



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 [redacted]

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): [redacted]

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):

- 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



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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.

The Grow Your Own program will be a collaborative partnership between Ector County ISD, University of Texas Permian Basin, Odessa College (OC), and Odessa Pathway to Teaching to prepare a diverse group of aspiring teachers to confidently enter the teaching profession as a highly qualified teacher. During 2019-2020, ECISD maintained 356 teacher vacancies throughout the school year. This equates to 18% of the total teaching staff. Due to this challenge, the District recognized the need to think strategically about attracting, recruiting, growing, and retaining ECISD teachers. As of May 2022, the District has 51 teacher vacancies and is at a 98% fill rate. Through the continued use of grant-funded opportunities, ECISD will be able to continue addressing teacher vacancies. Utilizing the Grow Your Own (GYO) approach is important to mitigating challenges. ECISD will employ a High School GYO called Future Teacher of Odessa, a four-year program spanning grades 9-12 in which students can earn up to 78 semester credit hours towards a bachelor's degree in Education. Our higher education partners are Odessa College (OC) and the UT Permian Basin. Students enroll in a mix of dual credit and non-dual credit courses. Most coursework is completed at the student's home campus but there are times when they can take classes at OC and UT Permian Basin so that they receive the college-going experience. In addition to Future Teacher of Odessa, ECISD will employ a Paraprofessional to Teacher strategy that aims to support paraprofessionals in earning a bachelor's degree and teacher certification.

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

Ashley Osborne - Executive Director Talent Development - will act as the co-grant manager. Ashley has experience managing grants such as Principal Residency Grant, TCLAS, ESSER, as well as local grant opportunities. Ashley will oversee the Paraprofessional to Teacher pipeline effort.

Ryan Merritt - Executive Director Career and Technical Education - will act as the co-grant manager. Ryan has experience managing grants such as Perkins Federal CTE grant and the Effective Advising Framework grant. Ryan will oversee the Future Teachers of Odessa pipeline effort.

Debra Bynum - Director Odessa Pathway to Teaching

Cheryl Cunningham - will be the dual credit instructor and will manage students work based learning experiences at the elementary campuses.

Kyrsten Nall - Supervises the dual credit instructors

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.

ECISD developed a robust five-year strategic plan to be the north star for all district operations and innovations. One focal point of the strategic plan is to invest in talent, and the development of the Human Capital Division was essential to mitigating ongoing talent challenges. It is the goal of Human Capital to attract and recruit talent as well as support and encourage employees to reach their full potential through professional learning. We help improve employee performance and create pathway opportunities such as Teacher Incentive Allotment, ultimately increasing employee retention. We recognize that recruiting existing teachers to ECISD isn't the only solution to our teacher shortage. We must look within to grow our own and provide development and growth opportunities to build the capacity of the talent present within Ector County. All pipeline efforts have a few common threads. 1) Talent should be cultivated and prepared for positions before taking on the roles. 2) The pipeline should plan for and mitigate potential barriers to pipeline conversion. 3) Each pipeline fills a unique niche within the organization. One program alone is not the "silver bullet," therefore we must cultivate multiple pipelines to address vacancies. Because of this, ECISD employs several pipeline efforts, many of which are grant funded. If awarded, ECISD would be able to sustain and scale these efforts. It is the goal of ECISD to employ teachers that match student demographics. The students of ECISD identify as 78% Hispanic, 15% white, and 4% African American while the teachers are 40% Hispanic, 51.5% white, and 5.7% African American. ECISD recognizes that recruitment efforts must be made to increase the Hispanic teacher population. In addition, there is a focus on increasing male representation among teachers. Currently, ECISD employs 25% male teachers and 75% female teachers. Targeted recruitment efforts, particularly at the high school level should translate to an increase in the male teacher population.

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.

Ector County ISD will collect and analyze data to ensure continuous improvement of both Pathways 1 and 2.

Pathway 1: ECISD will monitor enrollment and successful completion of students in the Education and Training Program of Study. We will monitor the number of credit hours earned for each student. Each student may earn up to 21 semester credit hours specifically in the Education and Training program of study in addition to other dual credit opportunities the student may have within the core curriculum at the IHE. ECISD will monitor the participation of students in TAFE, Texas Association of Future Educators. Utilize the ECISD To and Through department to ensure that students persist through obtaining their bachelor's degree and teacher certification.

Pathway 2: ECISD will maintain demographic data, grade reporting, and EPP performance data consistent with the goal of supporting a diverse group of paraprofessionals in becoming certified teachers. In addition, this data will be used to make comparisons with previous cohorts to determine if there are positive trends in demographic data and teacher employment. We will also compare the success of candidates to ensure that the district model is providing each candidate with the support they need to be successful.

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.

\$11,000.00 stipends for two Education and Training teachers with a master's degree who are teaching instructional practices and/or practicum in Education and Training for dual credit (\$22,000 total) to be disbursed over the two-year grant time line. In addition, \$3,000 will be allocated for travel to Summer 2023 TEA-led Grow Your Own Institute for the Education and Training Teachers. \$7,000 will be allocated for implementing and growing of the Education and Training program dual credit cost and TAFE organization. This brings a total award request for Pathway one to \$32,000, also allowing \$1,674.24 for indirect costs.

In the pursuit of Pathway 2: \$114,000 for Six paraprofessionals selected to receive grant funds to cover tuition, fees, and living expenses of up to \$19,000.00 per candidate for the life of the grant. As well as \$5964.48 indirect costs for Pathway 2.

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.

ECISD will utilize state-weighted CTE along with federal Perkins funds to sustain the Education and Training program. ECISD will pursue sustainability of the GYO model by working with local colleges and universities to provide local course credits for paraprofessionals at a reduced cost. In addition, it is the goal of ECISD to employ a tiered model for paraprofessional employment in which teacher vacancy dollars will be allocated to paraprofessional growth and development. ECISD will also explore partnering with local organizations to become a registered apprenticeship provider through the US Department of Labor to unlock potential dollars to sustain current and future pipeline efforts.

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).

Pathway 1: Existing dual credit teachers that have maintained a successful program through engaging students in TAFE, Dual Credit, and the high school program of study will be recruited to participate in the GYO program.
Pathway 2: ECISD will recruit a diverse pool of paraprofessionals to apply for the GYO grant stipend. Emails to all staff, teacher referrals, and principal recommendations will be utilized to target a group of highly skilled paraprofessionals that have already shown a track record of success in working with students. In addition, the application will consist of questions that ask each applicant to describe their desire to pursue the teaching profession. The application will also be used to filter candidates that do not currently meet eligibility criteria. In addition to receiving the stipend, selected participants will receive personalized support from the university, EPP, and district leadership. Participants will be invited to attend the Aspiring teacher academy, A series of optional professional learning opportunities targeted at ECISD's instructional paraprofessional staff. Through the year-long program, paraprofessionals receive basic and functional tools to better serve the students of ECISD. The goal of Aspiring Teachers is to develop the capacity of paraprofessionals to instruct a classroom of their own, eventually as certified teachers. The grant manager will also perform quarterly check-ins with the candidates to ensure their needs are being met and attempt to remove any barriers that are in the district's locus of control.

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.

Pathway 1 - Stipend recipients will sign a letter of commitment to receive the stipend. The letter will consist of grant assurances, length of the agreement, total stipend amount awarded, and stipend payment schedule.
Pathway 1 - ECISD will maintain an MOU with the partnering Institutions of Higher Education. The MOU will consist of grant assurances and length of the agreement.
Pathway 2: Stipend recipients will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding stating that they understand the commitments as outlined in the grant and they agree to be employed by ECISD for at least three years upon receiving their standard certificate. In addition, ECISD commits to employing the stipend recipient as a teacher of record upon completion of a bachelor's degree under the District of Innovation exemption as long as the stipend recipient completes programmatic requirements and is in good standing with ECISD. The candidates must be enrolled in a certification program if they were not enrolled through the university.
Pathway 2: ECISD will require an MOU between the district and Odessa Pathway to Teaching as the Educator preparation provider. The MOU will stipulate the support provided to stipend recipients as they pursue their teacher certification.

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