



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

NOGA ID [Redacted]

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?

Select your organization type:

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization CDN

Address City ZIP Vendor ID

Primary Contact Email Phone

Secondary Contact Email Phone

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 Title

Email Phone

Signature Date

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.

Region One ESC (Region One) leads in the development of a strategic plan to ensure pathways into targeted industries that offer a clear value proposition for all partners, with shared goals and aligned metrics for success. One example of a key career and education program at Region One is the TEA funded PATHS (Pathways Aligned to Health Science) Project. The PATHS Project aligns curricula in health science to create seamless paths starting from elementary, to middle school and high school, and on to college in identified areas via CTE stackable credentials/certificates, programs of study, and dual enrollment road maps, providing students with pathways mentoring through work-based learning (WBL) industry experiences and live "cybermentoring" by industry and post-secondary professionals in targeted occupations. The PATHS project also provides training and curriculum alignment in post-secondary health care entrance exams and provides a Pathfinder Academy for teachers and counselors created in collaboration with local Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), UTRGV and STC, that provides educators in each district's Health Science Endorsement area a compendium of high school to post-secondary pathways focused on targeted certificates, associates, and bachelor's degrees. Another example of a key career and education initiative at Region One is the USDE funded Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) Operation College Bound & Beyond. The goal of the EOC is to create an effective college and career educational culture that enhances learning and performance, particularly for at-risk, low-income, English learners and students with disabilities, so they excel and succeed in post-secondary education and a career. The EOC works with STC on Education, Advanced Manufacturing, Phlebotomy, and EKG pathways as well as the Texas A&M Manufacturing HUB on a Cybersecurity pathway where 80 participants have already completed high-demand FEMA certifications and are working towards continuing bachelor's degrees in computer science and information technology. Current staff in place for these projects include a Director, Coordinator, STEM Education Specialist, Transition Facilitator, program assistant and three interns. Our staff is diverse and experienced, led by Melissa I. Lopez, Region One ESC Administrator for the Office of College Career and Life Readiness (OCCLR). She has served in education for 24 years with 20 years of experience dedicated to federal grant administration. Ms. Lopez has been instrumental in the co-writing, implementation and evaluation of several multi-million-dollar GEAR UP grants. She leads a team of directors, coordinators, accountants, education specialists and program assistants to ensure that all programs adhere to EDGAR, GPRA and other related federal/state regulations and financial accountability requirements. New staff would include a web marketing specialist to make sure our work is disseminated and has regional impact. Region One strategically leverages business and industry partners across the region and leads the development and implementation of a regional employer engagement strategy.

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?

As an Education Service Center, Region One prioritizes the importance of cross-sector partnerships to build a strong Texas workforce that ensures all students have access to high quality education and workforce training. The region will benefit from a Regional Career Pathway Assessment Analysis. This work will bring key stakeholders across the region and ensure alignment of future work. The work must ensure it is robust and representative of the workforce needs. Region One has over 50 years of experience within the South Texas community and has built trust with our partners. Building strong partnerships and strategic cooperation within regional economies generates greater regional alignment, work-based learning and data and communication strategies, leading to improved outcomes for K-12 students, increased post-secondary credential attainment, and stronger talent pipelines to meet current and projected needs of in-demand industries. Along with cultivating strong existing partnerships, Region One ESC prioritizes the active recruitment and expansion of new partnership connections. Acquiring additional business partners will increase workforce training, internships, transitional jobs, and other work-based learning opportunities to further empower our community to achieve their full potential in industries that power the state's economy and spur economic growth in our region. In pursuit of this alignment, Region One proposes to host regional POWER (Pathways and Opportunities in the Workforce and Education Region) Summits and collaborate to form a skilled talent pool by educating regional stakeholders on the importance of K-12 to postsecondary to workforce pathways and aligning educational goals with diverse industry needs. Regional pathways create shared learning, economies of scale, increased staff capacity, and shared data, metrics, and analysis. In addition, Region One will host a Regional Convening where all partners share insights on work based learning and a strategic plan is drafted to increase opportunities for our students and overall community.

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.

For over 50 years, Region One has worked and coordinated services to become the premier partner for educational services across 48 school districts to improve regional systems and leverage resources. Region One has extensive experience managing federal and state funded grants, including 5 GEAR UP grants, an Education Opportunity Center (EOC) grant, a Teacher Incentive Fund, an i3 Investing in Innovation grant, and a CTE Perkins Reserve grant. Region One works with community-based organizations (CBOs) to facilitate student support, including employer and educator collaborations and a history of aligning educational goals with the diverse industry needs in Texas. All pathways are sustainable, scalable and aligned to in-demand industries. One example of Region One's cross-sector work is the Deep South Texas Financial Literacy Alliance (DSTFLA). Formed in 2012, the DSTFLA is comprised of over 45 members including area banking and business partners, community/nonprofit organizations, IHEs, and district representatives. The alliance was formed in response to a call to action - families in our region need financial literacy information and as a service center it is our duty to align the private and public sector to develop a cohesive initiative to educate and assist students and families in the areas of personal finance, financing post-secondary education options, and life-long financial stability. Another example is the work with area hospitals and IHE's through the PATHS grant. Working closely with the largest healthcare employer in the region has helped develop a better understanding of the workforce needs. Through PATHS and working with RGVC, STC, and UTRGV, healthcare pathways were developed for students and ensure that the educators are trained on all the options available for students. Additionally, the Effective Advising Framework (EAF) Coach supports and assesses the strategic planning system aligned to the framework utilizing grade-level student benchmarks for academic development, career development, personal and social development, and financial literacy utilizing the EAF Diagnostic Tool.

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?

Region One developed data collection and communication strategies to evaluate progress and measure quality of career and education pathways programs, including metrics for 6 GEAR UP grants over 20 years, a 5-year USDE EOC grant, and a newly awarded TEA Effective Advising Framework (EAF) grant. These grants support high quality career and education pathway programs meeting student academic, career, personal, and social developmental needs. Key performance indicators (KPI) are monitored and metrics aligned to the intended outcomes. For the past 3 years, Region One has served as the convener and fiscal agent of the PATHS grant, maintaining extensive secure data collection systems used to evaluate program outcomes and to drive actions for continuous improvement. The school year begins with stakeholder feedback and a review of our data to prioritize the initiatives for the year. We then prepare a planning guide, a calendar of events with dates, locations, and expected audiences for all services. Monthly workgroup meetings with district, employer, and higher education partners facilitate communication and shape changes to track progress of goals and objectives. In addition, Region One analytics include data collected from pre and post surveys to evaluate expected outcomes and drive improvements. Advisory Committees meet regularly to review project performance progress, accomplishments, challenges, objectives status, expenditures, and evaluation data as well as discuss strategies to improve services while ensuring a diversity of perspectives is incorporated in KPI. All data collected is analyzed to offer opportunities for stakeholders to expand upon a knowledge base, as well as increase capacity through data collection, tracking, and gap analysis. To further ensure equal access of services to all stakeholders, particularly diverse populations, Region One examines and assesses KPI on an ongoing basis to ensure a proportionality of ethnic and cultural groups is represented and/or are being served through all career and education pathway services. Metrics identifying weaknesses ensure equal access and treatment of groups, immediate changes or modifications to the program are implemented. Data is gathered and examined to determine if strategies are having the intended impact across diverse subgroups, thus ensuring that traditionally underrepresented groups have equal access to all career and education pathway services offered. Region One ESC Office of Partnerships, Marketing & Communication assists in sharing regional information to intended stakeholders through website, social media networks, and local media outlets. In addition to this center-wide work, a comprehensive communication plan is created to increase dialogue and communication reach among the partners and regional stakeholders identified. This dialogue creates multiple communication pathways using electronic forms and portals and newsletters to keep all partners informed.

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"

Learning about Work is perhaps the strongest category Region One offers through their existing grants, utilizing in-person, virtual and simulated settings for elementary, middle and high school students. Over the last decade, Learning about Work has allowed students the opportunity for career exploration in all pathways. Region One utilizes models such as worksite tours, job shadowing, simulations and informational interviews with employers. Experience has shown planning needs include working with districts and providing a calendar guide with all events scheduled for the year, allowing districts time to organize and maximize student participation. Another planning tool is the monthly work group meetings where feedback is received and needed modifications regarding initiatives. Region One leads planning and execution of high-quality work-based learning (WBL) in the region, including managing and supporting employer and educator collaboration on the creation, design, and delivery of services. In addition, Region One commits to aggregate and analyze WBL student and employer data to monitor access. One key aspect of Learning about Work is to engage parents so they understand the options available for students. Learning about Work is not included in all districts in the same manner; therefore, it is important for Region One to have a robust program that includes parents. Parent engagement increases student engagement and allows students the support needed to pursue their chosen career pathway.

When it comes to Learning through Work, our programs target the student's career and education pathway. For example, to create seamless paths from K12 to postsecondary studies, the PATHS grant provides health science career industry certificates, programs of study, and dual enrollment paths to students across all partner districts as well as postsecondary opportunities including the ability to earn a Certified Nursing Aide (CNA) certification and partaking in Junior Clinical Research Internship (JCRI). Students in the CNA program will become a part of a hospital-trained, workforce-ready, cohort with in-demand, high-wage, entry-level positions available by employer partners upon completion. Students completing the JCRI are trained in patient triage, problem-solving, and Stop the Bleed courses, as well as Basic Life Support or BLS certification and a CITI-certified foundation in research leading to manuscript publication. Not only will Learning through Work give students the opportunity to explore their chosen pathway, it also plays a role in deciding whether to choose that pathway or move on to another career.

Learning at Work is an area Region One has engaged in for several years. One example is the Substitute Teacher Hub (SubHub) and classroom tutor training programs. SubHub provides optimal customer service to participating Region One school districts to ensure that the Human Capital Management System is provided for districts that are in partnership with SubHub or are looking to partner with temporary teacher services. Also, in collaboration with a newly formed Texas A&M University partnership, a pre-construction academy was hosted for students and parents. This academy was formed to address three goals: 1) to increase the academic preparation and performance for high school and develop both academic and social skills through professional and educational partnerships that allow contextual teaching and experiential discovery 2) increase the high school graduation rate and participation in post-secondary education by introducing the diverse pathways into the construction industry and preparation to achieve acceptance into their career choice 3) increase educational expectations for participating students and family knowledge about post-secondary education options, qualifications, and financing. Hosting academies such as these is important, particularly in the area of construction due to research indicating that a student who decides to pursue a career in the construction industry faces various negative perceptions and misconceptions. Many recent studies have shown the need to recruit students to and through college with a construction-related skill set.

The Tri-Agency WBL Continuum is instrumental in the career development process that is iterative and ongoing for students including all stakeholders at each stage; Learning about Work, Learning Through Work and Learning at Work. As a Regional Convenor, Region One ESC will serve to be an advocate for this continuum and will stress the importance of each stage.

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.

Region One is committed to analyzing labor market information and working on an ongoing basis to ensure career and education pathways are aligned to in-demand industries. Under the Office of Administrative Leadership, School, and Community Support, a team of staff is dedicated to this work. One staff member closely working with the PATHS personnel is the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Coordinator, Mr. Leo Saenz, with over 35 years of experience working with the workforce and currently sits on the Workforce Solutions (WFS) board. As CTE Coordinator, Mr. Saenz ensures all district CTE needs are met and attends onsite visits to ensure there are no outstanding questions. He partners with Mr. David Gutierrez, the Workforce Solutions (WFS) Education Relations Manager, utilizing the latest WFS labor market information for the region and works with the CTE directors in the region. Mr. Saenz convenes district CTE Directors on a monthly basis to discuss any updates or changes to the labor market data and ensure career and education pathways are aligned to in-demand industries. Region One leads various cross-sector partnerships to develop and implement a regional vision and strategy for our students. One example is the Deep South Texas Financial Literacy Alliance (DSTFLA), meeting quarterly with the goal of increasing financial literacy awareness of families in Deep South Texas. The DSTFLA plans events and outreach activities to support the ever-changing financial and economic needs of the region. Thousands of students, families and educators are impacted annually through the support of the DSTFLA. Another example is the School Safety Initiative led by Region One. This initiative brings together school districts, local and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as experts in school safety. Region One ESC hosts a two-day conference focused on school safety and emergency management. This event is the first of multiple communication and collaboration activities. In addition to leading various cross-sector leadership teams, Region One ESC personnel serve on various advisory and community boards and organizations. Melissa Lopez serves on the leadership committee for RGV FOCUS, a collective impact initiative created in collaboration with Educate Texas and Communities Foundation of Texas. The Leadership Team includes representatives from school districts, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and businesses. Working toward a shared vision, they align resources along the cradle-to-career educational pathway to improve outcomes for the 440,000 learners, including K-12 and higher education students. Results are measured along each step of the journey, from pre-K to higher education, and into the workforce. Another staff member working with districts on the Effective Advising Framework (EAF) is Counseling and Guidance lead, Jennifer Avelar. She oversees two districts providing support and assessment of the strategic planning system aligned to the EAF by utilizing grade-level student benchmarks for academic development, career development, personal and social development, and financial literacy. As a result, the EAF Diagnostic Tool is fully utilized and ensures districts develop and submit a quality Implementation Plan. As a Regional Convener, we will meet with stakeholders from K-12 and post-secondary education, workforce development, and business/industry to align on a shared vision and goals with clear metrics for success. Region One will lead the use of labor market data and local employer knowledge to identify targeted industries and reassess priorities. There will be mapping of regional connections and alignment across state initiatives. Region One will coordinate with employers to engage in quality work-based learning and establish a communication and data sharing process across region between education and workforce system stakeholders. In order to streamline communication across the region, Region One will work with the Office of Partnerships, Marketing and Communication (OPMC). The PMC team will promote the positive aspects of public education and educate the community on public education issues by promoting a better public understanding of the objectives and accomplishments of the service center. The Office of Communications & Creative Services (OCCS) assists all programs and divisions by developing and maintaining communications and internal and external relationships. In addition, this office supports the endeavors of all programs and divisions by developing marketing and promotional materials to support their initiatives, programs, products, etc. The OCCS seeks to promote the positive aspects of public education while providing informational resources to all stakeholders in the Region One service area.

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.

Region One ESC is part of a state-wide system created to assist school districts. Region One works with partners to build regional infrastructure and increase alignment by identifying, investing in, and designating WBL programs that align to the tri-agency continuum and quality standards. These partnerships focus on leading regional strategic planning to increase alignment, building sustainable infrastructure, increasing regional communication and data infrastructure, and supporting ongoing collaboration and continuous improvement. Region One partners with industry leaders such as Texas Instruments, DHR Health, Reybotics, Inc. and over 45 banks, to provide on-going services focused on increasing students' 21st century skills in problem-solving, global awareness, creativity, and innovation by reinforcing concepts through conferences, WBL experiences, and mentoring, both in-person and virtually, where professionals share their journey to their career and what they do on a day-to-day basis to give students insight and information on how to make their aspiring careers a reality. Students understand the importance of higher education and college readiness by increasing awareness of emerging career opportunities in various fields and by working with industry professionals and college mentors. DHR Health provides much needed support for the health science pathways. Partnering with the PATHS Project, DHR Health collaborates to provide conferences exposing students to a variety of health care careers, simulated WBL experiences, American Red Cross certification sessions, and virtual Cybermentoring. A new program, Leaders in Advancement of Science, Education & Research (LASER) takes a cohort approach to create a pyramidal program using the spiral curriculum model where learning of gradually increasing complexity about health sciences and research is spread vertically over 4 years to create a high impact learning community. The Office of Partnerships, Marketing and Communications (OPMC) is included as a partner with Region One. Promoting positive aspects of the Pathways Leadership Team, the OPMC will assist by communication efforts including newsletters, website development, and social media outlets. The OPMC will support the grant by creating deliverables including a website and newsletter. The newsletter will engage employers and attract new partners. The website will provide access regarding pathways to all partners of the Pathways Leadership Team. Another partner, RGV Focus, seeks to transform college readiness, access, and success by increasing academic achievement and educational equity leading to a living wage and thriving communities. RGV FOCUS plays a critical role in improving student attainment outcomes through collaborative work by serving as a hub for partner organizations that have agreed to use a common set of indicators to measure student progress, identify areas of success and opportunity for growth, and determine how to advance effective data-driven strategies, including a focus on workforce development. Six area IHE such as, The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), South Texas College, RGV College, Texas State Technical College, Texas A&M, and Texas A&M International University collaborate with Region One to provide on-campus learning experiences for students and educators. Summer Pathfinder Academies are an educator-focused workshop where teachers, counselors, and administrators receive training in health science career programs offered by the IHE. The goal of the Academy is to develop educators to become health science advisors for their districts. College for All conferences bring students on campus to develop skills and explore career options leading up to and beyond secondary education. The IHEs have partnered with Region One to provide on-campus learning experiences, college awareness and readiness for both students and parents including exposure to colleges and universities, presentations regarding financial aid and material regarding preparation to enter and succeed in college. The Festival of International Books and Arts was created to bring outstanding scholars, authors and educators together and discuss their expertise to better understand the humanities. Region One offers an opportunity to learn about college and career pathways connected to the arts and humanities. The Hispanic Engineering, Science and Technology (HESTEC) Week is organized by UTRGV to promote STEM fields. Annually, students, educators and parents converge at the UTRGV campuses to hear from renowned speakers and participate in interactive educational exhibits. Workforce Solutions (WFS) actively participates in the regional Pathways Leadership Team by engaging in the process of reverse mapping pathways from industry to postsecondary to secondary ensuring students develop the skills and competencies needed to be successful. By providing consistent and timely feedback on labor market information, WFS, IHE, and industry partners ensure all certifications embedded in pathways have high labor-market value and participate in the co-design and development of a regional WBL continuum that provides opportunities for students to apply academic and technical knowledge and skills learned in the classroom in a realistic setting. Quality WBL activities begin as early as pre-kindergarten and continue through postsecondary, providing experiences designed to expand the boundaries of the classroom and prepare students for future career opportunities.

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 will support the goal of the program by providing staff and services needed by the Regional Convenor. As Regional Convenor, we will assist with implementation of a regional strategic plan, including implementation of action plans, employer engagement, and supporting and scaling equitable work-based learning opportunities across secondary education, postsecondary education, and workforce development. In addition, the Regional Convenor will assist with planning and implementation of high-quality work-based learning programming that equitably serves the Rio Grande Valley K-12 students and address identified gaps from the asset map and gap analysis. The Tri-Agency Regional Convenor grant budget totals \$545,500. Payroll costs total \$260,000 and supplies and materials total \$35,500, addressing staffing needs and allowing for ample personnel and inventory to support the goals of the grant. The Pathways Leadership Team, consisting of representatives from area Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), Workforce Development Board members, industry leaders and educators, will lead regional strategic planning that increases alignment and build sustainable infrastructure by increasing regional communication and data infrastructure that support ongoing alignment collaboration and promote continuous improvement. Travel costs totaling \$30,000 include attendance to a national and state-wide conference, bringing a global perspective to regional work. Lessons learned from areas both similar and dissimilar to our own will assist in creation of an asset map and gap analysis of the region, leading to the execution of high-quality pathways tailored for the area. An expense of \$90,000 for two P.O.W.E.R. Summits (Pathways and Opportunities in the Workforce and Education Region) to convene stakeholders across the region to discuss and participate in plenary and panels about the regional importance of WBL and models that can be used to replicate successful work. In addition, national presenters will be invited to share best practices and strategic planning time to increase communication and data infrastructure to support ongoing alignment and collaboration. In order to develop a shared vision and strategic plan, \$50,000 will be set aside for a Regional Convening to bring together the Pathways Leadership Team and area stakeholders to increase alignment of regional pathways. The purpose of the Regional Convening is to bring regional partners together to share what we have learned at national and statewide convenings, the POWER Summit and local entities and develop a strategic plan to move forward with the pathways work of the region. Contractual expense of \$80,000 include a partnership with the Office of Partnerships, Marketing and Communications (OPMC), promoting positive aspects of the grant and educating the public on behalf of the Pathways Leadership Team. The OPMC will assist by developing and maintaining communication with internal and external entities. The OPMC will support the grant by creating deliverables including a website and newsletter. The newsletter will serve to engage employers and attract new partners to join the Pathways Leadership Team. The website will provide access regarding pathways to all partners of the Pathways Leadership Team as well as updates regarding the work accomplished in the region with work-based learning and new partnerships. In addition, Region One is excited to partner with RGV FOCUS to advance cross-sector education to career pathways across the Rio Grande Valley under the Tri-Agency Regional Convenor grant. The scope of work includes assisting with identifying, coordinating, and convening the cross-sector Pathways Leadership Team to leverage current RGV FOCUS efforts for alignment and the implementation of the regional strategic plan. Services also include support for the development of the data infrastructure to build out a platform for data sharing to elevate focus on equity to eliminate local disparities. Communication efforts are supported through media platforms and outreach, including the Educate Texas Marketing & Communications Team. As a service center, Region One has access to multiple funding sources that will support the implementation of this project and future work. Current funding sources include GEAR UP grants, Migrant Services, Special Education, and Perkins Reserve Federal grant that service socially and economically disadvantaged families. The Pathways Leadership Team will continue to ensure representation and meaningful inclusion of community voices through support for Performance Key Indicators, specifically as it relates to the development, dissemination, and assessment of stakeholder needs through surveys to measure partner satisfaction, efficacy, and adoption in the regional pathways work.

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.

You may duplicate this page

Amended Section

Reason for Amendment