



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

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

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):

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

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 state of Texas, particularly, has struggled with retaining teachers over the last few years, with the issue only increasing in 2022. As a small district, located in a majority-rural county in Texas, Kermit Independent School District (Kermit ISD) faces many challenges retaining dedicated education professionals over the long term, including teachers from within its own community.

This funding will allow Kermit ISD to cover the tuition for the completion of a bachelor's degree and, if necessary, teacher's certification, for six dedicated professionals, including instructional aides and substitutes, who have already spent time working with the students in Kermit ISD. The district is already paying for three paraprofessionals to obtain their necessary degrees and/or certifications, and as such this funding will allow Kermit ISD to expand its program.

Once they have graduated and are certified to teach, participants in the program will be able to apply to any open teaching positions in Kermit ISD; if hired, the participants will be expected to stay and work in Kermit ISD, on any of its three campuses, for a minimum of 3-4 years.

The program funds will be administered by Kermit ISD under the care of Ms. Gayle Fuqua, and monitoring and tracking the success of the program will fall under the purview of Ms. Gayle Fuqua and Dr. Jose Lopez.

This program will provide Kermit ISD with a larger number of potential teachers who are not only dedicated to their work but who are also familiar with the local culture, who can help students in Winkler County navigate their educational career with sensitivity. This additional pool of certified teachers will help to reduce any issues Kermit ISD may face as a result of the ongoing teacher shortage, providing them a supply of candidates for any open teaching positions in the district.

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

1. Gayle Fuqua- LEA's grant manager who will collect the MOU's from the candidates and keep track of all financial areas and candidate records for the grant.

2. Dr. Jose Lopez - LEA leaders involved in program implementation will aid in planning and orchestrating the recruitment of candidates and collection of any necessary surveys with the help of district staff including school administrators.

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.

The primary goal of this program is to create a larger pool of certified teachers in Winkler County who can work as long-term educators in Kermit ISD in order to better ensure that students in the community get a quality education. Objectives in this program include recruiting six participants in the first year of funding and monitoring their completion of their bachelor's degrees and, if necessary, their attainment of their alternate teaching certification, over the following two years. This will result in six additional, certified teachers available to be hired for any open positions at Kermit ISD. Once hired, participants are expected to work in the district for a minimum of 3-4 years. These teachers will have the added benefit of being from the local community, and efforts will be taken to hire diverse candidates; as Kermit is a majority-Latinx city, with over 66% of its 6,267 residents identifying as such according to the 2020 Decennial Census, and the district will be making an effort to recruit participants equitably, encouraging diversity, it is likely that some percentage of participants will also be Latinx. Multiple studies have indicated that having minority teachers can lead to better academic achievement and overall success by students in that minority group (Atkins, Fertig, Wilkins, 2013). Kermit ISD will recruit participants from its long-term pool of substitutes and teaching aides by intensively advertising the program in schools, as well as reviewing employee evaluations and/or conducting interviews in order to ensure that participants in the program are dedicated and committed to both completing the certification and continuing to serve students in the Winkler County community by teaching at Kermit ISD campuses for a period of several years at the minimum. Only participants who meet the eligibility requirements will be admitted to the program, and all candidates will be expected to complete their bachelor's degree and certification in two years. Their program progress will be monitored through transcripts. They will apply for district jobs.

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.

Once in the program, participants will be monitored as they progress through their bachelor's and, if necessary, alternate certification program, and will be required to provide information to the school as to their academic progress, including but not limited to submitting academic transcripts to program administrators. On graduating from their studies, these teachers will be able to apply to any open teaching positions within Kermit ISD's three campuses. Once these teachers are hired as full-time employees, the district will make efforts to retain them as teachers by providing them with a welcoming working environment with an equitable salary in which their efforts to contribute to academic excellence in Kermit ISD will be supported by their colleagues and the administration. This influx of teachers will help to reduce any possible issues faced by Kermit ISD as a result of the ongoing teacher shortages statewide, in line with the Grow Your Own program goals. The primary goal of this project is to increase the number of certified teachers available to work in Kermit ISD schools, beginning with six participants in the first year of funding. This is intended to reduce any issues which Kermit ISD may encounter due to the ongoing teacher shortage occurring all over the state of Texas, which aligns with the goals of the Grow your Own Grant program. In order to meet this goal, this project will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by administrators including Gayle Fuqua, the executive director for Human Resources, and campus principals. The project's success will be judged by the number of participants recruited for the program, and those who successfully complete the program and receive their certification after the two-year program. Kermit ISD expects to recruit six (6) participants in the first cycle of the program; throughout the program, they will be required to check in with the school as to their progress, including submitting transcripts to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of their bachelor's degree and, if applicable, their certification program. Once this first group of six students, whose studies will be funded by this grant, have completed the program and have the necessary degrees and certification required, program administrators will review the program and evaluate the process in order to ensure its continued success in the future as Kermit ISD transitions into funding the program itself.

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.

Kermit ISD would like to use the grant funds to provide 6 of their Teacher's Aides/paraprofessionals with stipends for tuition, approximately \$18, 468 to \$19,598 per individual. In addition, any stipend funds left over would provide the candidates with funds for TExES and PPR exams, study materials, and gas funds and childcare for testing days as the closest testing center is approximately 1.5 hours away. Each state exam for teaching is approximately \$116 and each individual must take at least 2. Testing materials average about \$100 for one book for the PPR and one for TExES. Childcare for the candidates will vary drastically by the number of children and availability of childcare facilities but monthly costs in Kermit, TX can be around \$700. The estimated cost per individual averaged around \$19,000 which allows for 6 participants to total the cap of \$114,000.

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.

Kermit ISD intends to budget for this program out of its own funds in further years; this funding will cover the first two years of the program, in which six participants will be able to complete a certification program. The length of this funding will allow for a period of planning in order to determine how the program will be funded in the future; once funds are received, administrators of the program will work with the district in order to determine how it will be possible for the district to continue to fund the program after the period of funding; once a feasible budget is agreed on and approved, changes will, accordingly, be made in the district's budget, and the district expects that the program will be funded by the district from that point forward. Should it prove necessary, Kermit ISD may seek outside funding further on; however, at this point the district expects to pay for future cycles of the program out of its budget, continuing to increase the pool of certified teachers available to teach at any of its three campuses, reducing the impact of any ongoing teacher shortages on the district.

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).

There will be two phases to recruiting participants for the program. First, Kermit ISD will widely disseminate knowledge of the program around school campuses to substitutes, teacher's aides, and others who may be eligible. This strategy will include website announcements, district-wide emails, bulletin board flyers, and morning school announcements. In the interests of recruiting diverse participants in an equitable manner, all individuals working with Kermit ISD who meet the eligibility criteria for the program will be notified and will be allowed to apply to the program. Once eligible participants have been notified and shown interest in applying for the program, the second phase of the recruitment will include a review of their employee evaluations and/or an interview; this will ensure that applicants chosen to participate and receive funding are dedicated professionals who have shown a history of excellence and achievement in an educational setting, who have demonstrated success in connecting with students and/or colleagues in the course of their work with the district. Participants will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to the requirements of the program and that, if admitted to and upon completion of the program, they will agree to work at Kermit ISD for a minimum period of 3-4 years upon their hiring as teachers. Participants will be admitted to the program based on this criteria.

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.

In order to participate in the program, eligible candidates will sign a Memorandum of Understanding which will stipulate the following:

First, the six participants will commit to undertaking the studies necessary to complete their bachelor’s degrees and, if they are not majoring in education, to also complete an alternate certification during the two years allotted for the program. This funding will cover \$19,000 of funding to each participant for their tuition; if there is any surplus funding, it will go towards any alternate certification programs necessary for participants graduating without certification. The amount funded and/or stipend provided to participants will be specified in the MOU, based on the program’s budget, prior to their ingress into the certification program. Participants will provide documentation of their academic progress, including transcripts, to program administrators, throughout the two years in which they are enrolled in their academic studies in order to ensure that they are successfully meeting the program requirements. During this time, participants will be required as well to take part in surveys or other methods of measuring the program’s success and effectiveness, provided either by Kermit ISD or TEA. Once they have successfully obtained their bachelor’s degree and teaching certification, participants will be eligible to apply to any open teaching positions available at Kermit ISD campuses. If hired, participants will agree to work for Kermit ISD for a minimum of 3-4 years, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, if positions are available. If no positions are available, candidates will be assisted by the district in how to find a position, preferably in another high needs area.

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