



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.

LEA is not applying for a SSA;
email confirmation 10/14 mk

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.

Victoria ISD will send out invitations to all long term substitutes and instructional aids who are pursuing their teaching credentials to attend an informational meeting. At this meeting, the grant information and criteria will be discussed. Questions will be answered, and those who are still interested and meet the criteria will complete an application. The application will provide us with their current position in the district, current academic standing and reasons for pursuing a career in teaching. Recommendation letters and evaluation ratings from current district supervisors and colleagues will be requested. A review of academic transcripts will be conducted. A review of EPPs to consider for teacher certification will be held with local programs. The selection process for participants will consist of a committee review by the Executive Director of Talent Acquisition, Support and Retention (TASR), the Director of Elementary Professional and Classified Talent, Director of Secondary Professional and Paraprofessional Talent, Executive Director of Elementary Student Learning and Talent Development, and the Executive Director of Secondary Student Learning and Talent Development. The rubric for participant selection will take into consideration the local high need areas in Victoria ISD, the ability to attain certification within the two year grant cycle and the candidate's commitment to the outlined requirements of the grant. Efforts will be made by the committee to provide a diverse selection of participants which mirrors the current student population. Those selected will receive VISD Professional Development for new teachers during the two year cycle of the grant. Memorandums of Understanding will be read and signed by participants to commit to teach in VISD for a minimum of three years after completing certification.

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

1. LEA Grant Manager - Director of Secondary Professional and Paraprofessional Talent - writes and submits the grant application, recruits candidates, oversees the grant implementation

2. LEA leaders involved in program implementation - Executive Director of Talent Acquisition, Support, and Retention (TASR) - reviews grant application prior to submission, oversees the work of the LEA Grant Manager, supports in recruiting and selecting candidates.

2. LEA leaders involved in program implementation - Director of Elementary Professional and Classified Talent - supports LEA Grant Manager in recruiting and selecting candidates.

2. LEA leaders involved in program implementation - Executive Directors of Elementary and Secondary Student Learning and Talent Development - supports LEA Grant Manager in recruiting and selecting candidates, creates professional development plan for candidates to ensure that they receive all relevant teacher training while in the program.

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.

The major goals of the Grow Your Own program are in alignment with the Victoria ISD Strategic Plan. One of the primary focuses of our Strategic Plan is Talent Development. VISD recognizes that exceptional staff are what makes student success possible, and that we must focus on developing a homegrown talent pool. To that end, Victoria ISD was awarded and is successfully implementing the 2022-2024 Grow Your Own Grant under Decision 4 of TCLAS. In addition, we have begun a Pathway in Technology Early College High School Education and Training program to build our own home grown talent. We have partnered with the University of Houston-Victoria and US Prep to allow students who are completing their Bachelor's Degree in Education to serve as a Resident Teacher alongside their Sponsor Teacher. We are also in the initial discussion stages of developing our own "Grow Our Own" program to be implemented beginning in the 2023-2024 school year. Conversations about growing within our organization have been the main theme at our district-wide Convocation as well as our District Paraprofessional and District Secretary/Clerical meetings this school year.

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 identified in the Program Guide include identifying information for candidate recipients as well as feedback through TEA surveys and focus groups if requested. The candidate's application will include all identifying information, a written essay, and submission of recommendations. Once selected, the candidate will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding which will state eligibility requirements, district and student contributions, candidate obligations, and termination provisions. The LEA Grant Manager will require that candidates submit their degree plan and report cards and meet with them individually each semester to review their progress, assess their needs, and develop a plan of support.

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.

Victoria ISD is requesting the full amount of \$114,000.00 for a total of eight candidates for Pathway 2. This money will be used to assist 2 candidates attain their teacher certification and to assist 6 candidates complete a bachelor's degree and teacher certification. We are budgeting \$100,090.00 for professional and contracted services which will be used to pay for tuition and fees and \$10,500.00 for supplies and materials such as books. Of this amount, \$8,000 will be budgeted for teacher candidates earning teacher certification only, and \$102,590 will be budgeted for candidates completing a bachelor's degree and teacher certification. \$560 will be budgeted for substitute costs to cover release time, and \$2850 will be budgeted for indirect costs.

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.

Victoria ISD is currently in the initial stages of designing our own sustainable "Growing Our Own" program. Preliminary plans are for principals to nominate a promising paraprofessional(s), obtain a commitment from them to obtain their bachelor's degree, pay them a higher salary to serve as a teacher in a vacant position (under the tutelage of a teacher of record), and use the difference between their salary and a first year teacher's salary to help pay for their college tuition. The current timeline is for a proposal to be submitted to Cabinet by January, 2023. If approved, campus principals will nominate paraprofessionals by February, 2023. An informational session with paraprofessionals followed by a commitment will take place in March, 2023. The program will be included as an informational item at a School Board meeting tentatively set for April, 2023.

In addition, Victoria ISD currently partners with University of Houston - Victoria and US PREP to provide jobs for students in their final year of completing their Bachelor's Degree. These "Resident Teachers" serve an entire school year in our district with their "Sponsor Teacher." During this time, they observe, co-teach, and teach both small and large groups of students. They also participate in all teacher professional development and are an integral part of the campus staff.

This year, Victoria ISD began the Pathway in Technology Early College High School Education and Training program of study. Students who participate in the program can graduate core complete at any university and would receive a letter of agreement to work as a paraprofessional in our district with priority to participate in our Grow Our Own 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).

If Victoria ISD receives the grant, the Grant Manager will send out a mass email to all paraprofessionals and long-term substitutes with information about the grant opportunity. It will be included as the main topic of discussion in our district-wide paraprofessional and secretary/clerical meetings, and an informational session(s) will be scheduled for all interested candidates. In addition, the Grant Manager will identify all paraprofessionals who have already completed 75 college credit hours, provide the list to campus principals, and request recommendations for any candidates that they deem promising. The application will require a commitment to teach in Victoria ISD for a minimum of three years, strong evaluation ratings, recommendations, and a written essay explaining why they wish to be a part of the Grow Your Own program. A rubric will take into account our desire to fill teacher positions with applicants who live in the communities they serve.

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.

By May 31, 2023, Victoria ISD will have completed MOU's with all six approved candidates. The MOU will state that an applicant must be able to successfully complete a Bachelor's Degree in Education by May, 2025, or if they already have their Bachelor's Degree, that they be accepted in an accredited Alternative Certification program and earn their standard certification by May, 2025. The MOU will state the maximum amount VISD will pay toward each candidate's costs, outline all district and student contributions, and require a commitment to teach in Victoria ISD for a minimum of three years if recommended for an assignment. The MOU will also explicitly state the that candidates may receive paid release time and schedule flexibility to complete their degree and/or certification requirements with supervisor and LEA Grant Manager approval. By May 31, 2023, Victoria ISD will have agreements with the accredited EPP's that our candidates are attending. It is anticipated that most, if not all, candidates will be attending Victoria College and the University of Houston-Victoria, however, we are open to other accredited EPPs that may meet our guidelines. The agreement will stipulate the length of agreement, stipend payment schedule, and allowable reimburseable costs.

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