



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.

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
- General Provisions and Assurances
- Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- Lobbying Certification
- 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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Adjustments on this page have been confirmed with _____ by _____ of TEA by phone / fax / email on _____.

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
The post-pandemic increase in discipline incidents has also led to a rise in in-school suspensions and expulsions. Improvements are needed in the current school culture and student management plan.	By enhancing the school culture, we aim to cultivate strong relationships between staff and students, while proactively addressing harmful, violent, and threatening behavior. This will result in notable reductions in behavioral and disciplinary incidents, chronic absenteeism, bullying, and harassment cases leading to improved academic outcomes.
Teacher surveys reflect growing concern with behavior in a student body that's 90% econ disadvantaged and a feeling of helplessness without adequate tools to effectively address and improve it.	With coaching and professional development throughout the year we surround students with trained academic staff they can trust and who ensure the learning environment is nurturing, aiding students in overcoming challenging and traumatic experiences, while ensuring emotional and physical safety
Parent surveys reflect a growing concern about their students' ability to form meaningful connections with peers, with most parents reporting that their children struggle to feel good about seeing their peers daily.	Implement peer support system and inclusive environments to address students' ability to form meaningful connections. Encourage extracurricular involvement and strengthen parent-school-health provider partnerships to foster social engagement provide mental health resources for improved outcomes.

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.

By the end of the grant period, our goal is to establish a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment in our schools, as measured by a 40% reduction in all disciplinary incidents, a 60% decrease in bullying and harassment cases reported, and a 50% increase in student satisfaction surveys regarding the overall sense of belonging and support within the school community. In the three schools (elementary, middle, and high school) we also expect to see a 15%+ increase in the daily attendance rate when comparing current month data to the same month in the prior year.

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

By April 30, 2024 TBP will:

- Work with the Texas Center for Student Support to develop and implement a student support program at TBP's Pafford (Elementary), Bolt (Middle), and Upper (High School) campuses. This will include creating and using new surveys for staff, parents, and students.
- Compare YTD disciplinary incidents to prior year (22/23 school year) noting a 10% decrease
- Compare YTD bullying and harassment cases to prior year (22/23 school year) noting a 10% decrease
- Compare current ADA to prior year (22/23 school year) noting a 5% increase

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6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)**Second-Quarter Benchmark**

By October 31, 2024 TBP will have:

- Surveyed parents, staff, and students at the end of the second quarter and see a measurable improvement on all survey questions.
- Compared current YTD disciplinary incidents to the 22/23 school year data noting a 25% decrease
- Compared current YTD bullying and harassment cases to the 22/23 school year data noting a 30% decrease
- Compared current ADA to prior year (22/23 school year) noting a 10% increase

Third-Quarter Benchmark

By April 30, 2025 TBP will have:

- Survey parents, staff, and students at the end of the second quarter and see at least a 50% increase in the perceived sense of belonging and support within the school.
- Compared current YTD disciplinary incidents to the 22/23 school year data noting a 40% decrease
- Compared current YTD bullying and harassment cases to the 22/23 school year data noting a 60% decrease
- Compared current ADA to prior year (22/23 school year) noting a 15% increase

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.

To determine when and how to modify the program based on project evaluation data, we will follow a systematic approach to ensure it remains effective in the long term.

- 1) Regular Data Analysis: We will regularly collect and analyze data related to the program's performance against the benchmarks and summative SMART goals. This data will include discipline incident reports, surveys, attendance, and other relevant metrics.
- 2) Identify Patterns and Trends: By examining the evaluation data, we will identify any patterns or trends that indicate areas where the program is not making expected progress.
- 3) Root Cause Analysis: We will conduct a thorough root cause analysis to understand the underlying factors contributing to the lack of progress. This may involve seeking additional input from stakeholders, such as students, parents, teachers, and administrators, through additional surveys, focus groups, or interviews.
- 4) Modify Program Strategies: Based on the findings from the evaluation data and root cause analysis, we will work with TCSS and/or ESC11 to develop targeted modifications to the program. This may involve adjusting program components, providing additional resources or support, or implementing alternative approaches that are better aligned with identified needs.
- 5) Test and Monitor Changes: We will implement the modifications and soon thereafter assess their effectiveness. This will allow us to closely monitor the impact of the changes and gather feedback from stakeholders involved in the modified program.
- 6) Continuous Improvement: We will use ongoing evaluation data to assess the success of the modified program and make further adjustments as necessary. This iterative process ensures that the program remains adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs and challenges within the school environment.

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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.

The selection of schools will be determined based on a comprehensive needs assessment that considers:

1) Behavioral Problems/Disciplinary Incidents:

- Analyze disciplinary data to identify schools with higher rates of behavioral problems, such as suspensions, expulsions, and disciplinary infractions.
- Assess the types and severity of behavioral issues to determine the extent of intervention needed.
- Consider the frequency and patterns of disciplinary incidents to identify schools that would benefit most from targeted interventions.

2) Attendance Issues:

- Review attendance records to identify schools with consistently low attendance rates or chronic absenteeism.
- Examine factors contributing to poor attendance, such as student disengagement.
- Prioritize schools where improving attendance would have the most significant impact on student outcomes.

3) Negative Student Culture/Teacher Frustrations:

- Conduct surveys or interviews with students, parents, and staff to assess the prevailing student culture and perceived areas of concern.
- Gather feedback from teachers to understand their frustrations and challenges related to student behavior and the overall school environment.

4) Stakeholder Engagement:

- Involve relevant stakeholders, including the TCSS, Local ESC, campus parents, teachers, administrators, and community members, in the assessment process.
- Seek input from stakeholders through collaborative meetings, feedback sessions, or advisory committees to ensure their perspectives are considered.

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

TBP is committed to the success of the Student Support Program and will focus on:

1) Leadership Engagement

- Engage school leaders, such as principals and administrators, in the planning and decision-making processes.
- Clearly communicate the program's goals, objectives, and expected outcomes to ensure stakeholders are aligned.

2) Professional Development and Training

- Offer PD and training opportunities for campus staff on the Student Support Program to ensure they are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to successfully implement the program.
- Incorporate specialized training sessions that address topics such as trauma-informed practices, social-emotional concepts, positive behavior interventions, and culturally responsive approaches.

3) Establish Clear Roles and Responsibilities

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities for staff members involved in the Student Support Program and ensure expectations, and the importance the program's success is understood.
- Foster collaboration and teamwork by encouraging staff members to work together towards common goals.

4) Communicate and Collaborate

- Establish regular communication channels to keep stakeholders well informed about the program.
- Encourage open dialogue and feedback among staff members regarding the program's implementation, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.
- Facilitate collaboration and shared decision-making by creating opportunities for staff members to exchange ideas, share resources, and learn from one another.
- Share data findings with stakeholders to demonstrate the importance of their involvement.

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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.

To engage parents and families and solicit support for the Student Support Program, TBP will employ the following approaches

1) Communication and Education

- Conduct informational sessions or parent meetings to provide detailed explanations of the Student Support Program, its objectives, and how parents can get involved.
- Establish regular communication channels with parents to share information about the program's goals, activities, and benefits.
- Translate program materials and communications to ensure inclusivity with all TBP families.
- Offer workshops on relevant topics, such as effective communication, positive discipline, and fostering resilience, to empower parents in their role as partners in the program and their child's well-being/academic success
- Share success stories, testimonials, and data that demonstrate the positive influence of the Student Support Program on students' well-being and academic growth.

2) Seek Parent Volunteers and Partnerships

- Encourage parents to volunteer their time and skills to support program activities, such as mentoring, tutoring, or assisting with special events.
- Engage parents to connect with local businesses, non-profits, or parent groups to establish partnerships that can provide additional resources, expertise, or support to help enhance the program's effectiveness.

3) Family Engagement Events

- Organize family engagement events that promote a sense of community, connection, and active involvement in the school and the student support program.

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

To ensure adequate staff for the Student Support Program TBP will incorporate these steps into the plan:

- 1) Define the student needs and required support as part of the Student Support Program at each campus.
- 2) Create a detailed staffing plan that outlines the necessary staff positions, their responsibilities, and required qualifications. Consider roles such as counselors, social workers, psychologists, special education teachers, intervention specialists, and behavior specialists. Tailor the staffing plan to meet the unique needs of the student population.
- 3) Evaluate the available resources, including the budget, and allocate funds appropriately. Allocate sufficient resources for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and training qualified staff members. Consider potential partnerships with community organizations or agencies to supplement resources and support the program to help ensure staff maintain sufficient bandwidth to successfully implement the program.
- 4) Develop a system for evaluating staff performance and providing constructive feedback. Regularly assess the effectiveness of the student support program and individual staff members' contributions. Offer support, mentoring, and professional growth opportunities to help staff members enhance their skills and address any challenges they may encounter.
- 5) Monitor the implementation of the student support program on an ongoing basis. Collect and analyze data related to student outcomes and program impact. Use this information to make staffing adjustments, refine strategies, and allocate resources accordingly to ensure the program's effectiveness.

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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.

TBP counselors and admin staff currently conduct behavioral threat assessments using established protocols. Data is gathered through interviews, incident reports, social media analysis, and other means. The threat level is established by evaluating intent, means, and capacity. Appropriate interventions, such as counseling, disciplinary actions, or involvement of authorities are prioritized as needed to ensure student safety and well-being. The Student Support Program can provide additional support and leverage the existing student support team structure by focusing more on the areas where there are gaps in the current structure. The gaps will likely include additional tools for interventions, activities and practices that TBP can implement to address the non-academic needs posing a barrier to students' learning. These will likely include:

- Better Counseling and mental health services: Trained counselors and mental health professionals can provide individual or group counseling sessions to students who may be facing emotional or behavioral challenges. This support can help students develop coping strategies, improve their well-being, and enhance their learning.
- Additional Behavior intervention and management: The program can incorporate behavior specialists who work closely with students, teachers, and parents to address behavioral issues. They can develop personalized behavior intervention plans, provide strategies for classroom management, and support teachers in implementing effective behavior management techniques.
- Crisis response and prevention: The student support program can play a vital role in crisis response and prevention within the school. The support team can develop protocols for handling emergencies that may include incidents of violence or mental health crises. They can also implement preventive measures, such as promoting emotional well-being, conducting risk assessments, and implementing interventions to address potential threats or concerns.

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.

TBP identifies student support needs through various means including:

- Data collection: We collect and analyze relevant data, such as academic performance records, behavioral incidents, attendance records, and standardized test scores.
- Teacher observations and input: Teachers often have valuable insights into student behavior, social interactions, and academic progress. Regular communication and collaboration with teachers helps identify students who may need additional support.
- Student and parent input: We encourage students and parents to communicate their concerns, challenges, and goals. We conduct surveys, meetings, and individual conversations to gather their perspectives on student needs.
- Screening and assessments: We identify and implement screening tools or assessments to identify specific needs in areas such as learning disabilities, mental health, social-emotional development, or behavioral issues. These assessments may be conducted by qualified professionals, including school administrators, counselors, or specialized support staff.
- Collaboration with support professionals: Collaborate with support professionals such as social workers, psychologists, and special education teachers. They can provide additional insights, expertise, and assessments to identify student support needs.

TBP's student body is over 90% economically disadvantaged so we focus on partnerships with non-profit medical providers that are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC). FQHC facilities cannot turn away patients regardless of their ability to pay. TBP has a partnership with HHM Health which provides pediatrics, primary care, vision, dental, behavioral/mental, women's health, and pharmacy services using a sliding fee scale based on income.

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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.

TBP partners with its ESC by:

- Collaborate with the ESC: TBP engages its ESC to explore partnership opportunities that they have and/or that they know about with other schools.
- Professional development: Every year TBP leans on its ESC to tap into their professional development opportunities. We use them to help enhance staff members' knowledge and skills in areas such as mental health awareness, behavior management, social-emotional learning, physical health promotion, and effective instructional practices.
- Coaching and mentoring: TBP leverages the expertise of ESC specialists to provide ongoing coaching and mentoring to teachers and staff members. ESC specialists can provide guidance in addressing specific challenges and support staff members in their professional growth
- Resource sharing: TBP's ESC shares resources, research-based materials, and best practices. This includes access to online platforms, curated resources, or toolkits. These resources often serve as references for staff members' continuous professional development.
- Collaborative problem-solving: ESC specialists often foster collaboration between districts to problem-solve and develop innovative approaches. TBP regularly participates in these opportunities.

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.

TBP will strategically allocate funds to enhance services and supports for student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness. Here's how the school can utilize the additional funds effectively:

- Expand staff: Hire additional licensed professional counselors to bolster the support provided to students. This allows for more personal attention, timely interventions, and comprehensive care.
- Seek professional development: Allocate funds for professional development and training opportunities for existing staff members. This could include training and certifications related to mental health, behavior management, trauma-informed practices, social-emotional well-being, and health promotion.
- Expand Partnership with external providers: Collaborate with external mental health and healthcare providers to offer specialized services to students in school. Allocate funds for contracted services, allowing students to access therapies, assessments, and consultations that may not otherwise be available to economically disadvantaged students.
- Facilities and resources: Allocate funds for on-site resources such as books, educational materials, and technology that support mental health, behavior, and student wellness initiatives.
- Student, parent, and community outreach and engagement: Allocate resources to develop and implement outreach programs that increase student engagement and involvement in mental health and wellness activities. This could include organizing awareness campaigns, peer support programs, or student-led initiatives to promote well-being and reduce stigma surrounding mental health in school, at home, and in the community.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment: 4,761

10. Enter the Regional Educational Service Center that serves the LEA: 10 & 11

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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		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	

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	
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	
4. Total current-year grant allocation	
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the grant's defined limit	
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	

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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 Services Program Coordinator	\$90,000
2.	Campus Licensed Professional Counselor	\$75,000
3.		
4.		
5.		

Professional and Contracted Services

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	\$60,000
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	\$100,000
8.	Professional Development for Staff including Trauma Informed Training for Counselors	\$75,000
9.	Expanded FQHC Partnership Providing In-School Mental/Behavioral Health Services	\$350,000
10.		

Supplies and Materials

11.	Educational materials and technology that support mental health, behavior, and wellbeing	\$150,000
12.	Parent/Student Outreach and Engagement	\$25,000
13.	Assessment/Engagement Tools (like Rithym software @ https://rhithm.app/)	\$50,000

Other Operating Costs

15.	Data Capture and Analysis Tool(s)	\$20,000
16.		
17.		

Debt Services

18.		
19.		

Capital Outlay

20.		
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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"/>	
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