and other transition initiatives
- Resources for communication, mobility, and tactile skill development such as:
 - Signed English Workshops, Sign language Immersion program, and Communication Skills workshops are some examples of resources provided to educators, parents, and others to increase communication among DHH students
 - Collaboration with the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) in developing a set of training modules for paraprofessionals that would lead to a certification as an alternative media specialist
 - Assistive technology for meaningful communication, access, and involvement
 - Provision of Active Learning Teams in different regions with training on Active Learning and Train the Trainer events
 - Collaborate with TSBVI to support ESCs and LEAs participating in the TSBVI braille literacy pilot. Target a model for developing braille literacy skills earlier for students who are probable braille readers, through training for families and on-going support by educators
- Professional training and nontraditional certification opportunities for educators, administrators, and support professionals such as:
 - Signed English Workshops, Sign language Immersion program and Communication Skills workshops are some examples of resources provided to educators, parents, and others to increase communication among DHH students
 - Support in recruiting quality teachers of students with visual impairments to support new interns in the field
- Self and family advocacy and support connections and resources such as:
 - Educational Resource Center on Deafness (ERCOD) collaboration effort to provide activities for family involvement such as Guide by Your Side and Deaf Mentorship program to provide advocacy and support
 - Maintenance of the Crossroads website or similar, to provide information and supports for students and families

- Up-to-date statewide calendar with an Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) opportunities or resources available to parents and families in the state
- Identification and implementation support for evidence-based practices to address social, emotional, communication, and/or behavioral needs of students with sensory impairments
- Projects identified to meet federal regulations and/or state statutory requirements must include:
 - Statewide plan for the education of children with visual impairments (Texas Education Code (TEC) §30.002)
 - Statewide Deaf/Blind Plan to identify needs, set priorities, and guide the development and provision of services for students with Deaf/Blindness; and
 - For students who are deaf or hard of hearing, develop a Statewide plan for educational services through a State DHH Plan (see TEC §30.083).

1.4 Program Budget

\$2,540,000

1.5 Timeline

Lols must be submitted electronically to sped@tea.texas.gov by 5pm (CDT) on October 1, 2018, in order to be considered. Hard copy mailed or delivered Lols will not be accepted. Applicants should combine all attachments and documents into one PDF to include a cover sheet and table of contents. Grant awardees will be notified by November 1, 2018, with the grant period to begin July 1, 2019. This is a one-year grant that may be extended for additional years at TEA discretion.

1.6 Closing and Next Steps

Strong applications with a likelihood of award will be innovative in nature, demonstrate clear planning toward stated goals, and focus on producing desired outcomes rather than simply activity completion.

A virtual applicants' conference will be held the week of July 16, 2018. Questions submitted to sped@tea.texas.gov prior to July 13, 2018, will be answered at that time and an FAQ will be published. When submitting questions, applicants should include the name of this grant in the subject line. Applicants should refer to www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED for details and updates regarding the applicants' conference and this request for Lol generally.