



# 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](mailto: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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**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
Reduce number of urgent response needs.	Improve the campus culture for improved responsiveness of educators/staff based on student reported needs through the development of a comprehensive district wide model of inclusiveness, awareness and responsiveness.
Increase student attendance rates.	Improve the campus culture to increase educator/staff responsiveness to student needs to ensure students are connected to campus personnel and thus desire to be in attendance.
Decrease number of students withdrawing to homeschool situations.	Build a culture of support and inclusivity where students feel valued, honored and safe, and also where they are connected to a program or people that promotes their vision of success.

**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.

Student attendance will increase by 3% while crisis response and withdrawal rates will decrease by 20% by the end of the grant cycle.

**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**

Attendance rates will increase by 1% by the end of the first benchmark timeline.  
 Crisis referrals will decrease by 5% by the end of the first benchmark timeline.  
 Withdrawal to homeschool rates will decrease by 5% by the end of the first benchmark timeline.

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**6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)**

**Second-Quarter Benchmark**

Attendance rates will increase by 1%, from first benchmark, by the end of the second benchmark timeline.  
 Crisis referrals will decrease by 5%, from first benchmark, by the end of the second benchmark timeline.  
 Withdrawal to homeschool rates will decrease by 5%, from first benchmark, by the end of the second benchmark timeline.

**Third-Quarter Benchmark**

Attendance rates will increase by 3%, from beginning of grant, by the end of the third benchmark timeline.  
 Crisis referrals will decrease by 5%, from second benchmark, by the end of the third benchmark timeline.  
 Withdrawal to homeschool rates will decrease by 5% by the end of the third benchmark timeline.

**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.

Data will be collected for baseline and then monitored each six weeks, to make adjustments to meet goals. If progress is not noted, the identified campus team(s) will meet to review program, adjust efforts and tweak the programs based on the needs identified through collection of data from the following sources: Attendance data, Withdrawal Data, Student behavioral data from discipline referrals, crisis response collection data, and PASS survey results of student's personal feelings regarding their educational program involvement, as well as developed surveys for community feedback.

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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.

We are a small rural district and have one elementary, one junior high and one high school. We look forward to being able to address the social, emotional and safety needs of all students in the district. All three campuses are included and will participate in the grant.

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

Our leaders are already dedicated from the heart to do the right thing for students, staff and community. This grant would allow more personnel and programs to support those endeavors and to have the opportunity for consistency in program development for long term sustainability. The key factor that we face in school business is having the manpower to stick with program development and implementation as we are all pulled in a million directions to get the jobs done. Our counselors, social worker and administrators hit the ground running each day and though the intent is to get everything accomplished, many things fall between the cracks. There are simply not enough hours in the day to meet all the demands, particularly in small districts where resources are limited both in district and in the community. We proactively put programs in place but the monitoring often falls short without the dedicated specific to the programs focus that this grant will afford.

Our campus leaders and staff have been involved in the conversations regarding student and staff needs and how to best address those needs. Even with limited resources and funding, our campuses have continued to place priority and focus on improving the culture and climate on the campus and in our community. The district level team and Safety Committee along with our SHAC will meet quarterly (or more frequently as needed) to insure the progress and sustainability of the program. Support and encouragement, along with monitoring will be offered weekly to campus leaders and staff throughout program development.

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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.

We have active committees, with SHAC and our Safety and Security Committees being our strongest and most consistent groups. We will utilize these committees to develop a survey and be the sounding board for the development and organization of a more streamlined, collaborative and sustainable process. We will use online surveys for staff, students, and community, Family Engagement on Demand and parent/community events to inform and seek feedback for all stakeholders.

Our SHAC and Safety and Security committees include parents, community members, students, staff and business partners. We will continue to utilize these committees through the process with a major focus on sustainability beyond the life of the grant.

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

This grant would help fund positions to support the implementation and establishment of sustainable processes and routines to last beyond the grant cycle. These positions will include a Student Support Coordinator located on the High School campus who will coordinate the development and data monitoring for all campuses, three campus based data specialists who will input and collect data, help prepare and monitor survey development and collection, and assist with monitoring of program implementation. These positions will provide the initial monitoring and allow for constant revision to our processes and data analysis to insure long term success for all stakeholders.

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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.

Currently, each campus has an assigned counselor and we have one social worker housed at the Elementary campus. These members are the point personnel for each campus for behavioral health needs. The current process requires immediate notification of the campus administrator and the SRO if appropriate. Non emergent crisis referrals are staffed and resources sought to provide the necessary support. Emergencies require notification of parents/caregivers and appropriate staff for a meeting to review current data, while immediate needs and supports are located, then the team follows up for return to school needs and other needs.

With the addition of the support personnel through this grant, the lead Student Support Coordinator would be included in the process to provide consistency across campuses for referral and data collection. The campus based data collection specialists would help collect all the necessary data and ensure the documentation is prepared. Outside of the crisis times, the Student Support Coordinator and data specialists along with counselors, social worker will be working on the overall process to streamline the referral system, establish curriculum for support of all students with regard to needs beyond the academic curriculum, ongoing analysis of data, survey development, meeting organization, training of processes and professional development for all educators and staff to improve overall student support.

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 district uses a wide variety of methods to identify student needs. We used teacher referrals, parent referrals, communtiy referrals as well as surveys of student perception of their school environment and recurring discipline notifications that may have mental health anticedents. We partner with TCHAT for online counseling support, a local counseling center, Family Time Counseling, Tri-County Behavioral Support Center, and our local Special Education Cooperative.

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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.

We send staff to the service center for training as well as have Region 5 provide training and resources to our district. Our Counseling team is connected with Counseling Collaborative and we work with the Region 5 Safety and Security Collaborative. We write grants with the service center and will seek additional behavior support through grant funds from them as well as supports recommended by their staff.

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.

This grant will focus on increasing specific identified and targeted training to support all staff in the area of mental health, behavioral and emotional health and physical health and wellness of students. We will improve communication to develop district wide collaboration to secure consistent and sustainable processes, programs and support. The dedicated focus on curriculum for all students to be implemented during advisories, specials along with small group interventions coordinated with the campus counseling teams will greatly improve the overall culture of the campuses. The overall improvement of quality intervention and awareness by all staff will create an environment of belongingness and support.

We will utilize our CTE department to develop student led initiatives for in district development and implementation of anti bullying, mental health awareness opportunities and activities through televised announcements and short bios, interviews, etc. to build student awareness, empathy and acceptance. We will partner with a technology company who will train our students and staff to learn the technology and systems for long term implementation.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment:

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

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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 PNPs (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"/>
<b>LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)</b>	<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.	Student Support Coordinator	140,400.00
2.	Student Support Research Analysts-1 per campus	177,690.00
3.	Staff Stipends to attend summer training	50,000.00
4.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Professional and Contracted Services**

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	30,485.00
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	50,809.00
8.	Staff & SRO Training	25,000.00
9.	Student supported marketing campaign	25,000.00
10.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Supplies and Materials**

11.	Curriculum & Materials	90,000.00
12.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
13.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Other Operating Costs**

15.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
16.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
17.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Debt Services**

18.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
19.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Capital Outlay**

20.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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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
<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	
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