



2024-2025 Stronger Connections Grant

Competitive Grant Application: Due 11:59 p.m. CT, July 18, 2023

NOGA ID

Application stamp-in date and time

TEA will only accept grant application documents by **email**, including competitive grant applications and amendments. Submit grant applications and amendments as follows:

Competitive grant applications and amendments to competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov.

The application **MUST** bear the signature of a person authorized to bind the applicant to a contractual agreement

Authorizing legislation:

Grant period: **Pre-award costs:**

Required attachments:

Amendment Number

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

1. Applicant Information

Name of organization

Campus name CDN Vendor ID ESC UEI

Address City ZIP Phone

Primary Contact Email Phone

Secondary Contact Email Phone

2. 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 grant application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the grant application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- Grant application, guidelines, and instructions
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- General Provisions and Assurances
- Lobbying Certification
- Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances
- ESSA Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name Title Email

Phone Signature Date

Grant Writer Name Signature Date

Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization. Grant writer is **not** an employee of the applicant organization.

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Adjustments on this page have been confirmed with _____ by _____ of TEA by phone / fax / email on _____.

3. Shared Services Arrangements

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

4. Identify/Address Needs

List up to three quantifiable needs, as identified in your needs assessment, that these program funds will address. Describe your plan for addressing each need.

Quantifiable Need	Plan for Addressing Need
Riviera ISD needs an additional counselor position, preferred a Licensed Professional Counselor, on staff to address and support student, staff, and community needs	RISD will an additional counselor position, preferred LPCs. The added position will be a District-Wide position to oversee all three campuses and the Safe and Supportive School Program and sit on the advisory councils. The position will work with the IHEs to ensure all students are supported through this program.
Riviera ISD needs mental health training provided to all staff members across the District and needs support parents and community members on available resources.	Using the Institute of Higher Education (IHE), Texas A&M University- Kingsville (TAMUK), RISD will collaborate with the Institute of Rural Mental Health for training to be provided for all staff; staff will receive stipend to implement. Coastal Bend College will also provide support for dual enrolled students and parents.
Riviera ISD will provide outside counseling for students as identified as a need from community survey.	RISD will partner with TAMUK to provide outsourced counseling on the RISD campus. TAMUK will provide graduate students in counseling, social work, and psychology the opportunity to have a paid internship within the school district.

5. SMART Goal

Describe the summative SMART goal you have identified for this program (a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely), either related to student outcome or consistent with the purpose of the grant.

The LEA will improve the mental health ratings, through stakeholder surveys and advisory councils, and improve the overall school culture through this grant program. LEA will utilize the stakeholder (student, staff, parent, and community member) surveys to identify the order of priorities of mental and wellness needs. Use benchmarks to support the implementation of the program. LEA will partner with Texas Student Support, regional ESC, and local IHEs to build stronger connections that will extend into the community creating a solution to the mental health crisis. The expenses for the program will run from 11/15/2023 to 09/30/2025 but connections and trainings will build the foundation of the rural community to support student success.

6. Measurable Progress

Identify the benchmarks that you will use at the end of the first three grant quarters to measure progress toward meeting the process and implementation goals defined for the grant.

First-Quarter Benchmark

The first quarter will be 11/2023 - 5/2024. The first three identified needs will immediately be addressed: improving mental, behavioral, and emotional states of being (68.5%), supporting academic needs (63%), and improving academic achievement (55.6%) were the top three identified needs with partnerships from TAMUK and CBC. RISD will have the first benchmark survey go out to students, staff, parents, and community to see if these specific needs are being addressed. A new counseling position will be added.

Contracted services will be implemented to collect data from students. Staff will have attended trainings and will provide feedback. Staff will be provided refreshers and wellness support throughout this quarter. Parents and community members will also have been provided support with mental, emotional, physical, and wellness support.

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6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)**Second-Quarter Benchmark**

The second quarter 6/2024 - 1/2025 will roll in supports to address the additional identified needs: Providing Safe, Inclusive, and Supported Learning (53.7%), Improving Physical and Well-being of Students (46.3%), Address and Respond to Bullying, Violence, and Acts of Hate (46.3%), and Supporting Nonacademic Needs (38.9%). Student data will be compared and trends will be projected and addressed.

Events to support parents and community will be ongoing. Physical and virtual sign ins and feedback options will be made available. A survey will be sent to all stakeholders. The parent/community council will review data and provide feedback to District to changes if any to be made. Partnerships with both IHEs will continue to ensure success for the Student Support Program. All trainings from Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC will have been completed by this benchmark. Evaluations will be ongoing to ensure progress is being made.

Third-Quarter Benchmark

The third quarter 2/2025 - 9/2025 will be evaluating the program with surveys and evaluations for final reflections and planning for closure of funds. Students will have done a final surveys to see the improvement in mental, emotional, physical, and well-being from their point of view. All councils will meet to decide what events in place will need to remain in place to support the Student Support Program using the data collected and reporting system the Texas Center for Student Supports that was implemented. The data will reflect if the desired outcome of the increased in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increased in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increased in referrals for mental health services, and reduction in removals from class was met.

7. Project Evaluation and Modification

Describe how you will use project evaluation data to determine when and how to modify your program. If your benchmarks or summative SMART goals do not show progress, describe how you will use evaluation data to modify your program for sustainability.

Riviera ISD will use project evaluation data to determine when and how to modify the program by utilizing the surveys from students, parents, staff and community members at each benchmark. The parent, student, and staff advisory committee will meet at least twice a benchmark period to provide input to the counselor positions on staff to ensure the vision, mission, and goals are set at the first meeting and continued to be the focus throughout the timeline. The council will present to the Riviera ISD Board at least three times to ensure all stakeholders are involved.

The playbook from the Texas Center for Student Supports will be utilized to ensure completion of goals.

The program will be evaluated with the purpose to support systemic change in the way that the LEA can address and respond to bullying, violence, and acts of hate. Modification will ensure that the LEA is supporting the academic and nonacademic needs of students in providing safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. This should result with improved academic achievement as well as mental, behavioral, emotional, and physical health and well-being of students.

The student data collected will be shared during council meetings to ensure tracking data to support the student program is taking place. Tracking funds will also take place to ensure funds are being utilized to support students' growth towards the systemic change.

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8. Statutory/Program Assurances

The following assurances apply to this grant program. In order to meet the requirements of the grant, the grantee 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 grant 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 Statutory Requirements, TEA Program Requirements, and Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024–2025 Stronger Connections Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide the Texas Education Agency, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the grant program.
4. The applicant will formally establish a Student Support Program at three district campuses (one elementary, one intermediate/middle school, one high school) to address school climate and establish a student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC. If the applicant has few than three campuses or does not have three of the listed types of campuses, the applicant will establish the Student Support Program and the student support team structure at all campuses, up to three, served in the district.
5. The applicant will allocate 6% of awarded funds for contracted services for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
6. The applicant will allocate 10% of awarded funds for professional and contracted services with a partner approved by the Texas Center for Student Support and TEA. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
7. The applicant will use the family engagement playbook developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to partner and build support with parents and families prior to a student support team assessment, and during the student support implementation process to facilitate a student support partnership with families.
8. The applicant will establish a parent, student, and staff advisory committee to provide input on the establishment of the Student Support Program.
9. The applicant will engage in Student Support Program planning activities from the beginning of the grant program through implementation at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
10. The applicant will establish and implement at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, the Student Support Program aligned to the content and training provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
11. The applicant will incorporate a case management system into the student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
12. The applicant will align the student support team structure with behavioral threat assessment team operation and outcomes to ensure that students are well supported and that the effectiveness of interventions are monitored.
13. The applicant will implement the data collection and reporting system developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy of the implementation of the Student Support Program, including student support team structure, quality of support leading to positive outcomes, and data related to increases in desired outcomes (e.g. increase in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increase in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increase in referrals for mental health services, reduction in removals from class, etc.).
14. The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures.

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9. Statutory/ TEA Program Requirements

1. Describe how the LEA will identify the campuses that will participate in the establishment of the Student Support Program described in the program description? Include the criteria or considerations that will influence the determination by the LEA.

The LEA will utilize the Parent and Community Council, Staff Council, and Student Advisory/Council to provide input of the establishment of the Student Support Program to address school climate and establish a Student Support Program structure.

The LEA will ensure data is being analyzed and cross analyzed through the different lens, of mentioned councils above, to support students' success. The criteria will include the physical address of the school district. All campuses at 203 Seahawk Drive will be supported with funds. The three campuses are: Nanny Elementary, De La Paz Middle School, and Kaufer Early College High School.

2. Describe how the LEA will ensure that campus leaders and staff are committed to the success of the Student Support Program.

The LEA will ensure that campus leaders and staff are committed to the success of the Student Support Program by meeting during the benchmark periods and being a part of the advisory councils. The valued input from parents, students, staff, and community are the key stakeholders that campus leaders need to guide the decisions and benchmark success checkpoints. This will provide intrinsic motivation and commitment to the program.

Stipends to staff for training will also be provided. This will provide extrinsic motivation and commitment to the program.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

3. Describe how the LEA will engage parents and families to solicit support for the program.

LEA will engage families by offering services and events through the duration of the grant. The LEA will provide all strategies and resources from the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC to parents and families. This will support the the program. Communication will take place on all established forms of District communication: school app, class virtual apps, all social media outlets, call outs and mail outs. The District will also do surveys with the goal to collect more documented responses with each survey. This will be purposeful when sharing with the stakeholders.

Partnerships with the local Institutes of Higher Education will provide training for parents and families. The contracted services will also provide the unique opportunities of paid interns to provide support as needed and identified. Stakeholders identified a Yes (33.3%), Maybe (48.1%), and No (18.5%) need for the LEA to provide mental, emotional, physical and wellness support for parents and families.

4. Describe how the LEA will ensure that there is adequate staff to support the establishment and implementation of the Student Support Program.

The LEA is looking to add another District Counselor position, or of equal capabilities/credentials, the preferred credential of a Licensed Professional Counselor, meeting the needs of the survey of stakeholders, students, parents, staff, and community, who identified a (51.9%) need of having an Riviera ISD Staff member provide counseling services. This position will help support the current LPC on staff who provides for all grades (PK-12). The LEA will also partner with both Institutes of Higher Education, IHEs, TAMUK and CBC, for contracted services.

This added position and contracted services will be critical to the success of making stronger connections within the community and surrounding areas.

Purposeful connections will be provided with these funds to support students from 3 years old to 18 and beyond. TAMUK will provide staff to train the LEA's staff to implement mental health strategies and resources. TAMUK will provide interns to meet the needs of the community who identified the (63%) need of services provided from outside counselors. CBC will provide training to the dual enrollment teachers who instruct students on and off of campus. CBC is rolling out Cougar Care with the LEA in the first wave of support for dual enrollment services.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

5. Describe how each of the campuses will be supported by the grant program, if awarded, currently conduct behavioral threat assessments and how the campus will incorporate current systems into the student support team structure.

All three campuses, Nanny Elementary, De La Paz Middle School, and Kaufer Early College High School, will have the additional counselor position support campus individual needs, conduct behavior treat assessments, and be a part of the student support team and advisory councils. This position will be responsible for De La Paz Middle School and Kaufer Early College High School and the internees providing outside counseling services. All three campuses will be supported by the interns provided by Texas A&M University- Kingsville.

Kaufer Early College High School will have services provided by Coastal Bend College to support the dual enrollment students and adjunct professors.

The current counselor, who oversees all campuses, will oversee the use of data platforms, the electronic surveys sent to stakeholders, and all information and structures provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC. This position will oversee internees at Nanny Elementary and the Cougar Care provided by CBC. This position, already on staff, will ensure all campus leaders are up to date with progress in regards to benchmark success rate and financial progress throughout the timeline allotted.

6. Describe how the LEA currently identifies student support needs and how it identifies and establishes partnerships with external mental health and behavioral health providers to meet student needs.

Currently, the LEA takes self referrals from students, parent referrals, and staff referrals for counseling provided from RISD staff. If outside or additional counseling is needed, parents are encouraged to utilize resources such local mental health service community centers and/or behavioral hospitals if further attention is needed with the referral from the mental health community center.

Parents also have local churches and local mental health providers. If a student goes through the formal Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) process, the student could be accommodated with an outside mental health provider.

The District is limited to the current resources in rural South Texas.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

7. Describe how the LEA currently partners with the regional ESC to support improvement in student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, physical health and wellbeing, and improving academic outcomes for students.

LEA pays for the counselor and the nurse coop for the local Regional ESC. All information provided is dispersed across the District and to the community as needed.

Student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, physical health and wellbeing, is directly related to improving academic outcomes for students. What students tell their brain, their brain believes. Using this methodology, and addressing the mental health crisis is the top priority of the LEA. Building the stronger connections with the local university and college will be the foundation for a stronger rural community. Implementing the structures, strategies, and resources provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC will be what long term growth will stem from after the funds are removed. The program will be sustainable with best practices and the training received.

8. Describe how the LEA will use this grant program to supplement current work to improve services and supports for the mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness of students.

Currently, the LEA has one District Counselor. Funds are needed to supplement the additional position to address current work that will improve services and supports for the mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness of students.

The emphasized piece of this grant program is the partnerships with Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC. The LEA will take it a step further and partner with the local IHEs to address the needs the stakeholders identified for the LEA.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment:

478

10. Enter the Regional Educational Service Center that serves the LEA:

2

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10. Equitable Access and Participation

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this grant.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this grant.
- Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

11. PNP Equitable Services

Are any private nonprofit schools located within the applicant's boundaries?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the grant?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

Assurances

- The LEA assures that it discussed all consultation requirements as listed in Section 1117(b)(1) and/or Section 8501(c)(1), as applicable, with all eligible private nonprofit schools located within the LEA's boundaries.
- The LEA assures the appropriate Affirmations of Consultation will be provided to TEA's PNP Ombudsman in the manner and time requested.

Equitable Services Calculation

1. LEA's student enrollment	<input type="text"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNP (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text"/>
4. Total current-year grant allocation	<input type="text"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the grant's defined limit	<input type="text"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text"/>
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	<input type="text"/>

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12. Request for Grant Funds

List all of the allowable grant-related activities for which you are requesting grant funds. Include the amounts budgeted for each activity. Group similar activities and costs together under the appropriate heading. During negotiation, you will be required to budget your planned expenditures on a separate attachment provided by TEA.

Payroll Costs

1.	Additional counseling position, LPC preferred	\$160,000
2.	Staff Training Stipends	\$100,000
3.		
4.		
5.		

Professional and Contracted Services

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	\$48,000
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	\$80,000
8.	Texas A&M University- Kingsville	\$180,000
9.	Coastal Bend College	\$80,000
10.	Misc contracted services	\$62,000

Supplies and Materials

11.	LPC supplies, materials, technology, equipment	\$90,000
12.		
13.		

Other Operating Costs

15.		
16.		
17.		

Debt Services

18.		
19.		

Capital Outlay

20.		
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Direct administrative costs:

Indirect administrative costs:

TOTAL GRANT AWARD REQUESTED:

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Appendix I: Negotiation and Amendments

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 of the TEA website and may be mailed OR faxed (not both). **To fax:** one copy of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to either (512) 463-9811 or (512) 463-9564. **To mail:** three copies of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to the address on page 1. More detailed amendment instructions can be found on the last page of the budget template.

You may duplicate this page.

For amendments, choose the section you wish to amend from the drop down menu on the left. In the text box on the right, describe the changes you are making and the reason for them.

Always work with the most recent negotiated or amended application. If you are requesting a revised budget, please include the budget attachments with your amendment.

Section Being Negotiated or Amended	Negotiated Change or Amendment

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