

REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Program Guidelines

2020–2021 Coronavirus Relief Fund
(CRF) Operation Connectivity
Prior Purchase Reimbursement Program

Authorized by Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
(CARES) Act, Section 5001, Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)

Application Closing Date—11:59 p.m., Central Time
December 11, 2020

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

**Department of Grant Compliance and Administration
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701**

© Copyright 2020. Texas Education Agency. All Rights Reserved.

Contents

Introduction to the Program Guidelines	4
Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines	4
Contact for Clarifying Information	5
TEA Contact.....	5
Federal and/or State Appropriations	5
Reimbursement Timeline	5
Reimbursement at a Glance	6
Program Purpose, Goals, and Objectives	6
Eligible Applicants	6
Supplement, Not Supplant.....	6
Limitation of Administrative Funds	6
Application Requirements and Assurances	6
Statutory Requirements	6
TEA Program Requirements	8
Program-Specific Assurances.....	8
Statutorily Allowable Activities	9
Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds.....	9
Performance Measures	9
Compliance Monitoring	9
Attachments	10
Potential Future Funding	10

Introduction to the Program Guidelines

TEA, as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the Office of the Governor of the State of Texas, of CRF funding received from the U. S. Department of Treasury. TEA is awarding reimbursements to non-federal entities³ such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts and charter schools, who are the agency's subawardees⁴. These guidelines apply to all subawardees of TEA under this program. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its reimbursement subaward subrecipients.

This part of the request for application (RFA), Program Guidelines, is to be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and any application instructions. The reimbursement application must be completed for the applicant to be eligible for funding.

Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this reimbursement program. The [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs. Throughout the Program Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#). It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) when preparing your application.

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 Subawardee 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.

Contact for Clarifying Information

TEA Contact

Tamie Frierson, CRF Reimbursement Coordinator
Chelsei Culmer, CRF Reimbursement Coordinator
Department of Grant Compliance and Administration
tamie.frierson@tea.texas.gov
chelsei.culmer@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8992

Federal and/or State Appropriations

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project	Approximately \$420,000,000
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	Approximately \$420,000,000
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	\$0

Reimbursement Timeline

For all dates related to the reimbursement program, see the [CRF Prior Purchase Reimbursement Program](#) web page. If a due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the due date will be considered the following business day. All dates except the reimbursement ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Reimbursement at a Glance

This section provides detailed information about the reimbursement program.

Program Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

The purpose of this reimbursement program is to facilitate distance learning, including technological improvements, in connection with school closings to enable compliance with COVID-19 precautions and for developing online learning capabilities necessary to continue educational instruction in response to COVID-19-related school closures and safely reopening schools.

Eligible Applicants

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), including Public School Districts and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools, that expended funds from May 21, 2020, to December 11, 2020, for technology purchases (laptops, tablets, and/or hotspots) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supplement, Not Supplant

The supplement, not supplant provision applies to this reimbursement program.

Limitation of Administrative Funds

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

TEA prohibits applicants from budgeting any administrative costs (both direct and indirect) for this reimbursement program.

Application Requirements and Assurances

This section identifies the two 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)

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 reimbursement funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding reimbursement 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.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program. The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

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 that it will only use CRF funds for activities allowable under Section 5001 of the CARES Act.
3. The applicant assures that CRF funds will only be used for supplemental activities allowable by statute that are:
 - Necessary expenditures incurred due to COVID-19 pandemic,
 - Allowable costs that were not accounted for in the most recently approved budget as of March 27, 2020, and
 - Allowable costs incurred May 21, 2020, through December 11, 2020.
4. The applicant assures that CRF funds will not be expended for:
 - Expenses for the State share of Medicaid
 - Damages covered by insurance
 - Payroll or benefits expenses for employees whose work duties are not substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency (general LEA employees)
 - Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal program, such as the 2020–2021 CRF Operation Connectivity Local Match Reimbursement Program or the 2020–2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Grant
 - Reimbursement to donors for donated items or services
 - Workforce bonuses other than hazard pay or overtime
 - Severance pay
 - Legal settlements
5. The applicant assures that it will comply with all reporting requirements, including submitting required quarterly and/or final reports in the time and manner required by TEA.
6. The applicant assures that it will cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of (a) TEA, (b) the Department of Treasury and/or its Inspector General; and/or (c) any other federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority.
7. The applicant assures that no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program.
8. The applicant assures that any CRF reimbursement funds received for devices that are not received by the LEA prior to December 30, 2020, will be refunded back to TEA in the time and manner requested by TEA.
9. The applicant assures that it will provide required documentation for expenditure validation in the manner requested by TEA.
10. The applicant assures that CRF reimbursement funds for any expenditures determined to be noncompliant through TEA reimbursement validation monitoring or for which documentation is not provided by the LEA will be refunded back to TEA in the time and manner requested by TEA.

TEA Program Requirements

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), TEA Program Requirements.

LEAs may request reimbursement up to the Total Maximum Reimbursement Cap for Eligible Devices included in Section 3A of the application. LEAs must complete Section 3B. Requested Reimbursement Amounts for Eligible Devices in the application. The total amount requested in Section 3B cannot exceed the Total Maximum Reimbursement Cap for Eligible Devices in Section 3A. TEA will reimburse each LEA for 75% of eligible expenditures in the TOTAL REQUESTED REIMBURSEMENT - ALL DEVICES in Section 3B.

However, TEA reserves the right to ratably reduce or increase the 75% reimbursement rate to ensure all CRF funds are allocated and expended, depending on the statewide total request for reimbursement received from all eligible LEAs that apply.

The Total Maximum Reimbursement Cap for Eligible Devices per LEA is calculated at \$300 per Economically Disadvantaged Student or \$50,000, whichever is greater. To receive reimbursement based on the \$50,000 minimum, the LEA must include a sufficient amount of expenditures in Section 3B, with appropriate documentation. Eligible Devices are defined as laptops/Chromebooks, tablets, and hotspots. All other devices are NOT eligible for reimbursement under the Prior Purchase Reimbursement Program.

The PPRP Application will open on Wednesday November 18th, 2020. Complete applications will be prioritized and processed for payment in three rounds:

- Round #1 Due Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020
- Round #2 Due Date: Monday, December 7, 2020
- Round #3 Due Date: Friday, December 11, 2020

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. The applicant assures that it will adhere to all Statutory Requirements and TEA Program Requirements as noted in the 2020–2021 Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) Operation Connectivity Prior Purchase Reimbursement Program Guidelines.
2. The applicant assures that it will adhere to the General and Fiscal Guidelines, where applicable to this type of TEA subaward.
3. The applicant assures that it will adhere to the Office of the Governor CRF Terms and Conditions, where applicable to this type of TEA subaward.

Program-Specific Assurances

The program-specific assurances for this reimbursement program, aligned to the statutory and TEA program requirements, are listed in the Application.

Statutorily Allowable Activities

1. Reclassification of all eligible expenses originally charged to state/local funds, to these federal reimbursement funds. (This is the preferable use of this reimbursement funding.)

If, due to the timing of the reimbursement, the LEA cannot reclassify the original expenditures, then the LEA must use this reimbursement funding for one of the following CRF allowable activities:

2. Expenses to facilitate distance learning, including technological improvements, in connection with school closings to enable compliance with COVID-19 precautions, including safely reopening schools.
3. Other eligible expenditures, including payroll and benefit costs of educational support staff or faculty responsible for developing online learning capabilities necessary to continue educational instruction in response to COVID-19-related school closures. (This does not include general LEA staff.)

Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

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

The following are specifically unallowable for this reimbursement program.

- Expenses for the State share of Medicaid
- Damages covered by insurance
- Payroll or benefits expenses for employees whose work duties are not substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency (general LEA employees)
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal program, such as the 2020–2021 CRF Operation Connectivity Local Match Reimbursement Program or the 2020–2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Grant
- Reimbursement to donors for donated items or services
- Workforce bonuses other than hazard pay or overtime
- Severance pay
- Legal settlements

Performance Measures

There are currently no performance measures for this reimbursement program. However, the applicant agrees to collect data and report on any performance measures defined by TEA in a time and manner as determined by TEA.

Compliance Monitoring

TEA will conduct compliance monitoring in spring 2021. Documentation to be validated may include, but may not be limited to:

- original and complete itemized third-party documents such as invoices, receipts, and billing statements,

- purchase orders; and
- general ledger.

Documentation should identify the dates and the specific devices or services received.

Any CRF reimbursement funds for any expenditures 1) determined to be noncompliant through TEA reimbursement validation monitoring, 2) for which documentation is not provided by the LEA, or 3) determined to be duplicated benefit (double dipping) of federal funds will be refunded back to TEA in the time and manner requested by TEA.

Attachments

As part of the application process, the LEA will be required to upload documentation of the purchase(s) of additional allowable devices not included in TDEM reimbursements prior to May 20, 2020 or as part of the Operation Connectivity Bulk Purchase Order Program.

The documentation must include invoice(s) or billing statement(s) which includes the date, number of devices, and amount per device.

The applicant will receive instructions and a unique hyperlink to upload required documentation during the application process.

Potential Future Funding

Applicants should document other COVID-19 related expenditures for safely reopening schools (both remote and in-person instruction) in the event that additional funding becomes available. If this funding were to become available, the application and documentation upload period would be extremely short.