



2023-2025 Grow Your Own Grant Program, Cycle 6
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, October 13, 2022

NOGA ID [REDACTED]

Authorizing legislation **General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 40, 87th Texas Legislature**

This LOI application must be submitted via email to competitivegrants@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, October 13, 2022**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **February 9, 2023 to April 30, 2025**

Pre-award costs are **not** permitted for this grant.

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Attachment 1: Pathway Selection and Participation

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization **RUSK ISD** CDN **037907** Campus **RUSK HIGH** ESC **7** DUNS **056779804**

Address **203 EAST 7TH STREET** City **RUSK** ZIP **75785** Vendor ID **1756002356**

Primary Contact **STACIE YOUNG** Email **STACIE.YOUNG@RUSKISD.NET** Phone **903-683-5592**

Secondary Contact **CADI COLLINS** Email **CADI.COLLINS@RUSKISD.NET** Phone **903-683-5592**

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 **GREY BURTON** Title **SUPERINTENDENT**

Email **GREY.BURTON@RUSKISD.NET** Phone **903-683-5592**

Signature  Date **10/11/2022**

Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. Check the box below if applying as a fiscal agent.

- The LEA or ESC submitting this application is the fiscal agent of a planned SSA. All participating agencies will enter into a written SSA agreement describing the fiscal agent and SSA member responsibilities. All participants understand that the "Shared Services Arrangement Attachment" must be completed and signed by all SSA members and submitted to TEA upon request.

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 2023-2025 Grow Your Own Grant Program, Cycle 6 Program Guidelines.
4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Grow Your Own, Cycle 6 Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

PATHWAY 1:

5. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for Education & Training teachers that receive a stipend through the Grow Your Own Grant by May 31, 2023. These participating teachers must commit with the MOU to, at minimum, teach the Education and Training courses and, if applicable, establish and/or grow a chapter of a Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) as a condition of receiving the stipend.
6. The MOUs for Education and Training teachers must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 11 of the Program Guidelines.
7. If implementing dual credit Education and Training courses, the LEA must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for the partnering IHE by May 31, 2023. This MOU should include, at minimum, content outlined on page 11 of the Program Guidelines.
8. The LEA will retain documentation locally of each letter of commitment or MOU and submit to TEA upon request.
9. The LEA assures that each high school campus within the participating LEA will implement at least the Instructional Practices and/or Practicum courses in the Education and Training course sequence in 2023-2024, and at least both stated courses in 2024-2025, with the teachers receiving the stipend as teachers of record for both courses or either course. *Please see example on page 9 of the Program Guidelines.
10. To receive a stipend for teaching dual credit, the LEA assures the Education and Training teacher holds a master's degree in an education-related field and be the teacher of record for at least one dual credit course section in 2023-2024 and two dual credit course sections in 2024-2025 within the Education and Training course sequence.
11. All LEA high schools must establish and/or grow a chapter of a CTSO that supports the Education and Training career cluster through either the Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE) or Family, Career and Community Leads of America (FCCLA) and participate in at least one competitive event per year.
12. The LEA assures that all LEA high schools will participate in an initial TEA-led Teacher Institute in Summer 2023. Education and Training teacher stipend recipients are required to attend the entirety of the Institute. Principals, counselors, and LEA grant managers are only required to attend the first day. Participants who attended any previous Grow Your Own Summer Institute must still attend. IHE/EPP partners and student ambassador attendance is optional but recommended.
13. The LEA assures that each Education and Training teacher stipend recipient will pilot the TEA Education and Training curriculum if they are not currently using a high-quality Education and Training curriculum.
14. The LEA assures that each Education and Training teacher stipend recipient will receive TEA implementation supports and coaching by participating in online collaborative communities to be scheduled by TEA, not to exceed 6 hours per semester.
15. The LEA assures that Education and Training teacher stipend recipients will participate in surveys and, if requested, focus groups not to exceed 1 hour per semester and administered by TEA to receive input on the Education and Training programming.

Statutory/Program Assurances Cont'd

- 16. LEA grant managers shall support Practicum in Education and Training implementation, including but not limited to student scheduling, identifying field sites and field site teachers, and coordinating student transportation to field sites.
- 17. LEAs shall develop a marketing and recruitment plan to grow enrollment in high school Education and Training courses. Upon request by TEA, all LEA high schools will submit their plan for marketing and student recruitment.
- 18. LEAs must, upon request, submit reports on progress towards performance measures to TEA. If requested, LEAs must participate in focus groups and surveys to give input on the Education and Training programming.
- 19. All grant-funded teachers must be identified and submitted to TEA by May 31, 2023.

PATHWAY 2:

- 20. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for each candidate that receives a stipend through the Grow Your Own Grant by May 31, 2023. All candidate stipend recipients must commit with a MOU, at minimum, to remain at the LEA for an agreed upon length of time in a full-time teaching role as a condition of receiving the stipend.
- 21. The MOUs for candidates must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 13 of the Program Guidelines.
- 22. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU from each accredited EPP (see Eligible Applicants section of the Program Guidelines) that will partner with the LEA to award teacher certifications to all candidates (those earning a bachelor's degree and teacher certification and certification-only candidates) by May 31, 2023.
- 23. The MOUs for EPPs must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 13 of the Program Guidelines.
- 24. The LEA will retain all MOU documentation locally and submit to TEA upon request.
- 25. LEAs must allow reasonable paid release time and schedule flexibility, as determined by the LEA, for candidates to complete their degree and certification course requirements while engaged in the grant program.
- 26. All certification-only candidates within a LEA will be certified by the same partner EPP as a cohort managed collaboratively by the LEA and EPP.
- 27. The LEA assures that candidate stipend recipients participate in surveys and, if requested, focus groups not to exceed 1 hour per semester and administered by TEA to receive input on the grant programming.
- 28. If positions are available that can be appropriately filled in alignment with candidates' certification area(s), LEAs must commit to hiring/retaining candidates upon successful completion of their teacher certification to serve as a teacher of record in the LEA by the start of the 2025-2026 school year.
- 29. LEAs must, upon request, submit reports on progress towards performance measures to TEA.
- 30. The names of all grant-funded teachers and/or candidates must be identified and submitted to TEA by May 31, 2023.

ALL PATHWAYS:

- 31. If a teacher or candidate is unable to continue with the grant program, the LEA must file an application amendment and provide TEA with an update of the new amount and type of stipend recipient(s) within 30 days of notification.
- 32. LEAs must file application amendments within seven days of a request from TEA.

Program Description

Describe how the Grow Your Own program will be implemented with grant funds and how the grant will address the LEA's teacher pipeline needs.

Like many districts statewide, we are having difficulty filling classroom vacancies with highly qualified teachers. This grant will allow us to grow our Education & Training program at Rusk High School, as well as, help six individuals become highly qualified classroom teachers.

The Rusk ISD Education and Training program, along with the TAFE organization is growing. This grant will allow us to retain our current E&I teacher and help him continue to grow the program. We currently transport students to four campuses district wide to receive hands-on training. Our TAFE members participate in a variety of competitions throughout the school year. Grant money would allow them to purchase necessities to continue to compete and share their ideas. The Grow Your Own Institute would allow for the E&I teacher, high school admin, and others the opportunities to network and grow their knowledge base during the summer of 2023.

Rusk ISD is striving to provide six individuals with the opportunity to earn their bachelors degree and/or teaching certificate. Because we are a District of Innovation, we have teachers who hold bachelors degree within the classroom, however, they need to earn their teaching certification. This grant would allow for two individuals to do that. We would also have the opportunity to allow four current educational aides to earn their bachelors degree and teaching certificate. This would allow Rusk ISD the opportunity to retain staff.

Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel

Outline the required qualifications and experience for key personnel to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include each of the following individuals (when applicable) and a description of each role: 1. The LEA's grant manager; 2. LEA leaders involved in program implementation; 3. The campus principals for participating Education and Training high schools; 4. the college/career counselors for participating Education and Training high schools; 5. Education and Training teachers; 6. Education and Training field site teachers for Instructional Practices and/or Practicum courses; 7. Any other personnel responsible for implementing the grant.

Title and Responsibilities of Position

The LEA grant managers (Chief Financial Officer & Director of Instructional Programs) would have the opportunity to work alongside candidates to become highly qualified. The CFO would ensure all funding was being alloted in the current areas and distributed accurately. The DIP would work with campus administrators to ensure needs were being meet by candidates.

District administration would ensure all necessary documentation was collected and reviewed. They would also track teacher vacancies and ensure that candidates were on track for completing their degrees and/or certifications within the time period.

The campus administrators would ensure that grant participates were continuing with the process and completing tasks on time. The administrators would ensure candidates had the opportunity to work alongside current high qualified staff to gain hands-on learning and mentoring.

The college and career counselor would help track the number of students enrolled in the Education and Training program of study and ensure that appropriate certifications were being completed. The counselor would attend the GYO Institute during the summer of 2023.

The Education and Training teacher would track his class numbers and TAFE participants. The teacher would continue to promote his program of study in lower campuses to ensure program progression. He would also attend the GYO Institute and communicate often with district administration on his needs for the program and TAFE organization.

The Education & Training field site teachers would ensure high quality teaching and communicate any concerns with the E&I teacher at the high school. The field site teachers would build rapport with their E&T high school students and allow them hands-on opportunities within the classroom. They would allow for good mentoring.

Goals and Objectives

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed Grow Your Own program. Describe the talent management strategy, (including the LEA's approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified teachers) related to those goals/objectives.

One goal that Rusk ISD could achieve by using this grant is to further the knowledge base of the newly hired Education & Training teacher at the high school campus. He was hired during the summer of 2022 and is thriving. However, he is daily searching for new ideas for his program. This grant would allow him the opportunity to network at the Grow Your Own Conference during the summer of 2023 along with the college and career counselor and high school administration.

Because Rusk ISD is a District of Innovation, we are able to hire teachers without certification, knowing that these teachers will work towards gaining their teaching certifications. This grant would allow our district to help two classroom teachers receive funding to further their education by gaining their teaching certificates. We also have a multitude of highly qualified educational aides working within our schools. This grant would allow the district to provide four educational aides with the opportunity to complete their bachelors degrees along with their teaching certifications. These four aides would be fully certified and hired by 2025.

This grant would also be used to promote our already established Education & Training program not only on the high school campus, but throughout Rusk ISD and the community. By continuing to grow our E&T program at the high school and by allowing students to practice their skills on other district campuses we can ensure solid recruitment for future educators in Rusk ISD.

Progress Monitoring and Evaluation Measures

Describe how the performance measures identified for this program are consistent with the purpose of the program and related to teacher pipeline needs. Include the tools and processes used to measure performance and the extent to which the major goals and objectives of the grant are met.

We would look at the Education & Training program numbers from the start of the program four years ago and continue to track the progress the program is making. We would determine if our numbers are increasing and if so, continue to promote and recruit other students, focusing on the seventh and eighth graders at Rusk Junior High. If our numbers are decreasing, work alongside high school counselors and the college and career counselor to determine the reasoning behind the decrease. Further promotion would take place within the high school and junior high.

The Education and Training teacher would have students complete surveys often to determine if the program is meeting their needs and expectations. Students would be able to make suggestions and help with promotion of the program. Students would also continue to participate in TAFE competitions. Reviews of the products produced by the students would be evaluated and growth would be tracked.

Teachers holding bachelors degrees striving to earn a teaching certificate and educational aides working towards a bachelors degree would be required to submit semester grades and products for district staff to review to check for progress. District staff would work closely with the six individuals, including campus principals and district administration.

Budget Narrative

Referencing the applicant's budget workbook and the Application Funding section of the Program Guidelines, outline the proposed budget and amounts for allowable uses of grant program funding. This should also match the Pathway Selection and Participation section of this application.

The district is requesting \$5,500 for the Education & Training teacher stipend to be divided between two years (\$2,750 each year). This would help retain the current teacher in this position. Our district would like to send our Education & Training teacher, along with a high school administrator and the college and career counselor, to the Grow Your Own Institute during the summer of 2023. We are requesting \$3000 to go towards the cost of this conference and training. Because of TAFE organization has been so successful in the previous years, we are asking for \$5,000 to continue to promote the continuation of this program by providing opportunities for competitions.

Pathway 2 will help our district place highly qualified teachers within our classrooms. Our district, like others, are struggling to find highly qualified teachers to educate our students. This grant would allow for six individuals to continue their education and become highly qualified teachers. We are requesting two \$8,000 stipends for two current teachers in the classroom who are lacking their teaching certifications. We are also requesting four \$19,000 stipends for four educational aides who are currently pursuing their bachelors degree and teacher certification. This will overall increase our highly qualified staff district wide.

Sustainability Plan

Describe the sustainability plan for the Grow Your Own Program beyond the timeline of grant funding. The plan should address how a high-quality program will be maintained, including clear action steps beginning in the first year of grant funding and a demonstrated ability to leverage and coordinate resources to increase the LEA's capacity to strengthen the local educator pipeline and make progress on sustainability. This may include the use of other local, state, and/or federal resources. Consider also how the Grow Your Own program may be integrated into, be supported by, and provide support for existing LEA or EPP initiatives and/or priorities.

The district will create a sustainability plan that will be built on the initiatives developed through the first year of the Grow Your Own (GYO) Program. This plan will accurately outline the clear action steps beginning in the first year of grant funding. Some of the actions steps that will be taken during the initial year of funding to ensure grant sustainability include:

- +Receiving feedback from program participants through surveys and face-to-face interviews ;
- +Developing a strong relationship with partnering IHE(s);
- +Searching for other resources such as local, state, and federal grants; and
- +Receiving buy-in from valuable stakeholders.

The use of other state, federal and local resources, post-secondary partnerships, guaranteed interviews for returning students, etc will ensure the sustainability of the program. This ability to leverage resources will assist in sustaining the program beyond grant funding.

Stipend Recipient Recruitment

Describe the plan to recruit Education and Training teachers within Pathway 1 and/or candidates within Pathway 2 who are interested and eligible in participating in the program and receiving stipends. The plan must include strategies to equitably recruit diverse individuals and identify individuals with potential criteria including: **A. Pathway 1:** For Education and Training teachers, a demonstrated track record of success and/or achievement, involvement in student organizations and/or school activities, strong evaluation ratings (if applicable), and strong relationships with students (if applicable). **B. Pathway 2:** For candidates, a desire and commitment to teach long term in the LEA and/or region, strong evaluation ratings (if applicable), and strong relationships with students (if applicable).

The district is fully committed to the success of this program. Therefore, all program participants that receive stipends will be given assistance and support from district administration in order to full responsibilities, persist throughout the program, and excel in the role as specified.

Each teacher participant will meet with district administration on a monthly basis to discuss progress, obstacles, and/or solutions. The teacher of record that is providing Education and Training instruction, will be provided access to additional trainings that will help him strengthen the connection students have to the teaching field. This includes the Grow Your Own Institute as well as networking opportunities at Region 7 ESC. In addition, grant funds will be utilized to purchase any supplies and curriculum they need to ensure the courses can be properly conducted.

In addition, Pathway 2 candidates currently working to obtain their bachelors degree and/or teacher certification will be assigned a teacher that will serve as a mentor for the participant. Current certified teachers will meet with the participants on a weekly basis to help them address any issues they may be facing. The participants will also be able to shadow teachers and obtain experience in lesson planing, classroom management, and more. Once the participants have received their degree and/or teacher certification the participants will continue to be mentored. Time will be provided for the participant's teacher mentor to conduct classroom visits so that the mentor can provide feedback, modeling, and more.

Stipend Recipient Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

Referencing the Program-Specific Assurances in the Program Guidelines, describe the MOUs in which: **A. Pathway 1:** Education and Training teacher stipend recipients agree to meet grant requirements and any other terms set by the LEA; **B. Pathway 1:** IHE that will partner with the LEA(s) to implement dual credit Education and Training courses and commit to supporting the Education and Training teachers and course implementation (if applicable); **C. Pathway 2:** Candidate stipend recipients commit to remain in the LEA for an agreed upon length of time as a condition of receiving the stipend and if a position is available, the LEA commits to hiring/retaining candidates with satisfactory program completion/job performance; **D. Pathway 2:** Accredited EPPs that will partner with the LEA(s) to award teacher certifications to candidates and commit to supporting candidates with completion of their teacher certification and supporting LEA(s) with implementation of the grant program.

The Education & Training teacher will be required to sign an MOU agreeing to meet the grant requirements and any other terms decided on by the LEA. He will be required to attend the Grow Your Own Institute in summer of 2023.

The teachers will be invited to take part in the program based on their ranking. Teachers that agree to be part of the program will be required to sign a MOU which will commit them to continue their employment with the district for a minimum of 3 years as a condition of receiving the stipend. The teacher will be informed that the MOU is a condition set forth by TEA. If the teacher cannot commit, another teacher will have to be selected.

For educational aide candidates, the district will commit to hiring/retaining each participant that completes the program and demonstrates effective job performance. They will commit to continuing their employment with the district for a minimum of 3 years as a condition of receiving the stipend. They will also be informed that the MOU is a condition set forth by TEA and if the candidate cannot commit, another candidate will be selected.

At this time, we will not require a specific Educator Preparation Program that has to be utilized by the candidates.

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