



## To the Administrator Addressed

Commissioner Mike Morath

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<b>DATE:</b>	<b>November 29, 2018</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Request for Competitive Letters of Interest for Developing Middle School College and Career Readiness Free Instructional Resources and Materials</b>
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>Grant Opportunity</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS:</b>	<b>Action Required - Application Parts 1 and 2 Due Friday, January 4, 2019</b>

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is pleased to announce a grant opportunity to develop College and Career Readiness (CCR) Free Instructional Resources and Materials (FIRM) for middle school. Eligible applicants may be awarded up to \$725,000 for the development of instructional resources and materials. The deadline to submit the application and supporting materials is January 4, 2019.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, local education agencies (LEAs), and regional education service centers (ESCs).

### Background

House Bill 18 (see Attachment 5) requires LEAs to provide CCR instruction in 7th or 8th grade as part of an existing course in the required curriculum, as part of an existing career and technology course, or as part of a new elective course. Currently, LEAs are implementing college and career readiness instruction in a variety of ways, with limited access to high-quality instructional resources and materials that support their diverse needs.

TEA seeks to design highly flexible, high-quality Middle School College and Career Readiness Free Instructional Resources Materials (MS CCR FIRM) that can be implemented easily within a variety of LEAs. The prospective grantee can choose to enhance an existing curriculum to meet all grant requirements or to develop an entirely new curriculum. The grantee will also be required to produce a set of supporting resources to support high-fidelity implementation of the curriculum in schools. To launch this project, TEA requires a pilot-and-iterate framework to ensure all resources enable schools and districts to achieve the intended outcomes. Finally, the grantee will support scaling the adoption of resources across Texas. Please thoroughly review Attachment 1 for full project requirements.

TEA believes the best way to ensure that materials are high-quality and implemented with fidelity is by selecting grantees who will ensure a user-centered design approach is integrated throughout the entirety of the MS CCR FIRM development process. Grantees also must demonstrate expertise in curriculum design and implementation.

## Project Funding

The project will be funded through a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) federal discretionary grant. GEAR UP aims to increase preparation for and participation in postsecondary education among low-income students. The instructional materials will be piloted within GEAR UP subgrantee schools and, if found to be successful, we will promote broad adoption across the state.

## Next Steps

Interested applicants should thoroughly review the detailed Project Overview document in Attachment 1. To apply, submit the required responses using the templates provided in Attachments 3 and 4. Applicants should reference Attachments 5, 6, and 7 for guidance in developing high-quality responses.

Thank you,

Alexis Bauserman  
Director of Beyond Grad  
Special Projects Department

## Application Materials

- [Attachment 1](#) – MS CCR FIRM Project Overview
- [Attachment 2](#) – MS CCR FIRM Application (Optional): Notice of Intent to Apply
- [Attachment 3](#) – MS CCR FIRM Application Part 1: Qualitative Questions
- [Attachment 4](#) – MS CCR FIRM Application Part 2: Grant Activity and Budget Plan
- [Attachment 5](#) – MS CCR FIRM Appendix: Additional Context
- [Attachment 6](#) – MS CCR FIRM Appendix: TEA Web Style Guide
- [Attachment 7](#) – MS CCR FIRM Appendix: Accessibility Guidelines

## Important Dates

Date	Deadline
Thursday, November 29, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Request for Competitive Letters of Interest for Developing MS CCR FIRM Posted</li></ul>
Tuesday, December 4, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit questions regarding this request to <a href="mailto:BeyondGrad@tea.texas.gov">BeyondGrad@tea.texas.gov</a></li><li>• Attn: Alexis Bauserman</li><li>• Subject line: MS CCR FIRM Question-&lt;LEA NAME&gt;</li></ul>
Friday, December 7, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses to questions posted to Beyond Grad website: &lt;<a href="https://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=51539624233">https://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=51539624233</a>&gt;</li></ul>
Monday, December 10, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit Application (Optional) Notice of Intent to Apply</li><li>• See Attachment 2</li></ul>
Thursday, December 13, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Informational Webinar hosted by Beyond Grad Team</li><li>• 11:00am-12:00pm Central Standard Time</li><li>• Register here: &lt;<a href="https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3444729642703051522">https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3444729642703051522</a>&gt;</li></ul>
Wednesday, December 19, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses to webinar questions will be posted to the Beyond Grad website: &lt;<a href="https://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=51539624233">https://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=51539624233</a>&gt;</li></ul>
Friday, January 4, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit MS CCR FIRM Application Part 1: Qualitative Questions</li><li>• See Attachment 3</li><li>• Submit MS CCR FIRM Application Part 2: Grant Activity and Budget Plan</li><li>• See Attachment 4</li></ul>
January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Selection of MS CCR FIRM grantees</li></ul>