



**2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant for Regional Conveners**  
**Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, January 13, 2023**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

This LOI application must be submitted via email to [loiapplications@tea.texas.gov](mailto: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, January 13, 2023**.

Grant period from

Pre-award costs permitted from

Application stamp-in date and time

**Required Attachments**

- Application Part 2: Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
- Attachment A: Regional Convener Reference Form (Submit up to three forms with Application)

**Application Information**

Which workforce development area are you located in and applying to represent as a regional convener?

Select your organization type:

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN

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 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 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant to Regional Conveners Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2024 Tri-Agency Grant to Regional Conveners Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.
- 6. The applicant assures to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a regional convener for a geographic region with boundaries identical to those of the workforce development area.
- 7. The applicant assures to identify at least one staff person, who meets the qualifications and experience of a regional convener lead as outlined in these guidelines, with adequate time allocated to the work of this grant project and who will serve as the regional convener lead.
- 8. The applicant assures to identify multiple staff at the regional convener organization to engage in the work and participate in the designation process. This includes someone in an executive leadership position who has decision-making authority on behalf of the regional convener organization.
- 9. The applicant assures to complete all grant activities and deliverables in a timely manner, as described in the description of program and performance and evaluation measures.
- 10. The applicant assures to coordinate with their assigned coach, to be provided by TEA for technical assistance, and meet with their coach frequently throughout the project, including within the first month to align on program priorities and requirements.

**Statutory/Program Assurances cont'd**

- 11. The applicant assures to convene and engage a cross-sector pathways leadership team in the strategic planning process within the first three months of the grant project.
- 12. The applicant assures to develop an asset map and gap analysis within six months of the grant start date under the direction and guidance of their assigned coach. In addition, the applicant will keep this landscape analysis updated throughout the grant project.
- 13. The applicant assures to develop, in collaboration with members of the cross-sector leadership team, a strategic plan and supporting action plans within the first 12 months of the grant project.
- 14. The applicant assures to plan and execute work-based learning that will address K-12 gaps and will expand upon existing work-based learning within their region.
- 15. The applicant assures to participate and engage in statewide training and convenings during the grant period.

**Statutory/Program Requirements**

**1. Current Regional Landscape** - Describe the key career and education pathway initiatives and/or programs currently underway in your region, including those funded by TEA, THECB, and/or TWC, and your current level of involvement in those initiatives. Please also describe the current staff you have in place to support these initiatives and/or programs who will continue to be involved in this project and any new staff you would like to use grant dollars to hire to support this work. Describe the qualifications and experience of the staff person who will serve as the regional convener lead for this grant project.

East Harris County Empowerment Council (EHCEC) currently serves as the intermediary for the Texas Regional Pathways Network project titled "Gulf Coast Pipeline Project." The project is in its third year of existence and is funded by the Texas Education Agency's Carl D. Perkins Reserve grant. As the intermediary, EHCEC is responsible for convening and supporting all stakeholders and implementing the seven key components. This includes but is not limited to developing cross-sector partnerships, disseminating labor market data, linking secondary and postsecondary education partners, professional development for stakeholders and their staff, recruiting work-based learning partners to increase opportunities for students, and convening meetings to evaluate progress and incorporate feedback. EHCEC is also responsible for identifying current and emerging opportunities for highlighting past success and the current wins of the work and developing a sustainability plan. With coaching and ongoing support from Jobs for the Future, we help to share the tri-agency initiative with employer partners to connect them to the project and partner with local education agencies and institutions of high education. Our collective efforts have increased communication, collaboration, and coordination among project partners and brought our region closer to achieving the goals of the tri-agency initiative. We are excited to build upon this work and expand opportunities to interested partners across the Texas Gulf Coast region to increase prosperity in Texas. The Founder & CEO is the sole staff member who works on the Gulf Coast Pipeline Project. He will serve as the Project Director and regional convener lead. He holds a Master of Business Administration, a certificate of Entrepreneurship, and a Nonprofit Leadership certification. He also has over 13 years of managerial experience and extensive fundraising and team-building experience. Throughout his career, he has developed multiple cross-sector partnerships, transformed ideas into action plans, facilitated meetings, and developed innovative solutions to several community challenges. Additional staff members will be hired to support this work. These positions include Data & Technology, Project Manager, Marketing & Communications, and Work-based Learning Coordinator. The administrative assistant and finance professional will spend a portion of their time and effort on this project as well.

**2. Regional Convener Priorities** - What are your priorities for strategic alignment across current state, regional, and local pathways initiatives in the WDA? What would be necessary for that alignment to take place?

The priorities for strategic alignment across current state, regional, and local pathways initiatives are 1. Aligning goals and objectives: Clearly define this project's overall vision, mission, and objectives. Ensure that this initiative is aligned with those initiatives and with the larger goals and objectives of the Tri-Agency program. Establish measurable performance indicators and targets to track progress toward goals and objectives 2. Coordinating efforts: Identify areas of overlap and potential collaboration among initiatives. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder. Developing a shared resource allocation and management plan. Create a governance structure to oversee and coordinate the work. 3. Communication: Establish regular meetings and check-ins among initiatives. Create a communication plan to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and engaged. Develop a system for collecting and sharing feedback and suggestions. Encourage open and transparent communication. 4. Data collection and analysis: Develop a data collection plan that captures information from all initiatives. Establish a system for analyzing the data and reporting the results. Using data to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and make decisions about future efforts. 5. Stakeholder engagement: Identify key stakeholders and understand their interests and concerns. Establish a process for engaging stakeholders and gathering their input. Incorporate stakeholder feedback into decision-making. Communicate with stakeholders regularly to keep them informed and engaged in the initiatives. For alignment to occur, we would need a leadership commitment and buy-in from each cross-sector partner to ensure that all parties have a shared vision. Clear communication is necessary so that all parties are informed and engaged. Collaboration & coordination is necessary to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources. Data-driven decision-making is needed to track progress and identify areas of improvement. We would also need stakeholder engagement to ensure that each partner and sector can provide input and feedback on the project. Adaptability and flexibility will allow us to change and iterate as needed. Lastly, resources to do the work which include funding, staff and contractors, training and professional development, and ongoing support from the tri-agency partners.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**3. Regional Alignment Experience** - Describe your organization’s experience leading strategic planning to support regional career and education pathways (or related education and training initiatives) in collaboration with stakeholders representing a mix of industry, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development entities.

As a convener aiming to maximize resources and increase collaboration, EHCEC has led several initiatives to support various regional efforts. As the current intermediary of the Gulf Coast Pipeline Project, we work alongside industry, K-12 education, high education, and workforce entities to create a shared vision and a big win. To that end, EHCEC regularly convenes partners in these sectors to think, strategize, plan, implement and evaluate. For more than three years, we have been convening what is now referred to as the EHCTX Workforce Collaborative. This collaborative comprises K-12, high education, training providers, and employers. It was formed to connect K-12 to other sectors within the region and to connect industry to opportunities within the local education agencies. Through the collaboration, we identified goals and developed action plans that have increased cross-sector collaboration, communication and, efficiency & effectiveness. This helps everyone save resources that can be reinvested into the collaborative to produce greater returns for all stakeholders.

**4. Regional Data Experience** - How do you currently monitor progress and measure quality of career and education pathway programs or initiatives? What do you currently use as metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) to understand the strength of your region’s pathway programming?

We currently monitor progress and measure the quality of career and education pathways by establishing an overarching goal. The goal is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. It is agreed upon by all stakeholders and regularly reviewed on a regular basis. This allows us to monitor efforts continuously and ensure that progress is made. If issues arise, the entire project team may offer support or other solutions on an as-needed basis. We measure the quality of our efforts through feedback surveys, questionnaires, and comparing data between years. Current key performance indicators are the number of students in the programs of study, the number of students enrolled in dual credit, the number of students who receive a dual credit credential, the number of students in a non-traditional course, the number of students who participate in a work-based learning experience, the number of students who receive advising and a career counseling, the number of students who receive financial literacy training, and the gender, race, ethnicity and other demographic data of each student. We also track the number of teachers and counselors who receive professional development and the number of industry partners by pathway.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

5. **Regional Work-Based Learning Experience** – Using the Tri-Agency WBL Continuum attachment available on the TEA Grant Opportunities webpage, describe your experience planning, implementing and/or monitoring work-based learning activities aligned within each of the following categories: a. "Learning about Work"; b. "Learning through Work"; and c. "Learning at Work"

Since joining the Texas Regional Pathways Network over two years ago, we have thoroughly enjoyed developing work-based learning experiences for high school students. We are fortunate to have employer partners in various industries and professions through our network. This has allowed us to connect these partners to K-12 organizations to support their efforts to expose more students to career pathways and other initiatives. Learning about Work: In this module of the continuum, EHCEC has worked with industry partners and K-12 to organize a variety of events to help students learn about work. This includes career panels, mock interviews, financial literacy workshops, career exploration events and recruiting industry professionals to serve on pathway advisory panels. This allows students who may have never heard of a career or job to learn firsthand from professionals in the role today. Students can get answers to their questions, research job openings, and learn about starting salaries. Learning Through Work: We have developed events and experiences to support students who can learn through work. With the help of the project partners, we have been able to create unique experiences that provide hands on training. In other instances, students in specific pathways completed service learning projects and received internships with industry partners. Within our organization, we have developed volunteer opportunities for students to provide them with work experience. These experiences provide additional information for the students as they are able to see and understand the job from another vantage point. We have been in communications with partners to develop more internship opportunities across the region and hope to have this program online in the near future. Learning at Work: At this time, we continue to establish partnerships with organizations that can offer on-the-job training, mentoring, and apprenticeships. We regularly share these opportunities with partners so that they may inform their students. These activities are monitored for quality through check-ins and touchpoints with partners, students, teachers, and employers.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

6. **Regional Convener Responsibilities** - Describe any current work your organization performs related to the additional functions of regional conveners listed below. If there are functions you do not perform, describe how a partner organization performs the function and your working relationship with them. If there are functions that are not currently performed by either your organization or a partner, provide context for why it has not been a focus of your organization's work to date. a. Analyze labor market information and work on an ongoing basis to ensure career and education pathways are aligned to in-demand industries in the region; b. Convene a cross-sector leadership team made up of education, workforce, and industry stakeholders to develop and implement a regional vision and strategy; c. Engage employers and broker relationships with education and training providers; d. Streamline communicating information across the region; and e. Drive sustainability planning, including coordinated funding strategies, across education and workforce development entities.

As a current intermediary of the Gulf Coast Pipeline Project, EHCEC has been responsible for ensuring all of the aforementioned tasks are successfully completed. We analyze labor market data to determine which jobs are in high demand and high-growth industries and align them to career and education pathways. This information is disseminated to the cross-sector team and shared with stakeholders interested in this work. This information is cross-referenced against current pathways work and also used to develop future programming. We regularly convene a cross-sector team on a monthly basis to develop, implement and monitor strategies. The cross-sector team is made up of secondary, postsecondary, employers, training providers, workforce and economic development agencies. We share updates about the current work of each organization and trouble shoot issues that may arise. We engage employers and broker relationships with education and training providers to develop new partnerships and deepen others on behalf of the cross-sector team. Many of the partners do not have the capacity to develop partnerships due to limited staff size and current workload. As a regional convener who brings together multiple sectors regularly, it is easy for us to begin conversations about this work. We provide a consistent message and voice for the project which allows everyone to speak the same language thus streamlining communication and information across the region. Many of the companies and employers are eager to become involved in the work because they are able to influence what and how students are taught. We also regularly communicate with all stakeholders and encourage open communication outside the monthly meetings. We encourage partners to leverage each other's efforts and maximize resources. Lastly, we develop and implement sustainability strategies by identifying funding opportunities, identify marketing strategies to share the success of the work and increase the visibility of the project. We also meet with funders to share our progress, solicit contributions, to ask for feedback and connections to other organizations doing similar work across the country.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

7. **Partnerships** - Describe your current partnership(s), including the specific activities involved, with the following: a. Industry partnerships or specific employer partners (by sector); b. Postsecondary education; c. Secondary education; and d. Workforce or economic development.

EHCEC thrives on partnerships and collaboration. We developed this mindset when it became clear that our underresourced region lacked a connection between groups and organizations. After learning this, we set out to connect with the organizations in the community to learn more about their cause and to identify common issues between groups. This was both eye-opening and alarming. Many groups shared the same challenges and had similar feelings about the community. To that end, we have established partnerships with partners Port Houston, Comerica Bank, Veritex Bank, Wal-Mart, HEB, Amerigroup, Community Health Choice, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, Air Products, CVS Pharmacy, Frost Bank, UPS, Amazon, and Advanced Diagnostics to name a few. We work with these partners to increase the availability of work-based learning experiences for students and professional development opportunities for teachers. The partners provide human and financial capital to support a variety of workforce and community development efforts. Our postsecondary education partners are Lee College, San Jacinto College, Houston Christian University, and the University of Houston. The post-secondary partners support our efforts to expose students to their campuses, create unique learning opportunities for students and offer academic advising and other supports as needed. Our secondary partners include Crosby High School, Channelview High School, C.E. King High School, Dayton High School, North Shore High School, and Galena Park High School. These partners provide opportunities for student and parental engagement for the other cross-sector partners. They host career days, and industry roundtables, provide resources for field trips and offer their facilities for events. Our Workforce and Economic Development partners include Harris County Precinct 2, Workforce Solutions, and the Economic Alliance Port Region. These partners provide a host of services, resources and workforce development training opportunities for students, educators and employers alike.



**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

8. **Budget narrative** - Describe how the proposed budget will support the goals of the program. Please include justification for the specific funding allocations in the proposed budget, including how costs are connected to the grant activities described in this solicitation. Please also describe how each item in the proposed budget will support the needs of the regional team, beyond any one specific regional partner. In addition, include a description of other funding sources the region will leverage, if any, to support implementation of this project and future work.

The budget comprises several categories to support the grant goals and objectives. The largest portion of the budget is devoted to salaries and payroll expenses. Personnel is a critical component of the project as this grant seeks to build the capacity of the regional convener. To accomplish this, we propose the following: Project Director (.2FTE @\$30,000) will oversee the entire project, complete reporting requirements, and ensure that the project is properly led and managed. The Finance Director (.2FTE@\$20,416) will be responsible for all aspects of fiscal management of the project. The Data & Technology Staff Person (1FTE@\$83,520) will be responsible for managing the project's data aspects, including developing a data infrastructure to capture key metrics, outcomes, outputs and satisfaction surveys, etc. The Project Manager (1FTE@\$83,520) will be the staff member that will oversee the day-to-day aspects of the grant. This role will be dedicated to the project and responsible for ensuring that the team has the proper support, oversight, and guidance to deliver the project on time and on budget. Marketing & Communications staff person (.5FTE@\$40,600) is responsible for developing the project's educational resources and marketing materials. This includes but is not limited to a newsletter, website, and other communications deliverables for the project. Work-based Learning Coordinator (1FTE@\$55,680) will coordinate work-based learning partners and events to develop this aspect of the project. The Administrative Assistant (.2FTE@\$10,208) will be responsible for clerical support and other support tasks for the regional leadership team and staff. The benefits and payroll taxes for the staff are calculated at 28% of the total payroll costs. These positions represent the core team of professionals who will implement this work at the regional convener. Consultants will be used to provide contracted services such as project evaluation, strategic planning and training, and professional development for educators, employers, regional leadership team, and staff. These expenses are necessary as they will serve as an extension to the project team and allow each person to focus on their area of the project. Five convening events will be held throughout the life of the project. We estimate that each convening will be around \$2,500. We plan to offer stipends to the regional leadership team members for their time and effort. Each member is budgeted to receive \$3,500 for their service on the team. Travel expenses include funds to attend the state convening and the national conference. Mileage is also included in this line item to cover expenses associated with regional leadership team travel at 59 cents per mile. The supplies line item will be used to cover the cost of office and general supplies for the project. This includes postage, copies, etc. Marketing expenses will support the marketing and communications needs of the project. This includes hosting the website development and publication, photography, videography, newsletter development, etc. Equipment includes funds to cover the cost of a vehicle for the staff and office furniture for the new project staff. The technology and equipment line items will be used to cover items to develop the necessary data infrastructure, monitoring, software, CRM, and evaluation application. The administrative and general/indirect costs are calculated at 6.67% to cover costs that are not directly related to this project. The region is home to caring corporations and a large number of foundations who have a strong desire to invest in the community. We will use these funds to attract and leverage future investment for this work.

**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**