



2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant for Regional Conveners
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, January 13, 2023

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

This LOI application must be submitted via email to loiapplications@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, January 13, 2023**.

Grant period from

Pre-award costs permitted from

Application stamp-in date and time

Required Attachments

- Application Part 2: Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
- Attachment A: Regional Convener Reference Form (Submit up to three forms with Application)

Application Information

Which [workforce development area](#) are you located in and applying to represent as a regional convener?

Select your organization type:

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization CDN

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

Shared Services Arrangements

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

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 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant to Regional Conveners Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant to Regional Conveners Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.
- 6. The applicant assures to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a regional convener for a geographic region with boundaries identical to those of the workforce development area.
- 7. The applicant assures to identify at least one staff person, who meets the qualifications and experience of a regional convener lead as outlined in these guidelines, with adequate time allocated to the work of this grant project and who will serve as the regional convener lead.
- 8. The applicant assures to identify multiple staff at the regional convener organization to engage in the work and participate in the designation process. This includes someone in an executive leadership position who has decision-making authority on behalf of the regional convener organization.
- 9. The applicant assures to complete all grant activities and deliverables in a timely manner, as described in the description of program and performance and evaluation measures.
- 10. The applicant assures to coordinate with their assigned coach, to be provided by TEA for technical assistance, and meet with their coach frequently throughout the project, including within the first month to align on program priorities and requirements.

Statutory/Program Assurances cont'd

- 11. The applicant assures to convene and engage a cross-sector pathways leadership team in the strategic planning process within the first three months of the grant project.
- 12. The applicant assures to develop an asset map and gap analysis within six months of the grant start date under the direction and guidance of their assigned coach. In addition, the applicant will keep this landscape analysis updated throughout the grant project.
- 13. The applicant assures to develop, in collaboration with members of the cross-sector leadership team, a strategic plan and supporting action plans within the first 12 months of the grant project.
- 14. The applicant assures to plan and execute work-based learning that will address K-12 gaps and will expand upon existing work-based learning within their region.
- 15. The applicant assures to participate and engage in statewide training and convenings during the grant period.

Statutory/Program Requirements

1. Current Regional Landscape - Describe the key career and education pathway initiatives and/or programs currently underway in your region, including those funded by TEA, THECB, and/or TWC, and your current level of involvement in those initiatives. Please also describe the current staff you have in place to support these initiatives and/or programs who will continue to be involved in this project and any new staff you would like to use grant dollars to hire to support this work. Describe the qualifications and experience of the staff person who will serve as the regional convener lead for this grant project.

*Tyler Area Career Pathways Network [Role: Regional Convener] - A regional effort that engages cross-sector stakeholders in developing high-quality career and education pathways. The initiative helps students achieve college and career readiness, earn postsecondary degrees and credentials, and enter careers aligned with current and future workforce needs. *Rural, Set, Go! [Role: Consultant]- Rural, Set, Go! was designed to serve 12 of the 14 East Texas Council of Governments counties (Gregg and Smith were not included). The purpose was to engage community and business leaders in candid conversations about workforce and economic development needs, help employers increase access to qualified workers, and to learn about regional and state resources available to "upskill" workers. *Defense ETX implementation Committee - The Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) and U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) are working together to address the defense manufacturing skills gap. The Tyler Area Business Education Council (TABEC) has served as the grant intermediary for four Perkins Reserve Grant cohorts and is appropriately staffed to facilitate partnerships with LEAs, IHEs, and business organizations to offer community resources. The Executive Director supports all of the initiatives listed above. The director being involved in these initiatives, in addition to several more in the region, has helped to avoid duplication of programs and activities, while consolidating and streamlining strategies. The TABEC plans to hire a project coordinator to help support the work of the Council, Network, and Tri-Agency Initiative. The TABEC currently serves as the Regional Convener for the Tyler Area Regional Career Pathways Network. TABEC is a 501c3 organization funded by local businesses, educational institutions, and foundations. The mission of the Council is to connect education to economic development in an effort to improve our skilled workforce and local economy for the residents of the Tyler Area. The TABEC serves as an organizer of stakeholders and as a partner to businesses, education institutions and workforce development boards in developing new programs, facilities, and events to assist area students and families. The Council works diligently to ensure that available education programs and skills training are properly aligned with workforce needs. The Council coordinates several work based learning events; and also attends the Texas Regional Pathways Network meetings and conferences hosted by TEA and JFF. The Executive Director of the TABEC is committed to serving as the Regional Convener for Texas Workforce Development Area 8. With the support of staff and consultants provided by this grant, the regional convener will serve as a neutral advocate and liaison to coordinate the strategic planning, design, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative programs and initiatives.

2. Regional Convener Priorities - What are your priorities for strategic alignment across current state, regional, and local pathways initiatives in the WDA? What would be necessary for that alignment to take place?

We will focus initial efforts on the top two targeted industries in East Texas, health science and manufacturing, by:

- (1) Conducting county forums with members representing education institutions, employers, workforce development boards, economic development councils, chambers of commerce, and local elected officials to align priorities. This will be accomplished by utilizing a local consultant that has decades of experience executing this work. The consultant, that we have in mind, has facilitated this work for the last two years and has relationships with the key stakeholders.
- (2) Communicating labor market information, strategies, and initiatives with stakeholders in WDA 8. Market the local, state, and national education and skills training incentives available for workers and employers in the East Texas region. We will utilize a local marketing agency to help develop and effective and efficient marketing strategy. The agency that we have in mind has experience with assisting local education institutions, elected officials, municipalities, and non-profit agencies in the region, state, and nation.
- (3) Aligning the needs of East Texas employers and job seekers to area credentials. We will also match existing state and federal funding with the emerging, fastest growing employment sectors in East Texas. The Tyler Area Business Education Council is recognized in the community for being a neutral convener of key stakeholders to bridge education and economic development.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

3. Regional Alignment Experience - Describe your organization’s experience leading strategic planning to support regional career and education pathways (or related education and training initiatives) in collaboration with stakeholders representing a mix of industry, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development entities.

Since the Tyler Area Business Education Council's inception, we have worked with partners in all sectors to elevate education as one of the region’s most critical issues. The TABEC serves as an organizer of stakeholders and as a partner to businesses, schools, colleges, and universities, in developing new programs, facilities, and events to assist area students and families. Additionally, we serve to ensure local workforce needs are properly aligned with available educational programs and skills training. Our mission is to engage the business community in driving measurable improvement in education outcomes and economic success. Our vision is a better educated community to support businesses and growth through targeted economic development strategies. Our focus is to build business and education partnerships by allowing local leaders to make connections, identify common concerns, establish goals and lay the groundwork for sustainable programs. Designed as a liaison between the business and educational communities, the TABEC is comprised of a broad range of participants - from foundations and non-profit organizations that invest time and resources into education, to company leaders interested in hiring the most qualified workers, and most importantly to educational entities looking for new ways to inspire their students about the future. We are a catalyst for positive future development of students of all ages. Our goal is to complement and support the work of our schools. In 2013, the City of Tyler updated their comprehensive plan, Tyler 1st. Based upon community feedback, an entire section was added to the plan to focus community attention on the need to strengthen Tyler’s education system. The Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education (TAP4E) was established in 2015 as an initiative of the TABEC. TAP4E was formed to work on education outcomes from cradle to career to ensure that Smith County’s young people and adults are better prepared for the demands of the global economy.

4. Regional Data Experience - How do you currently monitor progress and measure quality of career and education pathway programs or initiatives? What do you currently use as metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) to understand the strength of your region’s pathway programming?

Tyler Area Business Education Council strives to promote student achievement in Smith County, from cradle to career, by leveraging data, community expertise, and collaboration. We unify diverse organizations to nurture, empower, and transform our community through educational attainment, which improves economic prosperity and quality of life.

We currently use publicly available data to monitor our progress and measure the quality of our programs and initiatives in the following areas:

- *Demographics and Socioeconomics
- *Kindergarten Readiness
- *3rd Grade Reading Proficiency
- *Algebra 1 Success
- *Advanced Placement and Dual Credit Participation and Success
- *SAT and ACT Participation and Performance
- *High School Graduation Rates
- *College and Career Readiness of High School Graduates
- *High School Graduates Enrolling in Postsecondary Education
- *Colleges and Universities Attended by High School Graduates
- *Financial Aid Application Submissions
- *College Persistence Rates
- *Certifications, Certificates, and Degrees Awarded
- *Workforce Participation
- *Employment in Local Target Industries

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

5. **Regional Work-Based Learning Experience** – Using the Tri-Agency WBL Continuum attachment available on the TEA Grant Opportunities webpage, describe your experience planning, implementing and/or monitoring work-based learning activities aligned within each of the following categories: a. "Learning about Work"; b. "Learning through Work"; and c. "Learning at Work"

a.

Worksite Tours – Coordinated several workforce tours with local manufacturing, health science, business, law, public service, and information technology partners for the last 5 years. We have experience coordinating the program and expectations with local education agencies and employers.

Job Shadowing – Co-hosted an annual event with the local chamber of commerce for several years. We discontinued this full day job shadowing program because of feedback from local employers and students, and began coordinating a similar program named the Chamber of Commerce Career Connections. Chamber of Commerce Career Connections (C4) is a one day, Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce and Business Education Council sponsored program, which links students and real-world workplace experiences. The goal is to provide Smith County students with the opportunity to begin or continue career exploration during their high school years by connecting them to over 75 local, premier, business professionals. C4 is a relaxed discussion format, which allows business professionals to engage in student conversations by sharing work experiences, successful moments, challenges, and personal backgrounds. These sessions are interactive, allowing students to ask questions and share concerns. Students experience hands-on interviewing and resume review with human resource professionals. Students also benefit from the expertise of local finance professionals to learn basic financial management skills.

Informational interviews with employers – Recruit business partners to volunteer at local education agencies to be interviewed by students. In addition, to prepare students for job interviews by critiquing resumes and facilitating mock interviews.

b.

Internships – Recruit business partners to mentor and educate an intern for local education agencies and institutions of higher education.

Service Learning – Recruit community-based organizations and local government to provide experiential learning opportunities for students to participate in that exposes them to programs and services that to address community needs.

c.

Currently assisting local employer councils to develop a plan for paid internships with local education agencies and institutions of higher education that may eventually lead to apprenticeships.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

6. Regional Convener Responsibilities - Describe any current work your organization performs related to the additional functions of regional conveners listed below. If there are functions you do not perform, describe how a partner organization performs the function and your working relationship with them. If there are functions that are not currently performed by either your organization or a partner, provide context for why it has not been a focus of your organization’s work to date. a. Analyze labor market information and work on an ongoing basis to ensure career and education pathways are aligned to in-demand industries in the region; b. Convene a cross-sector leadership team made up of education, workforce, and industry stakeholders to develop and implement a regional vision and strategy; c. Engage employers and broker relationships with education and training providers; d. Streamline communicating information across the region; and e. Drive sustainability planning, including coordinated funding strategies, across education and workforce development entities.

Tyler Area Business Education Council – The Business Education Council has worked with partners in all sectors to recognize education as one of the region’s most critical issues. Additionally, the Business Education Council has served as an organizer of stakeholders and as a partner to businesses, schools, colleges, and universities to develop new programs, facilities, and events that assist students and families. The Board of Directors consists of representatives from the City of Tyler, CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Health System, Delek Refining, The Genesis Group, Greater Texas Capital Corporation, Hispanic Business Alliance, John Soules Foods, Regions Bank, Smith County, Texas College, TG Mullins Consulting, TRANE Technologies, Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce, Tyler Economic Development Council, Tyler Independent School District, Tyler Junior College, Tyler Metro Chamber of Commerce, Tyler Pipe, the University of Texas at Tyler, UT Health East Texas, Whitehouse Independent School District, Workforce Solutions East Texas, and KLTV.

Tyler Area Career Pathways Network - A regional effort that engages cross-sector stakeholders in developing high-quality career and education pathways to help students achieve college and career readiness, earn postsecondary degrees and credentials, and enter careers aligned with current and future workforce needs. The key partners of the project include the Tyler Area Business Education Council as regional convener; Tyler ISD Executive Director of College and Careers as grant administrator; Tyler Junior College as Institution of Higher Education partner; Chapel Hill ISD, Tyler ISD, Winona ISD, and Whitehouse ISD as LEAs; CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Health System, UT Health East Texas, Hood Packaging, and TRANE Technologies as business partners; and Workforce Solutions East Texas as workforce development board.

Will engage the consultant from Workforce Solution East Texas’s Rural, Set, Go! to build on the work and relationships that have been established. We will engage community and business leaders in candid conversations about workforce and economic development needs, help employers increase access to qualified workers, and learn about regional and state resources available to “upskill” workers.

We will use a marketing agency to help effectively and efficiently streamline communications across the region.

We will utilize our staff, consultants, board of directors, advisory councils, and key stakeholders to help drive sustainability planning. Intentional and coordinated relationships with local, regional, and state education and workforce development entities will help leverage additional resources for all East Texas partners.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

7. **Partnerships** - Describe your current partnership(s), including the specific activities involved, with the following: a. Industry partnerships or specific employer partners (by sector); b. Postsecondary education; c. Secondary education; and d. Workforce or economic development.

Tyler Area Career Pathways Network - A regional effort that engages cross-sector stakeholders in developing high-quality career and education pathways to help students achieve college and career readiness, earn postsecondary degrees and credentials, and enter careers aligned with current and future workforce needs. The key partners of the project include the Tyler Area Business Education Council as regional convener; Tyler ISD Executive Director of College and Career as grant administrator; Tyler Junior College as Institution of Higher Education partner; Chapel Hill ISD, Tyler ISD, Winona ISD, and Whitehouse ISD as LEAs; CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Health System, UT Health East Texas, Hood Packaging, and TRANE Technologies as Business Partners; and Workforce Solutions East Texas as workforce development board.

Tyler Area Business Education Council – The Business Education Council has worked with partners in all sectors to recognize education as one of the region’s most critical issues. The Business Education Council has served as an organizer of stakeholders and as a partner to businesses, schools, colleges, and universities to develop new programs, facilities, and events that assist students and families. The Board of Directors consists of representatives from City of Tyler, CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Health System, Delek Refining, The Genesis Group, Greater Texas Capital Corporation, Hispanic Business Alliance, John Soules Foods, Regions Bank, Smith County, Texas College, TG Mullins Consulting, TRANE Technologies, Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce, Tyler Economic Development Council, Tyler Independent School District, Tyler Junior College, Tyler Metro Chamber of Commerce, Tyler Pipe, the University of Texas at Tyler, UT Health East Texas, Whitehouse Independent School District, Workforce Solutions East Texas, and KLTV.

Tyler Junior College’s Professional Learning Community [role: member] – High school teachers, community college faculty, workforce development professionals, community-based organizations, and employer partners convene to articulate a plan for aligning locally relevant academic/career pathways from K-12 through workforce in our community.

Tyler Manufacturer’s & Processors Group [role: member] - The goal of the Tyler MPG is to support the Tyler Area manufacturers and processors through idea sharing and advocacy in the areas of public policy, infrastructure, education, and workforce training and talent development to assist the growth of manufacturing in the region.

Coordinate:

*Chamber of Commerce Career Connections (C4) - Students from Smith County high schools (public and private) are invited to attend this one-day program, which is designed to provide students with the opportunity to continue their career exploration during their high school years by connecting them with local business professionals.

*Decision Day - An event to recognize and celebrate students’ postsecondary plans that include a four-year university, community college, certification program, trade school, or the military.

*Mayor’s Mentorship Achievement Program - A business mentoring program that connects local business leaders to high school students in our community.

*Money for College - A financial aid event that provides an opportunity for students and families to receive one-on-one assistance from local financial aid administrators to complete the FAFSA or TASFA. The event is held at various high schools throughout Smith County.

*School is Cool - A back-to-school celebration that provides Smith County families an opportunity to prepare for the new school year. Backpacks filled with school supplies are given to the attendees on a first come, first served basis.

*Smith County College Fair - An event structured to allow students and parents to visit with approximately 100 college and university recruiters from across the nation.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

8. Budget narrative - Describe how the proposed budget will support the goals of the program. Please include justification for the specific funding allocations in the proposed budget, including how costs are connected to the grant activities described in this solicitation. Please also describe how each item in the proposed budget will support the needs of the regional team, beyond any one specific regional partner. In addition, include a description of other funding sources the region will leverage, if any, to support implementation of this project and future work.

The proposed budget will help build regional talent pipelines to high wage, in-demand industries that will support economic growth across the region and the state while also ensuring that East Texans have the skills and credentials needed for economic advancement.

The grant will provide resources to:

Support the work of the Executive Director of the Tyler Area Business Education Council, in the development and implementation of the regional strategic plan and employer engagement strategy for the East Texas Region. The Director will also develop an asset map and gap analysis. These tools will be updated regularly throughout the grant cycle. The Director also will participate and engage in statewide training, conferences, coaching, and meetings facilitated by JFF and TEA.

Provide staff to support the regional convener, pathways leadership team, and consultants. The Project Coordinator will organize, manage, track, and assist with work based learning across the East Texas region. Funding will also be used to rent an office for support staff.

Contract with a local economic development consultant to facilitate asset mapping and gap analysis in the East Texas region.

Contract with a local marketing consultant to develop and execute the regional communications and outreach strategy; and, help identify the best processes and platforms for effective communication with partners across the East Texas region.

Contract with a local institutions of higher education to assist with data collection strategies, analysis, data infrastructure, and presentations. Help identify the best processes and software for data collection and analyses and share data with partners across the East Texas region.

Develop and execute high quality training session for regional education partners and employers to ensure continuity in the implementation of high quality pathways across the East Texas region. Funds will be used to rent a facility with space to accommodate all regional educators and business leaders.

Host a regional convening to announce the regional high-demand, high-wage pathways and work-based learning strategic and action plan. Funds will be used to rent a facility with space to accommodate all regional stakeholders.

Cover travel expenses incurred by the regional convener, TABEC staff, and pathways leadership team in the region and Texas.

Cover materials and supplies to plan and implement high quality work based learning programming, high demand programs of study, data collection strategies, communication strategies, and educational resources.

Cover software expenses to collect and track labor market data, education data, and create data dashboards.

Cover stipends for K-12 students that need support for work-based learning in the East Texas Region.

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