

## **IDEA B Discretionary Technical Assistance and Support Grant Opportunity for 2019-2020**

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is actively seeking Letters of Interest (LoI) from potential grantees to provide opportunities for specific work toward statewide ***Supports for Students Served in Small and Rural Local Education Agencies (LEAs)***. Interested Regional Education Service Centers (ESC) and/or Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) should submit an LoI in the template included in Attachment A to TEA **by October 1, 2018, at 5 pm CDT**. Potential grantees are encouraged to seek cooperative partnerships or collaborative agreements to meet all goals and objectives of the grant successfully. Funding is allocated from IDEA B Discretionary funds and scheduled for implementation in the 2019-2020 school year.

### **Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to the 20 regional education service centers and all institutions of higher education located in Texas. Other nonprofits or for-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply; however, they may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner (encouraged, as applicable).

### **1.1 Program Description**

The ***Supports for Students Served in Small and Rural LEAs*** grant is intended to develop a network of collaborative partnerships, resources, and professional development in innovative ways to ensure a more equitable level of service to students with disabilities in small and rural LEAs as compared to students in larger LEAs.

Applications with a likelihood of being funded will be demonstrably based on identified needs of stakeholders and will propose innovative solutions to meet these unmet needs.

The content of all resources and professional development materials produced through this grant must be firmly grounded in current literature and policy on special education best practice with explicit citations. All resources must be made available and accessible to all stakeholders.

Additional considerations for materials and resources produced through this grant:

- TEA maintains the right to final approval on all materials and resources before publication or presentation.
- All materials and resources will carry the TEA logo in addition to the logo of the grant awardee.
- All materials and resources are the property of TEA and must be provided to TEA at the end of the grant period or upon request.
- All materials or resources intended for use with parents and families will be made available in English, and Spanish at a minimum.

Grant awardees will make formal quarterly reports to TEA on identified outcomes-based, quantifiable lead measures with lag measure reporting at the end of the grant period. These measures must be mutually approved by the grantee and TEA and should be clearly proposed in LoI response. Additionally, budget proposals and final budget tables must include line-item/deliverable-based pricing.

## 1.2 Program Goal

The primary goal of *Supports for Students Served in Small and Rural LEAs* grant is to build capacity in small and rural LEAs to provide a more equitable level of access to students with disabilities in these communities. This goal will be accomplished through the creation of state-level infrastructures, resources, and professional development to support LEAs who face unique yet significant challenges including resource limitations and geographic remoteness.

## 1.3 Program Activities

In addition to what is listed here, applications should include innovative solutions to unmet needs to align with the stated goals of this program. This plan should, at **minimum**, include:

- Development of professional communities to mentor and support teachers and mitigate professional isolation
- Methods to share best practices among rural schools across the state
- Instructional and case management strategies for managing broad responsibilities (age, settings, student needs)
- Innovative collaborations with families, shared services arrangement providers, and contractors
- Post-secondary transition collaboratives and partnerships
- Collaboration with other networks and/or TEA initiatives with overlapping goals
- Teacher Recruitment and Retention Initiatives, such as:
  - “Grow Your Own” programs
  - Incentivize educator preparation programs to increase awareness of rural teaching opportunities
  - Explore any potential for flexibility in certification
  - Develop and implement career pathways leading to educator certification
  - Increase the quality and accessibility of online learning opportunities
- Development of Partnerships to Leverage Resources and Facilities, such as partnerships:
  - Among districts
  - With universities
  - With technology providers
  - With business and community organizations
- Family and Community Engagement Supports, such as:
  - Providing childcare at parent meetings
  - Providing an interpreter for all meetings with parents whose preferred language is other than English
  - Offering special events to engage families and community members
  - Incentivizing educators to attend community gatherings and civic meetings
- Technology tools and supports to increase access for teachers, students, and the community

## 1.4 Program Budget

\$1,000,000 per year

### **1.5 Timeline**

Lols must be submitted electronically to [sped@tea.texas.gov](mailto:sped@tea.texas.gov) by 5 pm (CDT) on October 1, 2018, to be considered. Hard copy mailed or delivered Lols will not be accepted. Applicants should combine all attachments and documents into one PDF to include a cover sheet and table of contents. Grant awardees will be notified by November 1, 2018, with the grant period to begin July 1, 2019. This grant is for one-year that may be extended for additional years at TEA discretion.

### **1.6 Closing and Next Steps**

Strong applications with a likelihood of award will be innovative in nature, demonstrate clear planning toward stated goals and focus on producing desired outcomes rather than simply activity completion.

A virtual applicants' conference will be held the week of July 16, 2018. Questions submitted to [sped@tea.texas.gov](mailto:sped@tea.texas.gov) prior to July 13, 2018, will be answered at that time, and an FAQ will be published. When submitting questions, applicants should include the name of this grant in the subject line. Applicants should refer to [www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED](http://www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED) for details and updates regarding the applicants' conference and this request for Lol generally.