



2021-2022 Texas Reading Initiative - Birth to Kinder

Competitive Grant Application: Due 11:59 p.m. CT, June 08, 2021

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

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 DUNS

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
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- General Provisions and Assurances
- Lobbying Certification
- Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances
- ESSA Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name Title Email

Phone Signature Digitally signed by Sarah Panepinto Date: 2021.06.08 16:09:51 -05'00' Date

Grant Writer Name Signature Digitally signed by John E. Romig Date: 2021.06.01 13:11:54 -05'00' Date

- Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization.
- Grant writer is not an employee of the applicant organization.

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3. Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) **are/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 percent of frequent readers decreased six points since 2010 and the percent of infrequent readers increased seven points, according to the Kids and Family Reading Report. In Texas, 54% of children under age 6 are read to fewer than 4 days per week.	Children and families may not read because they do not have access to books or because they do not have strategies for engaging with books effectively. This project will address both of these obstacles by distributing books contingent on completing training modules.
On average, frequent readers have 139 children's books at home. Homes of infrequent readers have 74 books, on average, at home, according to the Kids and Family Reading Report.	This project will partner with Fujii Associates to purchase books from a variety of publishers. This partnership will allow our project to maximize project funds to purchase as many books as possible, increasing children's access to books and decreasing the gap between frequent and infrequent readers' access to books.
According to the Kids and Family Report, 52% of parents reported they wished there were more books available that include diversity.	The budget for this project includes hiring a book purchasing coordinator. The book purchasing coordinator will work with Fujii Associates to ensure diversity (race/ethnicity; cultures, customs, religions; settings/living situations; differently-abled; etc.) in books purchased.

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.

Project staff will establish a process to recruit, enroll, and retain 10,000 Texan children from birth-four years old whose families will receive training and age-appropriate books contingent on completion of the training by August 31, 2022. This goal will expand to enroll 15,000 new children in year two and 20,000 children in years 3, 4, and 5.

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

Project staff will create a website to manage recruitment, enrollment, and retention of Texas families by December 3, 2021. This website will also host the parent training portal.

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6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)

Second-Quarter Benchmark

Project staff will develop training modules that include demonstrations of parents and children engaged in reading activities and are differentiated by child age range by March 3, 2022.

Third-Quarter Benchmark

Project staff will disseminate training videos via the project website to 10,000 enrolled families and disburse age-appropriate books contingent on training completion by June 3, 2022.

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.

There are multiple ways that we will use the project evaluation data to determine when and how to modify the program. First, we will implement feedback loops throughout the program. These feedback loops will be integrated throughout the parent training modules and will solicit information from parents regarding how the program is going. Further, we will also ask for feedback bi-yearly from our collaborative partners (i.e., TEA, school districts, our book distributor Fujii Associates, ESCs, etc.) through surveys using QuestionPro. We also plan to have a close relationship with TEA and will collaborate with TEA to ensure this program is being implemented to TEA standards. All information collected from our stakeholders, will help us determine whether the reading intervention program is being implemented with fidelity and is feasible to complete.

If our benchmarks or summative SMART goals do not show progress, we will reassess each of our benchmark goals. Using parent feedback, and feedback from our stakeholders (i.e., data from student assessments and stakeholder surveys), we will determine areas where improvements can be made, and will iteratively make those changes. Changes will be made iteratively to determine whether these program changes were positively associated with both parent and student outcomes.

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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 that proof of nonprofit status will be submitted with the grant application.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all program objectives as noted in the Request for Grant Applications (RFA) and agreed-upon required activities and shall provide the Texas Education Agency (TEA), upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant provides assurance to provide updates to TEA to a pre-determined timeline.
- 6. The applicant provides assurance that the grant funding will be used to serve children, ages 0-4.
- 7. The applicant provides assurances that they will complete a landscape analysis and develop a strategic plan for implementing the Books Beginning at Birth Program.
- 8. The applicant provides assurances that they will develop a system to identify, recruit and retain families to participate in grant activities.
- 9. The applicant provides assurances that they will partner with a vendor to provide high-quality books and supporting resources to families through a book distribution and/or lending service that meets the requirements of the grant.
- 10. The applicant provides assurances that they will partner with evidence-based parenting program(s) to provide families with access to high-quality, ongoing parent education trainings and resources, specifically related to early literacy development.
- 11. The applicant provides assurances that they will develop a process for collecting participation data and data to evaluate the effectiveness of the Books Beginning at Birth program. The data will be analyzed regularly to make responsive, data-driven decisions.
- 12. The applicant provides assurances that they will provide TEA with quarterly reports that summarize the impact and effectiveness of the Books Beginning and Birth program. Reports will include participation numbers, including disaggregated data by subcategories (as defined by TEA), kindergarten readiness data (literacy skills only), family satisfaction survey data, and any additional data as requested by TEA.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements

1. How will the subgrant funds be used to enhance the language and literacy development and school readiness of children, from birth through kindergarten entry, in early childhood education programs? Please include an analysis of data that supports the proposed use of subgrant funds.

Listening comprehension is one of the most critical kindergarten readiness indicators. It is an essential building block towards reading comprehension. This program will supply books to families to support reading and provide training to parents that will lead ultimately to improved listening comprehension of children entering kindergarten. Along with listening comprehension, the program will provide training in other foundational reading skills necessary to be successful in later reading development. These skills taught through the program will support and extend those taught in early childhood education programs (e.g., phonemic awareness, vocabulary, listening comprehension, modeling fluent reading).

Language will be developed by fostering age-appropriate discussion of books, explicit discussion of vocabulary terms, and providing a literacy rich environment (increasing access to books). Literacy skills will be developed by providing training in phonemic awareness activities, modeling fluent reading, and having comprehension-based discussions of books. These skills - phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension - are part of the big five components of reading. Entering kindergarten with these foundational skills will put students in good position for later success in reading instruction.

2. How will the subgrant funds be used to prepare and provide ongoing assistance to staff in the programs, including through high-quality professional development?

Parents/guardians will receive ongoing training throughout the year via the project website. Videos will include activities to build oral language, phonemic and phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and listening comprehension. Videos will briefly describe the domain being presented (e.g., phonemic awareness) and why this domain is important. The bulk of the training videos will focus on demonstrating the activities using parents and children. Videos will use a variety of home settings in the demonstrations to a variety of birth-four year old children as model implementers.

Although this project is not focused on behavior management/modification, we recognize that children's behavior can be a significant hurdle to effective literacy activities in the home. Therefore, each video will provide low-intensity strategies for promoting positive behavior during literacy activities (e.g., providing children choice in the text being read, limiting the duration of activities relative to child's age, etc.).

All training videos will be available in English and Spanish.

3. How will the activities assisted under the subgrant be coordinated with comprehensive literacy instruction at the kindergarten through grade 12 levels?

Comprehensive literacy instruction in kindergarten through 12th grade should include the "big five" components of reading (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). The training parents receive will target foundational skills students need to be successful in each of these big five components. For example, phonemic awareness activities will be included in the training videos. Strategies like pointing out rhymes and counting syllables in words are basic phonemic awareness activities that can be done in the context of parent-child reading activities. Further, broad reading and discussion of text can build children's vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension. Both of these areas are crucial for reading comprehension. Modeling of fluent reading is an evidence-based strategy for improving children's reading fluency.

In summary, all activities in this project are designed to support students' success in evidence-based reading instruction in K-12th grades.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

4. How will the subgrant funds be used to evaluate the success of the activities assisted under the subgrant in enhancing the early language and literacy development of children from birth through kindergarten entry?

Subgrant funds will be used to evaluate the success of activities assisted under the subgrant in enhancing the early language and literacy development of children from birth through kindergarten in multiple ways. First, subgrant funds will be used to fund Dr. Olsen as project evaluator. Dr. Olsen has a Ph.D. in Statistics, Measurement, and Evaluation in Education, and has completed multiple program evaluations on various projects in education and the health professions. Her expertise will help ensure the project is implemented with fidelity and evaluated appropriately. Second, this project will have a program website that will collect data on all benchmark measures, including student retention and achievement, and parental progress through the training modules. By using subgrant funds to design a website for this specific project, data will be collected in a thoughtful and organized manner, which will allow the evaluation to proceed smoothly. Third, the child assessments to measure achievement are being provided at no cost. Subgrant funds will be used to fund staff (undergraduate students) to administer, score, and enter these assessment data into a data management system. Program data will be reviewed annually to determine the success of program activities.

5. Provide a plan for how you will recruit, enroll, and retain families with children ages 0-4 in the Books Beginning at Birth Program and outline how you will target families within the Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZs), with an additional emphasis on serving low-income, high-need students, including children living in poverty, English Language Learners, and children with disabilities. Be sure to include a breakdown for the anticipated # of children served each year (identifying the continuation children vs. new children).

We will hire a recruitment coordinator to lead all recruitment, enrollment, and retention efforts. This person will be responsible for managing targeted social media advertising, direct mail advertising, and advertising in community organizations (churches, preschools, day cares, etc.). Recruitment efforts will be targeted to Qualified Opportunity Zones. Priority will be given to children living in poverty, English Language Learners, and children with disabilities. We will partner with local organizations serving students in the Qualified Opportunity Zones. For example, we will partner with Spanish-speaking churches to recruit English Language Learners. Retention efforts will include text messaging reminders (nudges), emails, direct contact with families.

We anticipate recruiting 10,000 new, unduplicated children in year 1, 15,000 in year 2, and 20,000 each in years 3-5 for a total of 85,000 new children enrolled in the program. We anticipate half of children continuing in the program for successive years (5,000 continuing to year 2, 7,500 continuing to year 3, and 10,000 continuing to years 4 and 5). We estimate a combined total of 117,500 children enrolled in the program over five years.

6. Explain how you plan to distribute books to families on an ongoing basis and identify who you plan to partner or collaborate with to increase access to books and supporting materials for families. Be sure to outline how you will ensure quality implementation and family usage.

Project staff will partner with Fujji Associates to purchase books for families. Our book distribution model is modeled after the successful My Home Library program developed by the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation. We will partner with ESCs across Texas to distribute books to parents contingent on parents' completion of training videos (i.e., Training videos will be divided into six modules. Parents will receive a distribution of books after completing each module).

Parents will also receive training in using the Hoopla app which provides free access to audiobooks and ebooks via local public libraries. This app will increase families' access to books at no cost to the project. However, we do not want to rely primarily on ebooks and audiobooks due to their technology requirements.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements

6. Response Continued:

Parents will be asked to self-report their implementation of the program on a weekly basis. Project staff will incentivize parents to complete the implementation survey by offering bonus books for completing the survey on a weekly basis. The implementation survey will ask parents to report the number of times they read to children in the past week, the estimated number of minutes engaged in reading activities in the past week, which books were read, and whether the trained activities were conducted in the past week (e.g., While reading, did you point our rhyming words to your child this week?)

7. Identify what type of parent education program(s) you plan to use and how you will ensure families are participating in the trainings on a regular basis. Be sure to identify the research-based literacy practices that will be included in the trainings and how the trainings will connect to the book program.

Project staff will create a parent education program unique to this project. The parent education program will be tailored to the age of child enrolled in the program (e.g., When entering the training portal, parents will select the age of their child. After selection, parents will be directed to training appropriate for the selected age range.). Training modules will be relatively brief (i.e., ~15 minutes) and will be spread out such that parents complete one every two months. Distribution of books will be contingent on completion of training modules, incentivizing parents to participate in the trainings. Research-based literacy practices include phonemic awareness activities, modeling fluent reading, discussing word meanings (vocabulary), and discussing text meaning (e.g., listening comprehension). Again, activities will be age appropriate (i.e., newborn babies will not be able to engage in discussion, but parents can point out and describe features of the book. "This ball is red. Red is my favorite color.") Each of these literacy practices will include specific strategies or activities (e.g., Phonemic awareness activities could include pointing out rhyming words, segmenting words into parts, and counting syllables. Vocabulary activities could include identifying essential vocabulary in a text and explicitly discussing its meaning before reading). When training parents in the use of these strategies, project staff recognize that some parents may not be proficient in these skills (e.g., some parents may struggle to identify syllables or may not know what syllables are). Therefore, project staff will recognize the need to provide parents foundational literacy training to support their reading activities with their children. For example, a training video on counting syllables would not begin with demonstrating counting syllables with children. The training video would include a definition of syllables and training on how the parents can identify them before training parents on how to teach their children to identify them. The book program will support the training modules by providing texts that facilitate the activities provided in the training modules.

8. How do you intend to collect data from the participating families on kindergarten readiness (literacy skills only) and overall family experience? Please identify the specific ways you will collect the data, how often it will be collected, and name the process for communicating the data to TEA.

We will use the Narrative Language Measures Listening (NLM-L) subtest of the CUBED assessment to collect data on kindergarten readiness. The NLM-L assesses children's listening comprehension, expressive language, inferential word learning, and is a proxy for reading comprehension. The NLM-L is available in English and Spanish (original, not translations).

We will hire three undergraduate research assistants to collect the NLM-L. The research assistants will meet with parents and children individually via video conferencing software. Alternative arrangements will be made with parents who do not have the technology capacity (computer/tablet and Internet connection) to participate in the data collection session virtually. NLM-L data will be collected at the beginning and end of each year of the program for children ages 3-4 in the program.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements

8. Response Continued:

Data on the overall family experience will be collected via survey. Survey responses will primarily be collected online using a QuestionPro survey software license. However, paper copies of the survey will be available and mailed to parents who cannot access the survey online. Survey questions will include both closed and open response options. Questions will solicit suggestions for improvement, elements of the program that were effective/ ineffective. Parents will respond to the survey at the end of each year. The survey will be available in both English and Spanish.

The team will aggregate and analyze data from the NLM-L and family experience survey. Reports presenting these results will be submitted to TEA by August 31 each year. Reports will include participation numbers (disaggregated by subcategories as defined by TEA), kindergarten readiness data (NLM-2), and family experience survey data.

9. Describe your organization's capacity for grant management, including data collection and tracking, meeting reporting requirements, and tracking progress towards goals and pre-defined outcomes. List the organization's key individuals that will play a role in grant activities and describe their expertise and experience in early childhood education.

In 2019, UTA had \$116.9 million of external funding expenditures, indicating our organization's capacity to manage this award. Faculty in the College of Education are currently involved in various funded projects and have earned grants from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and Spencer Foundation. UTA's Office of Grants and Contracts supports faculty with the efficient and effective management of the administration of funded projects. Specifically, this office will periodically review budgets as requested by the principal investigator; initiate, approve, and monitor budget, distributions, and transfers; assist as appropriate with mediation and resolution of administrative issues; and provide faculty with financial summaries required for progress reports. Dr. Amanda Olsen is an assistant professor in the College of Education at UTA. Her expertise includes factors associated with kindergarten readiness. She is particularly interested in buffering kindergartners from the effects of racial and wealth inequality. Dr. Olsen has been part of several funded projects, totaling \$150,000. Dr. John Romig is an assistant professor in the College of Education at UTA. His expertise includes professional development and literacy development. He has developed several professional development frameworks with experimental evidence to support their effectiveness. He is particularly interested in examining interventions meant to improve literacy outcomes for students with disabilities. Dr. Romig has been part of several funded projects and is currently co-principal investigator of Project Match Made in Schools, a \$1.08 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.

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	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
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11. 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.	John Romig - Project Director	\$33,822
2.	Amanda Olsen - Project Evaluator	\$34,667
3.	TBA Coordinators (3)	\$97,500
4.	Project Manager	\$26,000
5.	TBA - Undergraduate Project Assistants to assist data collection (3)	\$33,790

Professional and Contracted Services

6.	Web Hosting Services	\$10,000
7.	Spanish Language Services	\$2,500
8.		
9.		
10.		

Supplies and Materials

11.	Office Technology for Staff	\$15,000
12.	Training Materials	\$60,000
13.	Recruitment Materials	\$50,000
14.	Book Purchasing and Mailing	\$266,000

Other Operating Costs

15.		
16.		
17.		

Direct 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
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