2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant for Regional Conveners
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, January 13, 2023

Texas Education Agency ® NOGA ID [   ]

Authorizing legislation | Senate Bill 1, Part 18. CONTINGENCY AND OTHER PROVISIONS, Sec. 18.15. Contingency for House Bill 1525

This LOI application must be submitted via email to **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 **11:59 p.m. CT, January 13, 2023.**

Grant period from | **March 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024**

Pre-award costs permitted from | **Award Date**

Application stamp-in date and time

Required Attachments

- Application Part 2: Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
- Attachment A: Regional Convener Reference Form (Submit up to three forms with Application)

Application Information

Which workforce development area are you located in and applying to represent as a regional convener? | Region 10

Select your organization type: | Education Service Center

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization | Education Service Center- Region 19 | CDN | 071950

Address | 6611 Boeing Dr. | City | El Paso | ZIP | 79925 | Vendor ID | 741588856

Primary Contact | Angelica Haro | Email | aharo@esc19.net | Phone | 915-780-6505

Secondary Contact | Efren Tarango | Email | etarango@esc19.net | Phone | 915-780-5092

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 | Sonia Eubank | Title | Associate Executive Director

Email | seubank@esc19.net | Phone | 915-780-6571

Signature | *Sonia Eubank* | Date | 01/06/2023

Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are NOT permitted for this grant.

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 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant to Regional Conveners Program Guidelines.

☒ 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant to Regional Conveners Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

☒ 5. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.

☒ 6. The applicant assures to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a regional convener for a geographic region with boundaries identical to those of the workforce development area.

☒ 7. The applicant assures to identify at least one staff person, who meets the qualifications and experience of a regional convener lead as outlined in these guidelines, with adequate time allocated to the work of this grant project and who will serve as the regional convener lead.

☒ 8. The applicant assures to identify multiple staff at the regional convener organization to engage in the work and participate in the designation process. This includes someone in an executive leadership position who has decision-making authority on behalf of the regional convener organization.

☒ 9. The applicant assures to complete all grant activities and deliverables in a timely manner, as described in the description of program and performance and evaluation measures.

☒ 10. The applicant assures to coordinate with their assigned coach, to be provided by TEA for technical assistance, and meet with their coach frequently throughout the project, including within the first month to align on program priorities and requirements.

Statutory/Program Assurances cont'd

☒ 11. The applicant assures to convene and engage a cross-sector pathways leadership team in the strategic planning process within the first three months of the grant project.

☒ 12. The applicant assures to develop an asset map and gap analysis within six months of the grant start date under the direction and guidance of their assigned coach. In addition, the applicant will keep this landscape analysis updated throughout the grant project.

☒ 13. The applicant assures to develop, in collaboration with members of the cross-sector leadership team, a strategic plan and supporting action plans within the first 12 months of the grant project.

☒ 14. The applicant assures to plan and execute work-based learning that will address K-12 gaps and will expand upon existing work-based learning within their region.

☒ 15. The applicant assures to participate and engage in statewide training and convenings during the grant period.

Statutory/Program Requirements

1. **Current Regional Landscape** - Describe the key career and education pathway initiatives and/or programs currently underway in your region, including those funded by TEA, THECB, and/or TWC, and your current level of involvement in those initiatives. Please also describe the current staff you have in place to support these initiatives and/or programs who will continue to be involved in this project and any new staff you would like to use grant dollars to hire to support this work. Describe the qualifications and experience of the staff person who will serve as the regional convener lead for this grant project.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in our region's public schools continue to grow and provide students with options for exploration and preparation in industries, pathways, and programs of study they would otherwise not have access to. Students are enrolled in pharmacy tech programs, taking dual-credit fire technology courses, working in collaboration with local technical schools to provide early acceptance into HVAC programs among numerous other CTE programs of study available for students. El Paso Borderplex CTE programs are strong as is evidenced throughout our twelve independent school districts in our region and charter school LEAs. San Elizario ISD, which reported a student population of 3,190 students in grades K-12 for the 21-22 school year, provided twelve programs of study to their students. Socorro ISD, one of the three largest school districts in the El Paso Borderplex area, reported a student population of 47,137 students for the 21-22 school year and provided forty-one programs of study, two of those being regional programs of study. This quick synopsis of these two districts, with different characteristics in serving students in an urban and rural setting, showcase the varied opportunities for students of the El Paso Borderplex region. Districts of size and similar characteristics as San Elizario ISD would benefit from shared resources and opportunities to participate in regional events with districts such as Socorro ISD. These efforts are key for Education Service Center (ESR19) in serving as an intermediary to align efforts amongst the districts and charter campuses, but also holistically bring together opportunities aligned with our regional Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB). Ms. Angelica Haro is the current director for the Information and Instructional Technology Services Department at Education Service Center Region 19 (ESC R19). Her leadership and supervising experience has overseen various cross agency ventures to include overseeing a $47 million project between the El Paso Airport and ESCR19 to bring a new event center to the El Paso Borderplex. There are currently three consultants that she oversees that have CTE experience in the classroom as well as experience at campus level. Mr. Efren Tarango is a professional development consultant, with extensive experience serving as a project manager for several grants. His most current work involves managing the grant work for the entire state that consists of revising materials and creating a Bilingual Educator Certification program. An important goal of this tri-agency work is to hire a consultant that can provide guidance in the area of Health Science. Health Science is continuously an area of need as it is an in-demand, high-wage pathway for the El Paso Borderplex region according to the Workforce Solutions Hot Jobs reports published on an annual basis.

2. **Regional Convener Priorities** - What are your priorities for strategic alignment across current state, regional, and local pathways initiatives in the WDA? What would be necessary for that alignment to take place?

In working towards a strategic alignment across the state and our region, it is essential that we maintain a working relationship with our WSB Development Board, IHEs, and the district CTE programs through their CTE directors. We have been able to provide meaningful coordination efforts and alignment by hosting regional CTE Advisory monthly meetings where information is disseminated and discussed by all members present. The Committee continues to grow by recruiting members from IHEs and local business partners. This strategic alignment is framed by the following principles. ESCR19 Strategic Alignment Principles: 1. Improve the economic mobility of all students, especially those who are being serviced through CTE programs, by placing students in programs of study that meet living wage earnings and provide the potential for upward mobility. 2. Improve skilled employee pipeline for Borderplex employers by using reports generated by WSB, to align programs of study with five year growth projections in the region and across the state. 3. Continue to expand CTE programs in all districts where students have the ability to engage in career exploration as early as middle school and identify career exploration through TEKS alignment for K-5 students. 4. Recruit, retain and cross-train CTE teachers to meet market demands. 5. Serve as regional intermediary providing strategic guidance, consulting, alignment, and support for ISDs, and IHEs through our WSB. The greatest challenge in post-pandemic times is Principle Four. The interest is there in identifying individuals wanting to go from industry to the classroom. This is evident in our work with ESC- Region 13 and the CTE Educator Certification Program where the El Paso region has some of the highest enrollment numbers across the state. Once candidates are in the classroom, they often decide to go back to industry or are in need of knowledge, skills, and refinement of industry competencies to stay abreast of the latest changes. We have worked to resolve the latter by creating externship programs for teachers, where they are able to observe and work alongside local employers during the summer and their intersession breaks. The focus of these teacher externships is to build relationships with local employers and identify viable locations for students to complete their practicum and/or work-based learning opportunity; thus, allowing for teachers to observe new and developing trends in industry and recruit individuals into the classroom.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

3. **Regional Alignment Experience** - Describe your organization's experience leading strategic planning to support regional career and education pathways (or related education and training initiatives) in collaboration with stakeholders representing a mix of industry, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development entities.

ESCR19 works on scaling and expanding opportunities as related to growing in-demand labor market areas in the region. This is done by working alongside school districts by conducting program evaluations of their CTE programs and working in conjunction with WSB to identify a coherent evaluation using market trends and insights. ESCR19 and regional networks also focus on strengthening the academic rigor of the programs of study available for students by identifying regional pathways that have multiple entry/exit points and include advanced academics curriculum embedded in the pathway leading to dual credit and Advanced Placement {AP) opportunities for students. Supported regional pathway efforts seamlessly integrate rigorous academic requirements for students while preparing students for the regional workforce. This is done by supporting effective district advisors and providing access to high-quality tools and resources for staff and students. For example, the partnerships discussed in connections to high-quality tools and resources has led to the creation of virtual career exploration platforms, partnering with the Federal Reserve Bank division of Dallas to deliver a regional CTE teacher conference and working alongside Jobs for the Future and Social Finance to plan for a Pay for Success model to support Bio-medical initiatives. Strategic Implementation of Grant Funding – Braiding Resources for Student Success: A milestones in strategic planning is the collaboration between ESCR19 and San Elizario ISD to continue the GEAR UP grant and program in that particular district. Communication Strategy- ESCR19 has very close relationships with the ISDs, charter schools, IHS, several industry partners, and non-for-profit schools in our region. ESCR19 was the intermediary for the 2019-2020 cycle of the Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) for the Borderplex area.

4. **Regional Data Experience** - How do you currently monitor progress and measure quality of career and education pathway programs or initiatives? What do you currently use as metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) to understand the strength of your region's pathway programming?

We have been a key partner in evaluating the quality of CTE pathway programs in our region by conducting program evaluations. These evaluations take the following components into consideration: 1, Understanding the Target Population; 2. Stakeholder Input and Evaluation; 3. Labor Market Analysis; 4. Pathway Analysis; 5. Student Outcome Analysis

When we undertake progress monitoring analysis, we begin by identifying a problem of practice followed by employing the best method of administration. The qualitative data gathered through the analysis of programs is then evaluated across reports created by WSB and PEIMS reports provided by the district to identify trends and gaps in the programs of study at each LEA being examined.   The same method is used to assess how students are progressing across the region in academic indicators when we prepare the annual Executive Director's report to the ISDs. It is vital to use metrics from educational entities, other governmental programs, and qualitative analysis in order to cross reference areas that overlap and those that show a disparity. Discussion questions are then specifically designed for stakeholders in order to guide them through a problem of practice and help build a basis from where to gather the appropriate data to conduct a program analysis. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are then identified and measured across the Texas Academic Performance Report, local enrollment reports, Hot Jobs Workforce Solutions reports, and district advisory committee input. In the past we have deployed local surveys to students and parents, invited parents and teachers to participate in focus groups, had one-on-one conversations with parents, and conducted program walkthroughs using multiple consultants to arrive at a baseline. While this deliberate analysis guided by metrics and data might lead us to identify areas of refinement, it is vital that areas of reinforcement are also identified in order to strengthen programs and best practices that are already key highlights of a district. Most recently, we have worked alongside TEA to develop an online platform to support teachers across the- state of Texas who are interested in obtaining their bilingual certification. This work has been supported through the streamlining of communication to market the product, use data infrastructures to inform our quarterly decisions, and develop a technical assistance team to support individuals who are enrolled in the course. We have also been instrumental in developing data sharing MOUs and MOUs for HB5 college preparatory courses.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

5. **Regional Work-Based Learning Experience** – Using the Tri-Agency WBL Continuum attachment available on the TEA Grant Opportunities webpage, describe your experience planning, implementing and/or monitoring work-based learning activities aligned within each of the following categories: a. "Learning about Work"; b. "Learning through Work"; and c. "Learning at Work"

Education Service Center Region 19 (ESCR19) contributes to the local economy and regional collaboration efforts as it has a long presence in the El Paso region with various education, business, and private non-profit partners and leaders in the community. ESCR19 has partnered with El Paso Community College (EPCC) and developed regional MOUs that facilitate the dual credit program. ESCR19 has been an instrumental entity in bringing industry and educational leaders together for planning opportunities through committee work. ESCR19 is at the forefront of numerous services and programming in the area of Career and Technology Education (CTE) to include regional data sharing MOUs and managing the Texas Regional Pathways Network grant as an intermediary working with local IHEs in El Paso, TX and across state lines in New Mexico to further opportunities for students. Learning About Work- Over the span of the last three years, ESCR19 has been the program coordinator for a the CTE Summer Grant as governed and mandated by HB3. After being awarded two cycles of the grant, ESC Region 19 was able to establish the iBuild Summer Program in Architecture & Construction. The focus of the Program has been to introduce, enrich, and prepare middle and high school students in architecture & construction related fields. During a built-in enrichment period, students, teachers, and staff were able to visit construction sites, talk with site foremen, and engage in discussions with local architects. The purpose of these visits was to bring a real-world connection to the work students were engaged in through virtual career exploration tools like Xello. Xello provided simulations and overview of job duties and responsibilities while the job shadowing and worksite tours created a visual and real-world connection for participants. Learning Through Work- Our Special Education Department has been working through the Texas Student Centered Transitions Network to create a network to empower students. Community programs and local employers have come together to provide opportunities for local students seeking work to develop their soft skills as well as their job specific technical skills. Students participate in a reverse job fair where employers attend the job fair and students create a presentation board that serves as portfolio. Employers are able to talk to students and can request interviews at that time and benefit from employment offers on the spot. As an organization, ESCR19's HR department has also made job offers to students and placed them under the direct supervision of ESCR19 employees. Learning at Work WSB has been a vital member in our quest to place students in employment opportunities that are tied to their industry of interest. WSB has presented alongside our organization during an ongoing project at its fifth year since inception- The Region 19 / Head Start Scholarship Program for graduating seniors who were Head Start students in early childhood. Presentations and workshops include information on jobs for students who have gained technical skills during their CTE programs of study in high school. It is our intent and goal to enhance career trainings by: 1. Create a network of pay for success community partners; 2. Bridge dual credit programs and work-based learning opportunities; 3. Expand educational paths for students using relevant work experience.

We would like to expand apprenticeship partnerships with school districts through this grant through partnership with organizations such as the Language Acquisition Research Foundation. The Foundation addresses the need of not enough skilled IT technicians in El Paso. The Foundation has the only approved apprenticeship program from the Department of Labor in the El Paso area. The foundation CEO, Mr. White is willing to work with a cohort model of students to ensure their success in the program and certification exams. Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential. The foundation sustains apprenticeship programs in computer software technician, network support specialist, and cybersecurity support technician. The computer support technician program provides 2,000 hours of on-the-job training, 300 hours of classroom instruction, employability skills along with certifications. Network support specialist program provides 3,032 hours of on-the-job training and 618 hours of classroom instruction, employability skills along with certifications. The cybersecurity support technician program provides 4,000 hours of on-the-job training and 780 hours of classroom instruction, employability skills along with certifications. The Foundation has an average apprentice retention rate of 93%. Work-Based learning for apprenticeship participants will be conducted via presentations and shadowing of experts through the Foundation who have worked in the field. Mr. Barlow, training program coordinator at the Foundation, has over 15 years of experience in IT and is the Director of Technology at the Foundation, committed to engaging middle school and high school students in understanding programs of study in the IT and STEM clusters and preparing students for apprenticeship work.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

6. **Regional Convener Responsibilities** - Describe any current work your organization performs related to the additional functions of regional conveners listed below. If there are functions you do not perform, describe how a partner organization performs the function and your working relationship with them. If there are functions that are not currently performed by either your organization or a partner, provide context for why it has not been a focus of your organization's work to date. a. Analyze labor market information and work on an ongoing basis to ensure career and education pathways are aligned to in-demand industries in the region; b. Convene a cross-sector leadership team made up of education, workforce, and industry stakeholders to develop and implement a regional vision and strategy; c. Engage employers and broker relationships with education and training providers; d. Streamline communicating information across the region; and e. Drive sustainability planning, including coordinated funding strategies, across education and workforce development entities.

ESCR19 as the intermediary is already well-positioned to carry out the functions of this role through various committees, ongoing regional relationships, and experience convening cross-sector stakeholders. As allowable through the grant cycle, ESCR19 will fund staff as outlined in the budget schedule submitted so that appropriate time and effort is devoted to the important work of this Tri-Agency grant initiative. After experience as regional convener through the Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) and several years in the role as a Service Center and regional partner, ESCR19 possess the optimal qualifications to continue the work in this role. The Region 19 Borderplex area has a strong track record of excellence in convening collective impact educational initiatives. The regional philosophy is based on strong grassroots efforts where various stakeholders convene to work directly on the ground with students. The results are evident as the region leads the state is various college and career measurable outcomes such as accountability CCMR indicator percentage of graduates at 70% CCMR for the 21-22 school year, high school to college direct enrollment, FAFSA and Apply Texas application completion by high school seniors, and the dramatic region wide increase of college entrance exam testing. ESCR19 has a designated research and evaluation area that has already been working to collect data from our workforce board and various educational institutions to evaluate program outcomes for continuous improvement. In addition to the resources and partnerships already discussed, the key to long-term sustainability continues to be the relationships between the partners with ESCR19 in the intermediary role, dedicating the time and effort necessary for the program to be successful in achieving the measurable outcomes as previously described. It is vitally important that we focus on channeling the necessary resources and further develop the areas of improvement to include strong college and career advising and counseling support, continuum of work-based learning experiences, and credentials and degrees with value in the labor market. The El Paso Borderplex region already possesses the mechanisms in place to convene the consortium partners. Partner agreements and relationships will further help us ensure that the necessary mechanisms already in place are used to refine and reevaluate the benchmarks identified to measure progress towards success in this grant cycle. An important goal of this grant cycle is to enlist additional business & industry commitment to continue to inform curriculum as well as to provide additional work-based learning experiences that will reach more students. We intend to meet together as a team for planning and refinement that is targeted to the needs of our region, utilizing the resource that we already have. For additional guidance, ESCR19 as the intermediary will be using a planning document with measurable objectives, outcomes, activities, target dates for the activities, grant deliverables, and the activity owner. This live planning document will guide subsequent regional team meetings for regional representatives and facilitate ownership of activities so that all entities contribute to the outcomes of the grant. As the El Paso Borderplex region moves forward with this grant cycle, it is of utmost importance that regional partners further commit to ensuring the grant measurable outcomes are met on a timely basis. The regional approach to sustainability is key in leveraging shared learning, coordinated employer engagement, achieving economies of scale particularly in increased staff capacity, shared data and metrics, and a united coalition of advocates to accomplish grant objectives. ESCR19 in the intermediary role will continue to build sustainability by strategically building bridges between systems and breaking through "language barriers."
Another important goal at ESCR19, through this Tri-Agency work, is to expand the externship program to other school districts and invite more local employers to partner with us. In continuing with state-wide alignment, our intent is provide our students of this region with the opportunity to visit job sites in other parts of Texas that are aligned to their program of study or where they can take advantage of on-the-job-training using technical skills and knowledge attained via program of study completion. Our geographic location in relation to the rest of Texas creates a challenge, and our intent is to take advantage of any and all opportunities that we may have in order to create, maintain, and support exposure, preparation, and training for our students.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

7. **Partnerships** - Describe your current partnership(s), including the specific activities involved, with the following: a. Industry partnerships or specific employer partners (by sector); b. Postsecondary education; c. Secondary education; and d. Workforce or economic development.

The Region 19 Borderplex region has various strategic partnerships already in place that provide an advantage in implementing this Tri-Agency initiative. Our Workforce Board leadership specifically reached out to us directly, asking us to take the lead for the region with this grant application. The following regional committee and partnerships already exist and will be leveraged to further the work of this Tri-Agency grant initiative: CTE Advisory Committee-monthly meetings; CCRM Regional Committee quarterly meetings; El Paso Area Directors of Guidance & Counseling (EPADOG)-monthly meetings; FAFSA Committee- monthly meetings; EPCC/UTEP Operation College Bound-annual spring initiative at area high schools; Texas Tech Adventures for Your Future-spring event to expose middle school students to health science careers; TWC Career Specialists-team of career advisors continuously visiting MS & HS classrooms; Educate Texas TxCAN Advisory Council membership; Building a Talent Strong Texas Group representation at the state level by UTEP, EPCC, WSB and ESCR19; Business & Industry Advisory Committee-quarterly meetings for development and continued support of regional advisory committee database; El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence citywide collaboration of education, business and civic leaders that has worked for over 25 years to transform the PreK-16 educational pipeline in El Paso; The Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Education Attainment (CREED)-nonprofit organization investing in measurable outcomes to close the achievement gap; Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)-monthly meeting of district superintendents & IHE leaders; STTE (Success Through Tech Education) Foundation; Microsoft TEALS; TechSpark El Paso/Cd. Juarez; Girls Who Code-El Paso; GEAR UP- fiscal agent UTEP and ESCR19; Regional Technology Advisory Committee (RTAC)- quarterly meetings; MCA Foundation Healthcare Summit, Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA).
ESCR19 has an established record to serve as an intermediary in numerous regional initiatives by coordinating the various committees mentioned throughout the application. Industry and community representatives are eager to serve. IHE partners span across state boundaries into New Mexico to leverage Applied Science degrees unavailable within regional city and county limits. ESCR19 receives bi-weekly unemployment and detailed reports on any pertinent changes to the local labor market from the Workforce Board. Findings are discuss with districts and IHEs during regional convenings and meetings such as the College and Career Readiness Regional Committee quarterly meetings. Links between secondary and post-secondary education: strategic dual credit collaborations exist between EPCC, UTEP, NMSU, and Texas Tech in both academic and workforce areas. Dual credit agreements with high schools are tracked by EPCC, forming strategic advising tracking mechanisms to advance as many students as possible systematically to four-year programs as applicable. Credentials with value in the labor market: students participating in regional in-demand CTE programs of study have opportunities to obtain industry-based certifications at neighboring districts. Integration of rigorous core academics and career-focused learning aligned to dual credit opportunities for students are the efforts of EPCC through collaborative work with the ISDs and ESCR19. College and career information and advising strengthen the continuum of work-based learning experiences for students as employer connections continue to be revitalized upon the aftermath and uncertainty of the pandemic. A milestones in strategic planning is the collaboration between ESCR19 and San Elizario ISD to continue the GEAR UP grant and program in that particular district. We will be entering our last year of direct district support and the work has led to cross program collaboration between advanced academics and the CTE division of the district to provide students with multiple opportunities to explore options available to them in a post-secondary setting. Students and staff have been able to assess mapping of existing college & career advising mechanisms within the districts and those provided by platforms such as Texas OnCourse. Data collection and interpretation continues to be a driving aspects of benchmark identification mechanism to make informed decisions to support students throughout the different aspects of the school year. San Elizario ISD students along, with other students of Region 19 ISDs, have also been able to participate in the iBuild El Paso Summer Program spearheading Architecture & Construction pathways, a project funded by the CTE Summer Grant. Multiple grants have allowed us to funnel resources to ISDs of need such as San Elizario ISD while simultaneously providing opportunities for all area students. ESCR19 has very close relationships with the ISDs, charter schools, IHS, several industry partners, and non-for-profit schools in our region. ESCR19 was the intermediary for the 2019-2020 cycle of the Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) for the Borderplex area. All 12 ISDs participated in the TRPN grant making great strides to expand their program of study offerings in health science, information technology, and computer science. The channels of communication are already strong with all LEAs and local agencies involved in expanding this important work. Another important goal is to expand communication networks through this Tri-Agency initiative to expand collaborative efforts and continue to bridge gaps through targeted gap analysis conducted for pathways of need and regional industry shortages.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

8. **Budget narrative** - Describe how the proposed budget will support the goals of the program. Please include justification for the specific funding allocations in the proposed budget, including how costs are connected to the grant activities described in this solicitation. Please also describe how each item in the proposed budget will support the needs of the regional team, beyond any one specific regional partner. In addition, include a description of other funding sources the region will leverage, if any, to support implementation of this project and future work.

The proposed budget is meant to further enhance and support partners in securing the necessary supplies, equipment, consumables, instructional materials, supplies, software licenses, and stipends to meet the needs and goals of the program. Travel funds have also been allocated accordingly, so an increased number of partners benefit from convening opportunities and meetings at the state level. Additionally, the budget also includes funding to help with staffing efforts for the intermediary. During the grant period and beyond, partners are expected to share resources for the purpose of strengthening several high-need, high-wage, in-demand pathways. The intermediary is well-positioned to braid funding from other initiatives for CCMR support such as GEAR UP, Federal Perkins allocations, and other partner funds to enhance efforts purposefully, strategically, and exponentially for optimal benefits for students and the community. ESCR19 understands the limited budgets that partners must work with to include already allocated Perkins budgets by area districts, but also recognized the need to have optional support practices in place. ESCR19 has extensive experience with reimbursement processed for several Shared Service Agreement (SSA) grants and federal endowments. The ESCR19 business office allows program areas to submit invoices for reimbursement from member LEAs. A similar system will be employed for Tri Agency grant partners with the intent to provide an expedited process to reimburse partners. ESCR19 will utilize the experience and expertise that the technology department has with database development and data collection to enhance the currently existing system of reimbursement. Further streamlining processes will expedite reimbursements for partners and avoid potential delays. ESCR19 reimbursement program will maximize the allocation of funds for partnership and prove the most benefit in terms of equipment and supplies quantities at the best, most competitive prices. ESCR19 technology department will work in collaboration with ESCR19 purchasing department (Allied States Cooperative) to employ the most suitable data collection platform that will allow the review of submissions for accurateness, completion, and a prompt workflow system for accurate and reliable internal controls. ESCR19 currently utilizes Teams Prologic Workfront by Adobe, and Office 365 for purchase order and invoice reimbursement process. The timely and accurate control of funds will be a key element to this process and the experience of ESCR19 purchasing department and Allied States Cooperative (ASC) will be invaluable. ASC is a multi-state cooperative, which provides an EDGAR compliant procurement process to its members, facilitating competitive purchases from local, national, and international businesses. Membership on the ESCR19 Purchasing Cooperative entitles the entity to utilize competitively bid goods and services where the vendor or vendors can operate logistically and has the capabilities to perform in compliance with contract provisions. The timely processing of reimbursement will have the following outcomes: establish a client relationship that will promote future interactions, accurate expenditure accounting, and maximize the use of funds for ongoing expenses related to this grant. ESCR19 will utilize ASC to obtain the most competitive pricing and procurement offered to partners for purchase and reimbursement while aligning with the provisions that are outlined for public control and of funds. ESCR19 ASC members will be able to competitively fulfill equipment and supplies orders should it be needed. The Purchasing Cooperative has an established system of controls to ensure that the pricing of goods and services that are supplied are competitive and that those services are aligned to budget appropriation descriptors. The fact that this Cooperative exists at ESCR19, and we have personnel that have extensive experience with the processes, will put us in an advantageous position to continue with purchasing and fund expenditures. ESCR19 has consultants that can deliver both professional development for teachers and other educators as well as teach lessons and deliver coursework for students. With many years of experience in the classroom, ESCR19 consultants have been trained on several CCMR and CTE state wide and regional initiatives, accountability, leadership, technology, and specific content area expertise. The proposed budget will allow us to be able to fund their work with supplies for the program and any materials that they may need to deploy the program to stakeholders, educators, and students. Curriculum and lesson plans from this program will be used for coordination of efforts, payroll for a few staff dedicated to this grant, and braiding of resources and funding with other grants that ESCR19 has already been awarded. We also intend to use the proposed budget to help defray the costs of college courses and any IHE related expenses by helping to support payment for instruction, coordinating, and time and effort specifically dedicated to this grant.

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.

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Amended Section   **Reason for Amendment**