TEA
Texas Education Agency®

Stronger Connections Grant: Fidelity of Implementation Webinar

Welcome and Norms

- This webinar will be recorded and posted to the TEA's Stronger Connections webpage after the March 5th webinar along with this slide deck and the FOI Toolkit.

- Please submit questions to the Q&A feature. Our co-hosts and panelists will be monitoring those. We will review FAQs at the end of this webinar.

TEA Team

TEA Stronger Connections Team

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Objectives

Participants will understand…

1. Purpose of FOI evaluations
2. FOI check-in process
3. Next Steps for Q1 FOI

Agenda

- FOI Purpose
- Overview of Performance Measures
- Use of FOI Toolkit
- Survey Preview
- Check-in Process
- Quality Assurance
- Resources
- Timeline & Next Steps
- Questions

Why the FOI?

FOI Purpose

- Not compliance-driven, not tied to funding

- Provides awardee with an appropriate tool for progress monitoring and evaluation of efforts

- Program Assurance #14 - "The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures."

Performance Measures

Performance Measure FAQs

- **In-between scores:**
  - Above all else, the rubric exists to provide awardees with a tool to help facilitate progress monitoring and discussion of grant deliverables. Leadership should use their best professional judgement when it comes to selecting a rubric rating. Ratings should be able to be justified through local documentation of artifacts and in discussion at ESC virtual check-ins.
- **Criteria doesn't apply:**
  - When rating, please be mindful of where you are in the grant cycle. Ratings during the first and second quarters will look very different than year two of the grant. If rubric criteria does not yet apply to all participants of the grant, omit that criteria from your evaluation. This may cause fluctuation in ratings from quarter to quarter and that's okay. Feel free to document that in your narrative responses.
- **Low rating:**
  - Narrative responses and check-in conversations are held in a higher regard than just the numeric score you choose. The 1-4 scale helps the TEA quantify overall trends, but the system is rooted in support. Low scores indicate areas of growth and should be followed up with tailored supports for that awardee.

PM #1 – Grant Management

- **Overview**: This PM ensures that the awardee is 1) on track to spend 100% of their SCG funds in accordance with grant goals and deliverables, 2) successfully connecting the dollars to the work of the grant, and 3) complying with state and federal reporting requirements.

- **Meets Expectation**:
  - The LEA has submitted a projected quarterly budget for the 24-25 SY by the June 2024 FOI submission.
  - The LEA is on track to spend ~25% (+/-5%) of funds by December 2024.
  - The LEA continuously creates an environment where the following local stakeholders participate in budget discussions- campus leadership, district leadership and the business office.
  - The LEA is able to justify all their expenses against the deliverables and goals of the grant.
  - The district maintains a quarterly, if not monthly, budget where drawdowns are tracked and entered into the FOI survey.

PM #2 – Training & Professional Dev.

- **Overview**: This PM ensures that the awardee is building capacity by utilizing the appropriate technical assistance providers and attending mandatory and recommended trainings to support the implementation of their SSP and other grant deliverables.

- **Meets Expectation**:
  - The LEA is up to date on mandatory TCSS trainings.
  - The LEA ensures that the appropriate staff attend and complete these trainings.
  - The LEA provides timely feedback to TCSS and their partners regarding training and professional development outcomes and experiences, as requested by the TCSS.
  - The LEA participates in additional training and professional development according to their SCG goals with regional ESCs and/or vetted technical assistance providers.
  - (*Should the LEA be working with a nonapproved vendor via the appeals process, the LEA submits all required documentation to the TCSS for evaluation on time and completed in full.)

PM #3 – Data Collection

- **Overview**: This PM ensures that the awardee is submitting critical data entries using the tools and timelines set forth by the TCSS and the TEA. This PM also measures an awardee's ability to identify in-time supports and turn data analyzation into actionable next steps.

- **Meets Expectation**:
  - The LEA has ensured that all staff have completed necessary training regarding the case management system.
  - The LEA has ensured all campus and district leadership understand the case management system and support staff in its use.
  - The LEA meets case management system data entry timelines set by the TCSS.
  - The LEA attends all quarterly FOI check-ins, ensuring the appropriate personnel are present and that all agenda and FOI materials are completed prior to meeting. AND the local advisory committee reviews FOI submissions each quarter.
  - Participating campuses have completed approved climate surveys according to TCSS timelines.
  - The LEA submits other data, including critical feedback data, as requested.

PM #4 – Student Support Framework

- **Overview**: This PM ensures that the awardee is on track to building and maintaining an effective student support program and team according to the parameters set forth by the TCSS. This includes implementation of the parent and family engagement playbook as well as local advisory committees.

- **Meets Expectation**:
  - District leadership understand the SSP framework and PFE playbook and fully support its implementation.
  - The LEA has ensured that all staff have completed necessary training regarding the Parent and Family Engagement Handbook and Student Support Program framework. Follow up support is provided as needed by staff.
  - Any evaluation/diagnostic materials developed by the TCSS regarding the SSP/SST and PFE are completed on time and incorporated into next steps and action items.
  - The LEA is on track to establish local advisory committees by the end of the 23/24 SY. These committees receive communication on expectations and timeline of meetings. These committees operate based on TCSS roles and responsibilities. Members are given everything they need to effectively participate.
  - Staff at participating campuses have regular opportunities to ask questions, problem solve, and debrief regarding their experiences implementing the SSP and SST.

PM #5 – SMART Goals & Benchmarks

- **Overview**: This PM allows the LEA to track their progress towards the smart goals they indicated on their application according to their identified needs. The benchmarks outlined in SCG applications are integrated into this performance measure.

- **Meets Expectation**:
  - District and campus leadership as well as teachers at participating campuses know and understand the goals and benchmarks set forth by the LEA regarding the Stronger Connections Grant.
  - Goals developed by the LEA have adequate data sources and are measured accurately for student impact.
  - Goals and any corresponding data are discussed quarterly with district and campus leadership as well as teachers.
  - Local advisory committees are given timely opportunities to review goal progress and give input where reasonable.
  - Goals are on-track. If off-track, next steps, interventions, and in-time supports have been identified and discussed with relevant stakeholders.

PM #6 – Sustainability

- **Overview**: This PM ensures the LEA is integrating sustainability measures into their programmatic decisions.

- **Meets Expectation**:
  - District leadership, campus leadership, teachers, and members of the student support program team meet regularly to discuss SCG progress. Local Advisory committees are also given opportunities to discuss.
    - current challenges
    - recent success
    - areas of the budget that could be reworked to ensure longevity

  - Answer these questions in your narrative:
    - Can your LEA identify one avenue of your work that demonstrates scalability to other campuses?
    - Can your LEA identify one avenue of your work that demonstrates sustainability beyond Sept. 30, 2026?

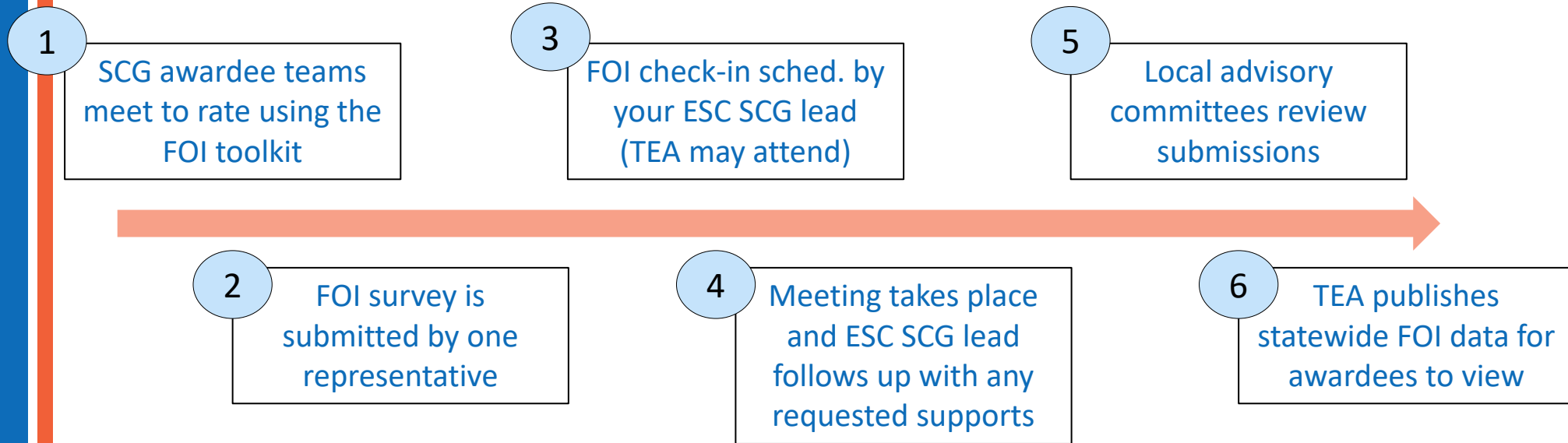# Toolkit and Survey

Check-in Process

Check-in Process

- SCG awardee leadership (campus, district, business office) will meet locally to review the FOI toolkit and rate using the rubric criteria. This meeting will likely take one hour- about 10 minutes per performance measure.
- After the leadership team agrees upon ratings, one representative will fill out the FOI submission survey. Results will be emailed to the person filling out the survey as well as the regional ESC SCG lead.
- The SCG awardee point of contact(s) will schedule a FOI debrief check-in with their regional ESC SCG lead. ESC SCG leads facilitate a conversation with awardees focused on strengths, weaknesses, and in-time supports. ESC leads do not contribute to ratings unless requested by the awardee. These virtual visits will likely be ~45 minutes.

Check-in Process cont.

- TEA's SCG program team (grant specialist, data project manager, and director) aims to attend at least one of the awardee's virtual check-ins per grant year. In other words, the awardee should expect to see a TEA SCG representative on their virtual check-in at least once in ST 24-25.

- ❖ *FOI check-ins are required to remain in compliance with the SCG.*

Check-in Process cont.

1. SCG awardee teams meet to rate using the FOI toolkit

2. FOI survey is submitted by one representative

3. FOI check-in sched. by your ESC SCG lead (TEA may attend)

4. Meeting takes place and ESC SCG lead follows up with any requested supports

5. Local advisory committees review submissions

6. TEA publishes statewide FOI data for awardees to view

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance

- This tool is standardized across all SCG awardees, provides district/regional/statewide implementation trends, and is designed to provide wraparound supports to awardees. This is primarily why use of the tool and participation in the check-ins is mandatory. Should you have additional, local methods of program evaluation, you are welcome to use it in conjunction with this tool. Please keep in mind the administrative burden that may place on the staff conducting evaluations.

- If an awardee rates a 3 or 4 in any performance measure, they will certify that they have local documentation to support that rating. Example artifacts are listed in the toolkit for each performance measure. Artifacts are not required to submit as part of the FOI survey, but TEA's program staff will ask to review it at the check-ins they attend.

Quality Assurance cont.

- Data turnaround – the TEA and the TCSS believe that data collection should be purposeful and produce meaningful metrics to evaluate. Our TEA SCG data analyst will work to ensure that data visualizations are available to awardees one month after the close of each FOI submission window.

Resources

Resources

- A PDF of the FOI Toolkit will be published to [TEA's Stronger Connections webpage](#) at the conclusion of the March 5th webinar. The toolkit includes an FAQ section. Anytime we amend toolkit content or update the FAQ, an email will be sent to ESC SCG leads as well as SCG awardee points of contact. The edited version will have the date changes were made and those changes will be highlighted.

- This webinar is being recorded and posted to that webpage as well.

- As we create and curate resources related to the SCG FOI, we will figure out the best way to release them to awardees.

- You are each other's biggest asset!

Timeline & Next Steps

Timeline

- **March 18th – April 5th** : SCG awardees meet internally to rate using the FOI toolkit, FOI survey is submitted

- **April 12th** : Deadline to submit the FOI survey in SmartSheets

- **April 1st – April 19th** : Regional ESC SCG Leads schedule virtual FOI check-ins with awardees to discuss submission

- **April/May** – SCG awardees discuss their submission with local advisory committees

- **April/May** – TEA SCG team publishes FOI dashboard, analyzes, and provides data visuals to awardees

Next Steps

Action Items:
- Schedule your first rubric rating meeting with your teams (campus leadership, district leadership, business office, other staff as needed)
- Download and review toolkit prior to that first meeting
- Heads up: there are budget-related questions!
- FAQs
  - We don't have a NOGA, are we completing the first FOI?
  - What to expect in first meeting?

Questions?

Thank you!

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