



**2023 -2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 24, 2023**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation **GAA, Article III, Rider 40, 87th Texas Legislature**

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, April 24, 2023**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **August 1, 2023-April 30, 2025**

Pre-award costs permitted from **the award announcement date to the grant start date**

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Signed Letter of Commitment or MOU
3. Letter from EPP Partner(s)

Please the program guidelines for further details on the required attachments.

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization CDN ESC UEI

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 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.
- 2. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program Requirements and Program-Specific Assurances as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program Program Guidelines.
- 3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

Program Priority Requirement

For districts/charters that are or have engaged in an ESF diagnostic process during or before the 2022-2023 school year, please provide the year the district went through the diagnostic and the priority focus area in the space below.

Summary of Program

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

Our overall mission is to attract, prepare, and retain a high quality, diverse pool of teaching candidates. This will allow our students to have amazing teachers. We have always had a strong relationship with our primary EPP, Sam Houston State University. We have seen our numbers of Student Teachers decline, especially Year Long Residencies (YLR). I attribute this decline to the YLR candidates wanting to go to a district that is set up to provide some financial benefit.

We have been fortunate to be able to hire many of those that clinical teach with us. They get a feel for the district and the great things we are doing. Our principals get a chance to see them in action and build positive, working relationships with them. A year of clinical teaching allows teachers to be day-one ready. Solid preparation creates a high probability they will remain in their chosen profession. This program will provide more opportunities by getting YLR candidates back on our campuses. This will provide more opportunities to fill vacancies with candidates we have seen in action, have worked with quality mentors, and we have helped develop over their time with us. Both the district and candidate have familiarity with one another. In addition, this will allow for growth of mentors in various capacities.

Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

Title and Responsibilities of Position	Required Qualifications and Experience
Asst. Supt. of HR and Operation	For the grant, manage YLR placement, protocols, and overall program.
Asst. Supt. of Business and Finance	For the grant, work with HR on use of grant funds to pay YLR and process of doing so.
Asst. Supt. of Innovation, Teaching, and Learning	For the grant, work with HR on developing needs and usage of Strategic Staffing concepts at the campus level.
Ex. Directors of Elem. Ed. and Sec. Ed.	For the grant, work with HR and campus principals they supervise to appropriately use and monitor the concepts developed for Strategic Staffing.
Campus Principals	For the grant, work with HR and Directors to ensure developed staffing concepts and protocols are used appropriately and followed.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

The major goals are to create a pipeline of quality candidates, provide more opportunities for all candidates and campuses, create teacher retention, increase student achievement on our campuses, and provide campuses with more experienced candidates.

We can facilitate more opportunities for candidates by being able to pay them. We will be able to attract more candidates, including those that may not have been able to financially take this route to certification. We believe this will help widen the pipeline for diversity of our candidates.

As previously mentioned, we have had a great partnership with Sam Houston State University. We will be able to get these candidates back in our district with opportunities to continue a positive, working relationship for a full academic year.

By working in our district for a year, the candidates and principals are able to create positive, work relationships. There becomes a familiarity with how it works. Time and effort is invested by both parties, so a strong mutual relationship is built. Both candidates and principals know the expectations and are more likely to stay.

By working with campus mentors, university staff, and campus/district administration all year long, the YLR candidates are provided exceptional reflection and feedback. They are involved in all the daily processes of teacher. They are able to see all aspects of processes from start to finish and work hand-in-hand with experienced teachers willing to share what they have developed over the year.

Through Strategic Staffing, their value will be enhanced, alongside their development, as they engage in differentiated, additional responsibilities.

Performance and Evaluation Measures

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

With YLR, student outcomes should increase with a reduction of student – teacher ratios, possible use of mentor teacher working with students requiring extended assistance (once they have developed the student teacher), etc. Student outcomes can be measured by various knowledge checks during the year. The data can be compared to those without YLR, as well as previous year data of the student involved.

Both mentor teachers and university supervisors will evaluate the YLR candidates. With an increase in partnership support, they are both able to provide feedback, which will strengthen the YLR candidate. Areas of identified growth will be able to be addressed.

Retention of the YLR candidates will be another tool to determine the effectiveness of the program. Additionally, we will use surveys and conversations with all stakeholders, including our governance meetings, to keep updated on where our program is and what adjustments may need to be made.

Lastly, we will check for growth in number of YLR candidates requesting our district and being placed.

Budget Narrative

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

Willis ISD being able to join in with other districts in our area that are already providing paid residencies will bring back more YLR candidates to our district. It will create more opportunities for all YLR candidates as now there is another district available from which to choose. Many that could not financially afford to choose this option now will have the capability. The YLR will make them stronger teachers and future leaders as they will be receiving more rigorous and extended training. This will help in retention, thus the financial burdens associated with losing and replacing teachers.

I foresee all awarded funds being used exclusively for staffing and going to the YLR candidates. We currently utilize clinical teachers, albeit currently unpaid, so there should be no further costs that we do not already absorb. Our Human Resources Department already handles all clinical teacher matters and organization, so no funding needs to be utilized in that capacity. We need to be able to use the funding for the clinical teachers.

We will continually review and monitor the program and its success. Hopefully, funds will continue to be made available. We are looking forward to more knowledge and work in Strategic Staffing. If not, we will regroup to see the best way to financially continue the program, whether that is evaluating our district budget each year to set aside funds, restricting the number YLR we can accept, using Strategic Staffing efforts, and planning, etc.

Statutory/Program Requirements

1. Description of partnership foundations: Applicants may have one or more EPP partners on the 2022 Vetted Teacher Residency Program List (link located on TEA Grant Opportunities page). Please list your partner(s) and the following partnership foundations information:

- o How many years have you been engaged in a residency partnership?
- o How many residents have you placed each year of that partnership?
- o Describe your practices for shared governance, or the review of residency program data to inform shared decision-making about teacher candidate and mentor teacher supports. How often do you meet with your partners to review this data? As a partnership, how do you manage follow-up and response to data?
- o Please describe any other key features of your partnership's progress toward building a residency program.

Sam Houston State University is our main EPP partner. I have been over Human Resources the past nine years, and I know Willis ISD was in a partnership with them well before I arrived.

Between both semesters, we used to have 35-40 student teachers each school year. The last few years, we have decreased to 20-25 each school year. Additionally, our YLR candidates are in the single digits.

The partnership Sam Houston State University has developed with all their districts has been phenomenal. They encourage feedback and input. In addition to two formal partnership meetings each year, we constantly communicate via email, phone calls, and video conferences. We already have governance meetings with our YLR campuses and candidates so data and information can be shared between both parties. This occurs at least three times a semester.

Sam Houston State University is always reaching out and checking on us and our partnership. They are encouraging and want to be helpful in make the process the best it can be for all stakeholders.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

2. Description of goals for paid teacher residencies and strategic staffing models: After reviewing the Program Elements section beginning on page 7, describe you and your EPP partner's existing or proposed shared goal for teacher resident placement. How will paid teacher residencies support your broader talent strategy as a component of your overall strategic plan and goals?

I believe the major goal is to create outstanding teacher candidates that are well prepared and day-one ready to begin their teaching careers. This, in turn, will lead to creating a pipeline of quality candidates each year that remain in the education profession for their careers. We are all educators and want the best for our students. We work cooperatively to train teacher candidates and help set them up for success. If they are successful, the students are successful. There is no greater tool than experience, and the YLR provides a safe and helpful environment in which this can be obtained. In addition, we want these candidates working with skilled and willing mentors to get the most out of their time with us. Mentor development will also be a goal of the YLR.

Paid YLR will provide more opportunities for more candidates to have this experience. Many financially could not take advantage of this opportunity because of a financial situation. In addition, with the candidates being with us the entire year from day one, they will gain much more experience with the many and various components of teaching. Going into their first teaching job, they will have a better understanding of what happens the entire year, and not just a specific semester. They can grow with a team and learn to be a great team member. Ultimately, this growth and relationship building will help us use these candidates to fill vacancies. We have helped create this teacher, and we know what we are bringing to our team. They will have experience with our professional learning communities, Sped. Program, IEPs, and ARDs.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

3. Commitment of local resources: Please review the Program Elements section on page 7 of the program guidelines. How will you, alongside your partner EPP, commit resources and time to 1) the year-long design process and 2) the implementation supports year? Be sure to provide information about the designation of a strategic staffing design lead, whose role will be co-funded by this grant opportunity. Provide a description of your plan to track and maintain evidence of that staff member's time and effort toward strategic staffing project management.

Willis ISD will commit to all components of the program. We will dedicate time for required meetings, impromptu meetings, reports, district communications associated with the program, and any other component/requirement. Robert Whitman, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Operations, will be the district lead. Many of the areas are already overseen and handled through our Human Resources Department. There will be no role co-funded by this grant. We will use the funds to pay YLR so we can be a part of this program without adding more financial obligations to the district at this time. In addition, we have an excellent relationship with our ESC6 partners and look forward to our network of resources being strengthened.

Tracking of time and effort will be completed by agenda, sign-in sheet, or communication/event log of the various components listed in the design and implementation years. The same will be used when any other activity associated with the program is taking place. This may include working with the EPP on placements, conducting / evaluating surveys, working with the technical assistance provider, etc.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

4. Commitment to shared communication: Describe how you will maintain strong communication throughout the design and implementation of the sustainable teacher residency program with your EPP partners and your technical assistance provider. How will you demonstrate evidence of communication and ongoing engagement with your partner and provider? For example: evidence of communication logs, shared meeting agendas, etc.

Our relationship with our EPP (Sam Houston State University) and Region 6 Service Center is already strong. There has never been an issue in reaching out to one another, and even more so as the relationships have grown. This occurs through email, phone calls, video conferencing, and in-person visits. Going back to the prior question, I will use agendas, sign-in sheets, or activity / communication logs with dates and times.

5. Strategic staffing technical assistance: The program elements describe how teacher residencies will be made sustainable through strategic staffing models where residents support other instructional needs in the district, such as, for example, substitute teaching or para-professional responsibilities. How do you see the design and implementation of strategic staffing models with teacher residents as a way to support immediate instructional needs in your LEA? Additionally, please describe the rationale you share with your partner(s) for seeking technical assistance for the purpose of designing and implementing strategic staffing models.

I believe the YLR candidates are with us to learn to be better teachers and gain experience / knowledge of how that happens. I understand there are different models, but they need this knowledge first. As we do in all student teaching situations, all stakeholders must feel confident in the progress and gradually provide less direct oversight. Once that is established, the mentor may be able to be used in some other areas to assist, or the YLR may be able to support in some areas. But, the base must be established and time given to the candidate.

I believe this a fluid process. I believe we ask for assistance and feedback continually through the process. This will keep the program active, growing, and functioning at its best. The best ideas are those which are cooperatively developed by knowledgeable / experienced stakeholders.

We look forward to the Strategic Staffing Design year to help us identify a sustainable model to both financially support YLR and academically best prepare our residents through purposeful, meaningful experiences. Our goal is day-one ready teachers who remain in education so all students have access to high quality teachers.

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