



2023-2025 Grow Your Own Grant Program, Cycle 6
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, October 13, 2022

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation **General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 40, 87th Texas Legislature**

This LOI application must be submitted via email to **competitivegrants@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, October 13, 2022**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **February 9, 2023 to April 30, 2025**

Pre-award costs are **not** permitted for this grant.

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Attachment 1: Pathway Selection and Participation

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization CDN Campus ESC DUNS

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):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LOI application, guidelines, and instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> Debarment and Suspension Certification |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances | <input type="checkbox"/> Lobbying Certification |

Authorized Official Name Title

Email Phone

Signature Date

Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. Check the box below if applying as a fiscal agent.

- The LEA or ESC submitting this application is the fiscal agent of a planned SSA. All participating agencies will enter into a written SSA agreement describing the fiscal agent and SSA member responsibilities. All participants understand that the "Shared Services Arrangement Attachment" must be completed and signed by all SSA members and submitted to TEA upon request.

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 2023-2025 Grow Your Own Grant Program, Cycle 6 Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Grow Your Own, Cycle 6 Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

PATHWAY 1:

- 5. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for Education & Training teachers that receive a stipend through the Grow Your Own Grant by May 31, 2023. These participating teachers must commit with the MOU to, at minimum, teach the Education and Training courses and, if applicable, establish and/or grow a chapter of a Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) as a condition of receiving the stipend.
- 6. The MOUs for Education and Training teachers must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 11 of the Program Guidelines.
- 7. If implementing dual credit Education and Training courses, the LEA must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for the partnering IHE by May 31, 2023. This MOU should include, at minimum, content outlined on page 11 of the Program Guidelines.
- 8. The LEA will retain documentation locally of each letter of commitment or MOU and submit to TEA upon request.
- 9. The LEA assures that each high school campus within the participating LEA will implement at least the Instructional Practices and/or Practicum courses in the Education and Training course sequence in 2023-2024, and at least both stated courses in 2024-2025, with the teachers receiving the stipend as teachers of record for both courses or either course. *Please see example on page 9 of the Program Guidelines.
- 10. To receive a stipend for teaching dual credit, the LEA assures the Education and Training teacher holds a master's degree in an education-related field and be the teacher of record for at least one dual credit course section in 2023-2024 and two dual credit course sections in 2024-2025 within the Education and Training course sequence.
- 11. All LEA high schools must establish and/or grow a chapter of a CTSO that supports the Education and Training career cluster through either the Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE) or Family, Career and Community Leads of America (FCCLA) and participate in at least one competitive event per year.
- 12. The LEA assures that all LEA high schools will participate in an initial TEA-led Teacher Institute in Summer 2023. Education and Training teacher stipend recipients are required to attend the entirety of the Institute. Principals, counselors, and LEA grant managers are only required to attend the first day. Participants who attended any previous Grow Your Own Summer Institute must still attend. IHE/EPP partners and student ambassador attendance is optional but recommended.
- 13. The LEA assures that each Education and Training teacher stipend recipient will pilot the TEA Education and Training curriculum if they are not currently using a high-quality Education and Training curriculum.
- 14. The LEA assures that each Education and Training teacher stipend recipient will receive TEA implementation supports and coaching by participating in online collaborative communities to be scheduled by TEA, not to exceed 6 hours per semester.
- 15. The LEA assures that Education and Training teacher stipend recipients will participate in surveys and, if requested, focus groups not to exceed 1 hour per semester and administered by TEA to receive input on the Education and Training programming.

Statutory/Program Assurances Cont'd

- 16. LEA grant managers shall support Practicum in Education and Training implementation, including but not limited to student scheduling, identifying field sites and field site teachers, and coordinating student transportation to field sites.
- 17. LEAs shall develop a marketing and recruitment plan to grow enrollment in high school Education and Training courses. Upon request by TEA, all LEA high schools will submit their plan for marketing and student recruitment.
- 18. LEAs must, upon request, submit reports on progress towards performance measures to TEA. If requested, LEAs must participate in focus groups and surveys to give input on the Education and Training programming.
- 19. All grant-funded teachers must be identified and submitted to TEA by May 31, 2023.

PATHWAY 2:

- 20. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for each candidate that receives a stipend through the Grow Your Own Grant by May 31, 2023. All candidate stipend recipients must commit with a MOU, at minimum, to remain at the LEA for an agreed upon length of time in a full-time teaching role as a condition of receiving the stipend.
- 21. The MOUs for candidates must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 13 of the Program Guidelines.
- 22. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU from each accredited EPP (see Eligible Applicants section of the Program Guidelines) that will partner with the LEA to award teacher certifications to all candidates (those earning a bachelor's degree and teacher certification and certification-only candidates) by May 31, 2023.
- 23. The MOUs for EPPs must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 13 of the Program Guidelines.
- 24. The LEA will retain all MOU documentation locally and submit to TEA upon request.
- 25. LEAs must allow reasonable paid release time and schedule flexibility, as determined by the LEA, for candidates to complete their degree and certification course requirements while engaged in the grant program.
- 26. All certification-only candidates within a LEA will be certified by the same partner EPP as a cohort managed collaboratively by the LEA and EPP.
- 27. The LEA assures that candidate stipend recipients participate in surveys and, if requested, focus groups not to exceed 1 hour per semester and administered by TEA to receive input on the grant programming.
- 28. If positions are available that can be appropriately filled in alignment with candidates' certification area(s), LEAs must commit to hiring/retaining candidates upon successful completion of their teacher certification to serve as a teacher of record in the LEA by the start of the 2025-2026 school year.
- 29. LEAs must, upon request, submit reports on progress towards performance measures to TEA.
- 30. The names of all grant-funded teachers and/or candidates must be identified and submitted to TEA by May 31, 2023.

ALL PATHWAYS:

- 31. If a teacher or candidate is unable to continue with the grant program, the LEA must file an application amendment and provide TEA with an update of the new amount and type of stipend recipient(s) within 30 days of notification.
- 32. LEAs must file application amendments within seven days of a request from TEA.

Program Description

Describe how the Grow Your Own program will be implemented with grant funds and how the grant will address the LEA's teacher pipeline needs.

Pathway 2 of the Texas Education Agency's Grow Your Own Grant will enable DeSoto ISD to expand our efforts and to address the teacher shortage by providing pathways to allow diverse populations to enter the teaching profession. DeSoto ISD is working to prioritize growth from within as COVID-19 demonstrated the important role of Instructional Aides and Teachers In Residence play in our organization as well as the challenges of filling math, science & bilingual teaching positions.

Currently DeSoto ISD faces challenges acquiring highly qualified candidates in the highly competitive north Texas area. Funding will allow us to reduce barriers and support highly motivated employees who desire to enter the teaching profession but lack financial resources. Receiving the TEA Grow Your Own grant will provide DeSoto ISD with opportunities to offset educator preparation program costs while increasing retention rates by investing in employees who demonstrate grit and organizational commitment & interest in high need areas.

Goal 1: Create and expand our Grow Your Own Pipeline of internal candidates with post-secondary and certification opportunities for Instructional Aides and Long-Term Substitute candidates.

Goal 2: Prioritize internal candidates in high needs areas of Math, Science, ELAR and Bilingual education.

Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel

Outline the required qualifications and experience for key personnel to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include each of the following individuals (when applicable) and a description of each role: 1. The LEA's grant manager; 2. LEA leaders involved in program implementation; 3. The campus principals for participating Education and Training high schools; 4. the college/career counselors for participating Education and Training high schools; 5. Education and Training teachers; 6. Education and Training field site teachers for Instructional Practices and/or Practicum courses; 7. Any other personnel responsible for implementing the grant.

Title and Responsibilities of Position

Dr. Violet Dean - Chief of Human Capital Management. With over 26 years in public education – teacher, principal, & Human Resources. She has extensive HR leadership in Texas school districts. She is a Holsworth fellow & advises Texas districts on internal capacity-building initiatives. She will communicate the program impact to district leaders & recommend changes to the implementation team.

Andrae Rhyne - Executive Director of Federal & State Programs. With over 30 years in public education- teacher, principal, Curriculum Director, Dallas ISD Alternative Certification Program Manager & competitive grants (ESSER, GEAR UP, A2E2). Mr. Rhyne consults with other districts regarding improvement initiatives, teacher quality & grant management. Mr. Rhyne will monitor fiscal compliance.

Dr. Elexia White - a 10-year educator with an administrator certification who works & leads district recruitment & retention initiatives, including the district Teacher in Residence program & the New Teacher Academy. Dr. White has presented at various national conferences, including the Magnet Schools of America conference.

Campus Principals- The campus principals serving as the campus instructional leaders are best able to help recognize the employees that have the most potential to add long term benefits to the district. They will also be able to see & be aware of the effectiveness and progress of the stipend recipients. They will work with instructional coaches and Human resources to determine progress measures.

Elizabeth Bostic – DeSoto ISD Budget & Grant Manager. With over 15 years in public education - teacher, Instructional Coach, Campus Administrator & School Action Fund grant lead. She works with the district leadership to align grant goals & district strategic initiatives. Ms. Bostic will provide coherence of TEA grant expectations & coordinate activities with the Human Resources team.

Goals and Objectives

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed Grow Your Own program. Describe the talent management strategy, (including the LEA's approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified teachers) related to those goals/objectives.

Goal 1: Create and expand our Grow Your Own Pipeline of internal candidates for Instructional Aides and Teacher In Residence candidates. Selected candidates will enroll in an approved IHE and complete a bachelor's degree. After completion, candidates will enroll in an accredited EPP and complete certification requirements. DeSoto ISD will offset employee educational costs by reimbursing employees that successfully complete coursework.

Goal 2: Prioritize internal candidates in high needs areas of Math, Science, ELAR and Bilingual education. DeSoto ISD will select candidates to complete undergraduate and certification requirements in critical shortage areas. We will put priority on applicants a focus in high need areas. DeSoto ISD will offset employee educational costs by reimbursing employees that successfully complete coursework.

Goal 3: Increase the professional capacity of all individuals pursuing teaching certifications. University partners will provide experiences for cohort members to increase their professional capacity in key areas including, but limited to, classroom management, classroom culture, unit design, etc.

Recruiting and Hiring: The district will host at least one virtual and one in person session to recruit Teachers In Residence & Instructional aides. The district will give priority to district alumni already working in the district who need to complete a bachelor's degree. Following informational sessions, interested individuals will complete an application. A selection committee will review and score applications. The superintendent will announce selected candidates at a district event.

Retention: Partners from surrounding entities will be invited to donate to the continuation efforts of the Grow Your Own Pipeline. Once certified, individuals will sign a contract addendum to their letter of intent, agreeing to 3 years of service in DeSoto ISD.

Progress Monitoring and Evaluation Measures

Describe how the performance measures identified for this program are consistent with the purpose of the program and related to teacher pipeline needs. Include the tools and processes used to measure performance and the extent to which the major goals and objectives of the grant are met.

The purpose of the Grow Your Own Program DeSoto ISD is to provide current employees with opportunities to complete a bachelor's degree and become certified teachers. The progress monitoring and evaluation measures detailed below support the implementation of the program and are intended to meet the needs identified of the program goals.

Goal 1 requires that we create a Grow Your Own Pipeline of internal candidates with post-secondary and certification opportunities. We have identified district expectations to measure the performance:

- Min 3.0 overall GPA
- Academic Advisement – to ensure degree completion
- Completion of at least 60 hours of professional learning
- TExES Score of at least 240 on applicable exams
- Professional Portfolio

To support Goal 3 of the goal and objectives of the program, candidates will maintain a professional portfolio as evidence of their experience, capability, and potential as a professional educator.

Sample documents may include the following:

- Discussion of teaching methods/strategies/lesson planning
- Observation and feedback forms (T-TESS Observation and Feedback Rubric)
- Log of professional development activities and hours (Internal Tracking Form)
- Assessment – use of varied assessments
- Technology in instruction and assessment

In addition to the above processes/measures, DeSoto ISD will utilize an internally created selection rubric to determine fit. The district may use selection process and will also include use of the Haberman STAR Teacher Pre-Screener or other evidence-based screeners. The district will use a Gantt chart or similar tracker to monitor participant progress and ensure grant fidelity.

Budget Narrative

Referencing the applicant's budget workbook and the Application Funding section of the Program Guidelines, outline the proposed budget and amounts for allowable uses of grant program funding. This should also match the Pathway Selection and Participation section of this application.

As referenced in the budget our narrative for the budget expenditures is as such:

Payroll 6100 Costs

Substitute Pay – The current certified substitute rate is \$125.00 per day. The allocation of \$4000.00 will afford recipients a maximum of 2 days off to complete university coursework or certification requirements.

Extra Duty Pay- To provide additional support, the district reserved \$5,000 for extra duty pay.

Tuition Remission - The budget contains a \$96,000 allocation to reimburse tuition expenses for four participants and reimburse Educator Preparation Expenses for maximum of 6 candidates.

Bachelor's seeking recipients will receive \$14,000 each and the certification recipients will receive \$5000. The funding plan should yield four bachelor's candidates and eight teacher alternative certification candidates.

Selected candidates will sign notification explaining the reimbursement process for tuition, fees, and living expenses incurred by the end of the 24-25 school year the grant timeline.

Supplies and Materials 6300 Costs

Supplies & Materials - Every semester providing the certification staff members for a class supply grant.

The budget includes an \$8,000 allocation for books, study materials, and exam preparation materials, etc. Grant program staff will review expenses to ensure program compliance and allowability.

Sustainability Plan

Describe the sustainability plan for the Grow Your Own Program beyond the timeline of grant funding. The plan should address how a high-quality program will be maintained, including clear action steps beginning in the first year of grant funding and a demonstrated ability to leverage and coordinate resources to increase the LEA's capacity to strengthen the local educator pipeline and make progress on sustainability. This may include the use of other local, state, and/or federal resources. Consider also how the Grow Your Own program may be integrated into, be supported by, and provide support for existing LEA or EPP initiatives and/or priorities.

DeSoto ISD will collaborate with university partners to explore reduced tuition options future participants. We plan to build a consistent pipeline of students to our university and certification partners to strengthen the partnership and promote sustainability efforts beyond the life of the grant.

DeSoto ISD will incorporate Grow Your Own efforts into future ESSA Comprehensive Needs Assessment activities to leverage support from Title II and other funding sources to split fund talent initiatives. DeSoto ISD is currently exploring ways to build a library of resources and create customized, asynchronous test preparation experiences.

DeSoto ISD will utilize the FAFSA model to qualify participants to take advantage of federal funding options. The district will collaborate with university financial aid counselors and will host periodic sessions in multiple formats to attract a wider and more diverse audience.

The Recruitment and Retention division will work with university and certification programs to optimize employee time. Recruitment and Retention staff will also reach out to community partners to invest in the Grow Your Own program.

Stipend Recipient Recruitment

Describe the plan to recruit Education and Training teachers within Pathway 1 and/or candidates within Pathway 2 who are interested and eligible in participating in the program and receiving stipends. The plan must include strategies to equitably recruit diverse individuals and identify individuals with potential criteria including: **A. Pathway 1:** For Education and Training teachers, a demonstrated track record of success and/or achievement, involvement in student organizations and/or school activities, strong evaluation ratings (if applicable), and strong relationships with students (if applicable). **B. Pathway 2:** For candidates, a desire and commitment to teach long term in the LEA and/or region, strong evaluation ratings (if applicable), and strong relationships with students (if applicable).

The DeSoto ISD Human Capital Management Team will reach out to Teachers In Residence and currently employed aides which details individuals' level of education. Once reviewed the team will request transcripts to validate their college credit hours.

The district will utilize a recruitment announcement to invite all individuals to 1 virtual meeting and 1 in-person informational session. The announcement will also be sent to the campus administration, as they have staff that they would like to suggest applying for the program.

DeSoto ISD will provide all interested parties with an application packet and deadline information. Weekly, the implementation manager will send reminders to individuals who received an application regarding the upcoming deadline and application requirements. Additionally, committee members will provide an "Applicant Sprint" where application assistance is provided to all qualifying employees to ensure that all individuals who are interested complete an application. After a committee reviews each application, an acceptance notification will be sent to all stipend recipients.

To celebrate recipients' accomplishments & raise monies for the continuation of GYO the cohort members will be invited to a Scholarship Soiree done in partnership with the campuses to celebrate individuals who received the funds. The Scholarship Soiree done in partnership with the campuses to celebrate individuals who received the funds. The Scholarship Soiree will also be a retention and sustainability strategy where we celebrate employees who have completed their degrees and certifications annually. We will work with university partners to establish a district tuition benefit for all students to address sustainability of the Grow Your Own Program initiative.

Stipend Recipient Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

Referencing the Program-Specific Assurances in the Program Guidelines, describe the MOUs in which: **A. Pathway 1:** Education and Training teacher stipend recipients agree to meet grant requirements and any other terms set by the LEA; **B. Pathway 1:** IHE that will partner with the LEA(s) to implement dual credit Education and Training courses and commit to supporting the Education and Training teachers and course implementation (if applicable); **C. Pathway 2:** Candidate stipend recipients commit to remain in the LEA for an agreed upon length of time as a condition of receiving the stipend and if a position is available, the LEA commits to hiring/retaining candidates with satisfactory program completion/job performance; **D. Pathway 2:** Accredited EPPs that will partner with the LEA(s) to award teacher certifications to candidates and commit to supporting candidates with completion of their teacher certification and supporting LEA(s) with implementation of the grant program.

-Candidates will receive an MOU that notes the following:

- That candidates have until the end of the 2024-25 school year to earn their bachelor's degree and/or teacher certification

- Completion of their portfolio in accordance to their position of Teacher In Residence or Instructional Aides as outlined above

- With documentation of receipts turned in at the end of each semester reimbursement shall occur as such:

- For Instructional Aides- Candidates will be reimbursed for registration and initial enrollment fees. The candidates will be reimbursed for each course where they receive a 'C' or higher after they have been accepted into the Grow Your Own program if they complete their degree or by the end of 2024-25 school year.

- For Teachers in Residence- Candidates will be reimbursed for certification course enrollment. The candidates will be reimbursed for each certification course where they receive a 'B' or higher after they have been accepted into the Grow Your Own program if they complete their certification or by the end of 2024-25 school year. They will also be reimbursed for payment for the certification tests and cost of posting certification with TEA.

- Candidates will have a signed letter of commitment to serve as a teacher of record in the DeSoto ISD by the start of the 2025-2026 school year, if positions are available that can be appropriately filled in alignment with the candidate's certification area(s)

- The Contingency plan for the event that no teaching positions are available is as follows:

- Candidates agree that the following year if campuses do not pick them up before the 25-26 school year starts that they will remain in district as active substitutes in open classrooms for the 1st 60 instructional days of the following school year.

- If they are picked up by a DeISD campus within the 1st 60 days of the following school year they will remain with DeSoto ISD for 3 years including the stipend. If the position is not available in the 1st 60 days, the candidate may leave the district.

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