

Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities (LASO) 2022-2023 Winter Cycle

Strong Foundations
Planning Supports
Program Guidelines



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Grant Program Guidelines 2022

Grant Name as it will appear on the TEA Grant Opportunities Page	Strong Foundations Planning Supports
Application Due Date	11:59 p.m. Central Time, December 22, 2022
Program Authority	General Appropriations Act (GAA), Article IX, Section 18.15 (TCLAS), 87 th Texas Legislature

INTRODUCTION

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities³ such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, open-enrollment 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.

This document MUST be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and the specific program instructions. The Standard Application consists of all forms to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding.

For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL AND FISCAL GUIDELINES

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs. Throughout the 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 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.

OVERVIEW OF GRANT PROCESS

The following steps provide a high-level overview of the process for responding to a grant opportunity, including submitting an application, and being selected for funding:

1. TEA publishes grant application and supporting documents on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) webpage.
2. Eligible applicants submit grant application via Qualtrics to TEA by the specified deadline on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) webpage.
3. Grant applications are reviewed and scored. Note: Applicants may be required to attend an oral interview or respond to additional questions regarding their application.
4. TEA announces applicants selected for funding on the TEA [Grants Awarded Data](#) webpage.
5. ***Applicants selected for funding will be required to submit and certify an eGrant application including assurances and a budget summary to receive funding.***
6. TEA staff conducts budget negotiations on the eGrants application.
7. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) will be issued upon successful completion of the negotiation process.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND/OR STATE APPROPRIATIONS

The following is provided in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education Appropriations Act:

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project	\$14,055,000
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	\$14,055,000

APPLICANT ASSISTANCE

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

Contact for Clarifying Information

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *TEA Contacts*.

The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions:

Program manager name	Shay Wise-Garland
Program manager title	Director of Scale Strategy
Program manager email	strongfoundations@tea.texas.gov
Program manager phone	512-463-9586

Errata Notices

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Errata Notices*.

TIMELINE

Dates, except the grant ending date, may vary slightly as conditions require.

Date	Event
November 7, 2022	Grant application available
November 17, 2022; 8:00-9:00am November 18, 2022; 8:00-9:00 am	Webinar schedule See the General and Fiscal Guidelines Applicants' Conference/Webinar Webinar registration link can be found at LASO website Webinars will be both live and recorded
December 1, 2022	FAQ deadline See the General and Fiscal Guidelines , Frequently Asked Questions. The FAQs for this grant program will be posted to the TEA Grant Opportunities and LASO website site no later than the date listed on the Grant Timeline. Applicants may email their questions to the LASO central inbox at LASO@tea.texas.gov
December 6, 2022	FAQ Publishing
December 22, 2022	Due date for the application. The application must be received by the TEA by 11:59 p.m., Central Time. See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Grant Application Due Date and Time
December 28, 2022- January 30, 2023	Application review period, including interviews if necessary See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Grant Review Process
February 6, 2023	Anticipated award announcement
March 1, 2023	Beginning date of grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Grant Period

Date	Event
January 30, 2025	Final date to submit an amendment (if selected for funding)
April 30, 2025	Ending date of grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines , <i>Grant Period</i>

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

GRANT AT A GLANCE

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

Authorizing Legislation

This grant is authorized by the General Appropriations Act (GAA), Article IX, Section 18.15 (TCLAS), 87th Texas Legislature.

Where to Submit the Grant Application

Complete the application via the link emailed to the Superintendent. In case, if the LEA is unable to receive the application link in the superintendent email, please refer to this form posted on [LASO website](#) to acquire a new link.

Purpose of Program

Strong Foundations Planning grant provides support to LEAs to develop a strong instructional framework in math or literacy, provides optional adoption supports in selecting new HQIM if LEAs choose to make a materials switch; and trainings to support creating systems to effectively manage instruction at the district level.

Eligible Applicants

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Eligibility To Apply*. LEAs are eligible to apply. LEAs that have previously engaged in the Strong Foundations Framework Development Grant may not re-apply for the same subject area focus as previous grant cycles. Prior grantees for the Strong Foundations Framework Development Grant are eligible applicants in new subject areas.

Shared Services Arrangements

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Shared Services Arrangements. Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed.

APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS

This section describes the required attachments that must be included with the application.

Required Attachments

See the following section of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Grant Required Program-Related Attachments*

Does not apply to this grant program

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES

This section describes the types of requirements that applicants must assure adherence to in order to be eligible to be considered for funding:

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)
- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

Statutory Requirements

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Statutory Requirements*.

Per TEC §22.0834, 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*.

Does not apply to this grant program

TEA Program Requirements

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

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

Does not apply to this grant program

Program-Specific Assurances

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Provisions and Assurances*.

The program-specific assurances are listed on the application.

- The LEA agrees to appointing a primary point of contact and LEA lead for all grant related activities. The LEA lead will be responsible for ensuring all assurances are met by the LEA, coordinates with the selected approved provider on a regular basis, attends any check-ins or webinars hosted by TEA, and communicates with TEA should the primary point of contact leave the LEA during the grant period.
- The LEA agrees to using the TEA approved provider for the appropriate services aligned to the grant goals.
- The LEA agrees the Superintendent or CAO (or equivalent role) agrees to participate in any trainings or collective learning series hosted by the LEA and approved provider.
- The LEA agrees the Superintendent or CAO (or equivalent role) will approve the math and/or literacy development, framework adoption, and implementation process.

- The LEA agrees the Superintendent or CAO (or equivalent role) signs-off on the final LEA math and/or literacy instructional framework, or other products that are created as a result of completing a collective learning series on math, literacy, implementation, or assessment.
- The LEA agrees the LEA lead and Superintendent, or CAO (or equivalent role) will participate in monthly Communities of Practice (CoPs) with similar LEAs during the grant period. The LEA agrees to create a comprehensive committee that is representative of the LEA for the collective learning series and to review drafts of deliverables.
- The LEA agrees to submission of feedback surveys from TEA to LEA leadership and the LEA's committee on a quarterly basis.
- The LEA agrees to participating in an end-of-grant focus group upon request. TEA may reach out to request participation of committee members and/or LEA leadership.
- The LEA agrees to submitting all other required data as part of the grant program.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

This section provides detailed information about the grant.

Description of Program

All students deserve equitable access to research-based, TEKS-aligned, and high-quality instruction. The first step to improve instruction in core content areas is creating a district-wide, subject specific vision and framework that provides an overview of what instruction should look like in a given content area. This district-wide vision and framework should also be rooted in the research of how students learn in that subject area, be aligned to the TEKS, and be specific to the local context.

The Strong Foundations Planning grant is intended to support school systems in setting and creating a subject-specific instructional framework, aligning the vision and framework with the district's larger strategic plan, and ensuring the right systems and structures are in place to ultimately adopt and implement high-quality instructional materials and research-based instructional strategies. School systems will leave the Strong Foundations Planning grant with a subject-specific (math or literacy) vision and framework and prepares districts to either create a plan for instructional materials adoption to select high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) or supports districts in planning for implementation of HQIM they may already have.

Strong Foundations Planning Supports grant provides support to LEAs to develop a strong instructional framework in math or literacy, provides optional adoption supports in selecting new HQIM if LEAs choose to make a materials switch; and trainings to support creating systems to effectively manage instruction at the district level.

Supports activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Development of a district-wide instructional vision and framework for the content area(s) selected
- Training and system planning for the evaluation and potential adoption of HQIM
- Job-embedded, high-quality professional learning on the science of how students learn in math or literacy, best practices for HQIM implementation, assessment systems and strategies, and strategic planning for learning acceleration

- Ongoing, job-embedded capacity building support for instructional and district leaders
- Readiness assessments to support overall planning and decision-making
- Participation in Communities of Practice for district leaders (Superintendent or Chief Academic Officers)

School systems may choose the following offerings within this grant:

- A: Literacy Framework Development and Strategic Planning Supports
- B: Mathematics Framework Development and Strategic Planning Supports

The Strong Foundations Grant Program (Texas Education Code Sec. 29.0881) is established through House Bill 4545, 87th Regular Session, 2021 for campuses or a program at a campus serving students enrolled in prekindergarten through grade five to implement a rigorous school approach that combines high-quality instruction, materials, and support structures.

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 not apply

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The applicant agrees to provide data on the qualifications and experience of the existing or future staff members, as required per the program guidelines as follows:

Does not apply to this grant program

PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION MEASURES

Performance Measures

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

- Quarterly feedback surveys completed by the LEA's leadership team
- Collective learning series exit ticket data and required artifacts from the LEA's committee
- Artifact submission related to creation and development of an instructional framework or other products created as a result of the grant activities

Limits on Contracted Evaluators

Applicants should make every effort to ensure that contracted evaluators be independent and objective.

APPLICATION FUNDING

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Continuation Funding, Fund Management, and Use of Funds*

It is anticipated that approximately 50-100 LEAs will be awarded ranging in amounts from \$140,000 to \$400,000.

Selection of Applicants for Funding

Applicants will be selected in:

- Rank order

Oral Interviews for Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Grant Oral Interviews for Funding*.

During the virtual oral interviews, applicants will have the opportunity to elaborate and be evaluated on the topics below, as well as answer any additional questions which the TEA may have to assess their readiness for this grant program. The applicant may reference any documents, including the Program Guidelines and FAQs.

1. Stakeholder Engagement: Including, but not limited to, plans for engaging stakeholders at the teacher, school, and district-level to support buy-in of a newly developed instructional framework
2. Materials Adoption and/or Aligning Support Models: Including, but not limited to, the LEA's decision to utilize adoption supports to adopt new math or literacy instructional materials; or, if already using HQIM, the priority areas with which they hope to better align support models such as coaching supports, observations, and feedback practices

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

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

TEA (or Authorizing statute) requires a:

- There is no cost share or matching requirement

Limitation of Administrative Funds

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

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

Direct Administrative Costs

TEA permits applicants to budget reasonable and necessary direct administrative costs for this grant program.

Indirect Costs

For Federal Grants Only

Does not apply to this grant program

For State Funded Grants Only

Does not apply to this grant program

Pre-Award Costs

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

Pre-award costs:

are permitted

Note Pre-award costs are permitted from the award announcement date to the start date.

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 may include but are not limited to the following:

Field Trips

Field trips

may not be funded under the grant program

Only the following types of field trips are allowable:

Does not apply to this grant program

Note Field Trips will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Field Trips Justification form, refer to the [Administering a Grant page](#).

Advisory Council

An advisory council:

may not be funded under the grant program.

Only the following types of advisory councils are allowable

Does not apply to this 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.

Only the following types of civic or community organization membership costs are allowable:

Does not apply to this grant program

Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences

Hosting or sponsoring conferences

may not be funded under the grant program.

Conferences must be managed to minimize costs to the grant award. Only the following types of civic or community organization membership costs are allowable:

Does not apply to this grant program

Note 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:

may be funded under this grant program

Note 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

Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

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 associated with grant activities.

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- 70% of funds must go towards contracted services with a single Strong Foundations Approved Provider
- Salary to support a project manager at the LEA
- Stipends to accommodate committee member time spent on collective learning and providing feedback on an instructional framework
- Materials and supplies needed to support the collective learning series
- In-state or out of state travel associated with grant activities

General Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

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

- Stipends or salaries for staff members not associated with completion of grant activities
- Purchase of Tier 1 instructional materials outside of a small-scale pilot or for review during a review and selection phase of an adoption process

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

FEDERAL GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Equitable Access and Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Equitable Access and Participation*.

This requirement: Does not apply to this grant program

Private Nonprofit School Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Private Nonprofit School Participation*.

This requirement: Does not apply to this grant program

Maintenance of Effort

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Maintenance of Effort*.

This requirement: Does not apply to this grant program

SCORING AND REVIEW

This section provides information on the scoring and review of grant applications.

Grant Review and Funding Criteria

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Grant Review Criteria*.

All eligible LEA's grant applications will be evaluated in the following way:

For literacy applications, eligible LEAs will be awarded based on rank order of 3rd grade RLA STAAR scores from lowest to highest. LEAs that are prior participants or currently participating in other Strong Foundations supports (including RSSP, Strong Foundations Literacy/Math Framework Grant, and/or CRIMSI full year pilot) and in good standing will be prioritized. LEAs will be awarded their preferred option if possible; however, each option has capacity limitations and LEAs may not receive their preferred option.

For math applications, eligible LEAs will be awarded based on rank order of 3rd grade math STAAR scores from lowest to highest. LEAs that are prior participants or currently participating in other Strong Foundations supports (including RSSP, Strong Foundations Literacy/Math Framework Grant, and/or CRIMSI full year pilot) and in good standing will be prioritized. LEAs will be awarded their preferred option if possible; however, each option has capacity limitations and LEAs may not receive their preferred option.

Once the applicants with previous grant funds from RSSP, Strong Foundations Literacy/Math Framework Grant, and/or CRIMSI full year pilot have been funded, grant funds will be awarded to other applicants using the same process as above.

In the case of a tie at the end of funding availability, virtual interviews will be conducted to assess overall readiness.

Oral Interviews for Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Grant Oral Interviews for Funding*.

During the virtual oral interviews, applicants will have the opportunity to elaborate and be evaluated on the topics below, as well as answer any additional questions which the TEA may have to assess their readiness for this grant program. The applicant may reference any documents, including the Program Guidelines and FAQs.

1. Stakeholder Engagement: Including, but not limited to, plans for engaging stakeholders at the teacher, school, and district-level to support buy-in of a newly developed instructional framework

2. Materials Adoption and/or Aligning Support Models: Including, but not limited to, the LEA's decision to utilize adoption supports to adopt new math or literacy instructional materials; or, if already using HQIM, the priority areas with which they hope to better align support models such as coaching supports, observations, and feedback practices

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