



**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

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):

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN  Campus  ESC  DUNS

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 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.

The North East Independent School District started the 2022-2023 school year with approximately 170 teacher vacancies. More vacancies are expected as teachers submit resignation and retirement notices through the year. North East ISD will use Grow Your Own funds to initiate Pathway 2 and launch a teacher pipeline populated with paraprofessionals already holding undergraduate degrees and eager to earn a teacher certification. North East ISD will recruit six strong and diverse candidates from a pool of qualified and eligible paraprofessionals, and work jointly with an Educator Preparation Program institute on the vetted list. North East ISD will ensure that selected applicants are paired with veteran and experienced teachers and principals who, along with the EPP, will ensure that the selected paraprofessionals are immersed in experiences and curriculum necessary to produce effective certified teachers. Selected applicants will have the following covered through the grant: tuition, certifications fees and substitute coverage.

We continue our discussions with two universities with EPP programs on the published vetted list. We want to ensure to partner with the univeristy that offers the best support to the individual candidate.

**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 district's Chief of Schools and Leadership - an associate superintendent position - will serve as the Grant Manager. He will oversee the program collaboratively with the Executive Director of Human Resources.

Executive Director of Human Resources will ensure candidates are immersed, with the classroom teacher, in performing teacher functions. Additionally, she will ensure principals create a flexible schedule for candidates to attend EPP classes, and ensures applicants are progressing towards expected outcomes. She will report updates directly to the Grant Manager.

Campus principals with candidates on their campuses will ensure applicants have authentic classroom experiences, ensure that program classroom expectations are met and, with the classroom teacher, guide, nurture and coach the assigned applicant. The Campus Principals will contact the HR Executive Director regarding work/EPP scheduling.

An EPP representative will monitor and report applicant progress to the Grant Manager and the Executive Director of HR.

**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.

North East ISD seeks to use Pathway 2 funds to design goals and objectives that will strengthen the district's teacher pipeline. The district will recruit six dedicated paraprofessionals who are actively assisting certified teachers in the classroom. The district will screen and recruit paraprofessionals with strong and diverse backgrounds. We seek to ensure that our educators are reflective of the student population. Additionally, we will seek paraprofessionals eager to fill special education teacher vacancies. Each member of the grant management team brings a unique perspective to education, curriculum and teacher preparation. The talent recruited from the district's paraprofessional ranks will be selected based on insight provided by the Grant Manager and his team. The six candidates selected to participate in the program will be assigned to special education classrooms as special education assistants while serving in the teacher pipeline program. Once the applicant has successfully completed the program, the district will interview the recently certified special education teachers and guarantee them special education teacher positions in the district. The district will place the candidates as special education assistants based on where both the school and the candidate will benefit, and which campus has experienced and veteran special education teachers and principals with the expertise to guide the candidate through the program. Retaining qualified teachers is a challenge nationwide. This district's superintendent is driven to create benefits, perks and compensation that keeps talented teachers here. However, we have heard that compensation is just one factor teachers weigh when entering or remaining in the profession. Educators also seek professional development. The district continues to seek professional development opportunities to advance employees. Recently, select teachers were recruited to serve in the Principal Residency Program which prepares them for campus leadership roles and earns them a principal certification. A related TCLAS Decision 5 program is currently in progress. populations.

**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.

The performance measures are created to ensure that the program graduates a well-prepared and become effective special education teachers. Paraprofessionals seeking teacher certification in special education will be measured by their work in the EPP program as well as success in the special education classroom. In the special education classroom, the candidates will be observed by the teacher of record using a structured and standard classroom observations, as well as growth and achievement among students assigned to the candidate. Special Education assistants will be appraised annually in the district's Eduphoria Strive. Additionally, the North East ISD Special Education Department has developed T-TESS supplemental rubrics used to appraise Special Education teachers.

In the EPP classroom, candidate grades and classroom participation will be reported to the district. A candidate must maintain a "B" average in the EPP classes. A grade lower than a "B" on an individual assignment will require a meeting with the teacher and/or the EPP representative, who will report corrective measures to the district through the grant management structure. This criteria will apply to daily assignments, tests, section exams and/or quarter exams.

**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.

While the grant funding allows for living expenses, we believe that fully covering all tuition expenses, and exam requirements would be more advantageous and appealing to candidates currently earning a paraprofessional hourly wage.

Therefore, the budget is simple:

North East ISD will recruit six qualified candidates seeking only a teacher certification.

The budget amount for each of the six is \$8,000.

That amount will cover a candidate's tuition at the EPP as they pursue a teacher certification as well as fees for the following: the Special Education exam, the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility exam and the fee to add the special education certification. We are also including the cost of fingerprinting.

The budget template has an itemized breakdown of expenses.

**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.

Data and evidence of the success of this program will allow grant managers to seek local funding to sustain the teacher pipeline beyond the grant timeline. As the number of teacher vacancies continue to increase in our district and state wide, we will need to consider local funding when the grant ends. Currently, the financial outlook may position us to continue with a similar program, however, the financial landscape may change and a combination of state, federal and grant may be required to sustain a similar program.

**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).

Two channels will be used to seek qualifying candidates for Pathway 2. The Chief Academic Officer, who will serve as the Grant Manager, will ask principals to recommend potential candidates. Degreed paraprofessionals seeking to earn only a teacher certification show interest through a survey. From those responding, candidates will be interviewed by a committee comprised of the Grant Manager, the Executive Director of Human Resources and principals. Paraprofessionals will be required to seek two letters of recommendation from educators citing the strengths of each candidate and how candidates relate to students. Additionally, the candidates will be required to address their desire and commitment to teach long term in North East ISD. The selection committee will require and review strong evaluation ratings and relationships with students. Evaluation ratings for top contenders will be reviewed. A survey of paraprofessionals gauging interest in in this program revealed that 15% are intrested in special education. We will give special consideration to those who will be able to fill hard to staff positions such as special education. We will make efforts to ensure that candidates reflect the student population they are destined to teach.

**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.

Each selected Pathway 2 candidates must agree with and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Candidates who successfully complete the program and earn a teacher certification will be hired by the district and must commit to teaching full time in North East ISD for three academic years by the start of the 2025-2026 school year. The MOU will state that North East ISD will make payments directly to the institute of higher education. The MOU will include the requirement that candidates MUST enroll in the EPP with which North East ISD partners, and it is the responsibility of the candidate to apply and be accepted to the EPP. However, North East ISD'S relationship with the EPP more than ensures that candidates will be considered for acceptance. The MOU will state that candidates will receive reasonable paid release time and schedule flexibility to complete program requirements.



**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.

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**Amended Section**

**Reason for Amendment**

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