



**2023-2025 Texas Center for Student Supports LOI  
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, May 30, 2023**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation **P.L. 117-59 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Title II, School Improvement Programs, BSCA**

This LOI application may 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, May 30, 2023**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **July 1, 2023 to September 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 documentation as described on pages 1-2 in the Program Guidelines - limited to no more than **10 pages**

**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  UEI

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.

- 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.
- 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.
- The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Center for Student Supports LOI Program Guidelines.
- The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Center for Student Supports LOI Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- The applicant will formally establish the Texas Center for Student Support (TCSS).
- The applicant will dedicate a full-time director level position or above with personnel approved by TEA to lead the planning, execution, and implementation of all TCSS functions.
- The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to develop a TEA aligned student support team framework that includes protocols for team operation, recommendations for team staffing, standardized forms, resources, and tools that LEAs will use to support their student support teams.
- The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to develop a parent and family engagement playbook with resources and tools that LEAs can use to partner and build support with parents and families prior to a student support team assessment, and during the student support implementation process, to facilitate a student support partnership with families.
- The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to establish and implement a campus leader, teacher, parent/family, and student advisory group and use subgroup focus groups to provide feedback and input on needs for services and support and on products developed for the Student Support Program.
- The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to develop and implement job-embedded professional learning, technical assistance, and coaching to support LEAs with establishing and implementing student support team structures.
- The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to develop and implement a data reporting system to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy of the implementation of the Student Support Program, including student support team structure, quality of support leading to positive outcomes, and data related to increases in desired outcomes (e.g. increase in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increase in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increase in referrals for mental health services, reduction in removals from class, etc.).



**Statutory/Program Assurances Cont'd**

- The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures.
- The applicant will establish a collaborative partnership through contract procurement with the University of Texas at Austin Behavior Sciences and Policy Institute, and with the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health (TIEMH) at the University of Texas at Austin, to develop the Student Support Program.
- The applicant will develop a plan to sustain the TCSS to support ESCs and LEAs beyond the life of the grant cycle.

**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel**

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

Title and Responsibilities of Position	Required Qualifications and Experience
Texas Center for Student Support Director (proposed position)-Ensures Successful Execution of Statewide Initiative, ESC partnerships, and LEA Supports	Minimum five years experience in program development, system implementation, & managing contracts. Competency in facilitation, leadership, supervision, & critical thinking (Mental Health Supports Preferred). Master's.
Project Manager, Texas Center for Student Support (proposed position)-Manages Project Deliverables and Coordinate Progress with Vendor Partnerhsips	Minimum of five years of experience managing long-term projects with outcome-driven metrics & logistics. Competency in stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, data visualization & organization. Master's degree or higher.
Technical Specialist, Texas Center for Student Support (proposed position)-Input, Maintenance, & Reporting of Data Aligned w/ Project Metrics.	Minimum of three years experience in data collection & reporting, technology platforms, & learning management systems. Competency in organization, time management, meeting deadlines, & customer service. Associate's degree.
Contracted Technical Assistance Providers - Content Development	Proven success in developing system-wide educational frameworks, training, & aligned resources supported by research & evidence-based practices. Record of high-quality deliverables within the required time frame & budget.
Contracted Technical Assistance Providers - Data Reporting System	Proven success in developing customized digital data dashboards, data reporting systems, and educational data integration. Record of high-quality deliverables within the required time frame & budget.

**TEA Program Requirements**

**HISTORICAL SUCCESS:** 1. Describe the success that the ESC has had in supporting LEAs with the following: **a.** electing and managing technical assistance providers to support LEAs and ESCs resulting in delivery of agreed upon deliverable and measurable outcomes; **b.** establishing and improving school culture resulting in strong relationships between staff and students, reductions in behavioral and disciplinary incidents, reductions in chronic absenteeism, reduction in incidents of bullying and harassment, and improved overall academic outcomes; **c.** implementing effective mental health training, support, and resources; and **d.** implementing effective student support team structures.

a. ESC-20 has a record of success managing technical assistance providers to support LEAs and ESCs across TEA state-wide efforts. We use a public RFP process that includes a rubric scoring vendors according to quality, experience, longevity, and affordability. Grant examples highlighting the proven record of success in producing agreed-upon deliverables and meeting measurable outcomes include the Texas Computer Cooperative, Center for Effective Districts, Inclusion in Texas Network, Evaluation Capacity, and Special Education Fiscal Support. Key indicators of success within grant examples demonstrate the ability to manage multiple contracted vendors, integrate feedback from educational & family stakeholders, consistently apply a structured project management approach, and contract with university partners and national research experts. ESC-20 deliverables within these grants were produced in alignment with TEA standards, completed within the agreed-upon deadlines, and procured with fidelity to budget requirements. See attached Artifacts #1-5.

**TEA Program Requirements Cont'd**

b. Through the Special Education Liaison grant, ESC-20 has developed a pattern of success in improving school culture by building sustained relationships with LEA staff members. These modeled staff relationships have led to measured improvements in overall academic achievement as measured by state assessment and reductions in disciplinary removals, as measured by indicators within Results Driven Accountability. TEA has recognized the repeated and ongoing success of the ESC-20 Liaison program by providing additional funding to expand the program twice and selecting ESC-20 to participate in the pilot expansion of the Strategic Integration Liaison system. See attached Artifact #6 c. The longstanding partnership with the Center for Health Care Services demonstrates the ability of ESC-20 to effectively implement mental health training, support, and resources. ESC-20 has provided regional open enrollment training in Youth Mental Health First Aid, Adult Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Care, and AS+K About Suicide to Save a Life. In addition, trained staff from the service center have also provided customized Mental Health training to LEAs throughout the region in rural and urban locations. ESC-20 has adopted an internal staffing model that exemplifies the assembly of a School Student Support Program Team. This staffing model includes integrated training between School Health, School Safety, School Counseling, and other critical professional partners. See attached Artifact #7 d. ESC-20 has demonstrated effective implementation of student support team structures for decades using a student case management approach within the Head Start component. Many support services are provided to Head Start children and families through the efforts of the ESC-20 Head Start management team, partnership with school staff, and the integration of community resource agencies. The Case Management System for student support is a collaboration of services that benefit children and families in an effective and timely manner. The goal of a coordinated case plan is to provide the opportunity for the student and family to function at the highest level possible by intentionally connecting them to the planned services needed. Through the coordination of school services and community development, case management services are possible. Case management is a web of service providers that collectively meet to address the individual needs of Head Start children and families. The program management team coordinates key efforts to organize services rendered, document implementation, and measure student progress. This method has been implemented with high rates of effectiveness each year and is currently monitoring 867 enrolled students at Level 1, and 10-15% of enrolled students at Level 2. See attached Artifact #8

**CONTENT:** 2. Describe how the ESC will serve as the statewide Student Support Program content, training, and resource center for all twenty ESCs and participating LEAs. Include a brief description of the Student Support team framework, parents and family engagement playbook, and case management system.

ESC-20 will use existing models to deploy statewide Student Support Program efforts including those used within the Texas Instructional Leadership Initiative & Effective Schools Framework. This deployment includes serving as the primary hub for in-person & online ESC staff training, so each region has personnel certified to support LEAs receiving the Stronger Connections competitive grant award. A website will be developed to maintain access to resources and report data metrics as required. ESC-20 will work with selected technical assistance providers to build a Student Support Team (SST) framework that establishes a statewide understanding of the team structure & purpose. The framework will outline required & recommended membership including parent participation, mental health representatives, administrators, teachers, & nurses/law enforcement/community agencies as needed. It will establish required and recommended professional development such as Behavior Threat Assessment, Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Care, Bullying Prevention, Substance Abuse, Suicide Prevention, and Psychological First Aid. The framework will outline student entry points into the SST process, which may include a referral based on school data sources or outcomes of the Behavior Threat Assessment. A structure will be created in the framework to provide guidance on data collection, generation of a student support plan, connections to community & school resources, and frequency of progress monitoring. The parent and family engagement playbook will be created in multiple languages with the intent to explain the SST process, help families understand warning signs & risk behavior, and connect families to school & community resources. ESC-20 will leverage existing partnerships with organizations such as Communities in Schools San Antonio to assist in building the playbook. A letter of support from CIS-SA is available upon request. A Case Management system will be developed to establish a progress monitoring process for adult responsibilities, document data collection for services provided, establish a recurring meeting cadence, and designate a primary point of contact for elevated reports of concern. The case management system point of contact is established to ensure that implementation efforts are effective, the team is informed of progress, and connections to all needed providers within the school and community are accomplished.



**TEA Program Requirements Cont'd**

**STRUCTURE:** 3. Describe the protocols that the ESC will develop to establish and strengthen a clear link between existing school district support systems and the student support team structure including but not limited to behavior threat assessment, mental health needs, suicide prevention, emotional and behavioral health needs, and other needs that create barriers to positive student outcomes. Describe how the ESC will support the management of technical assistance providers agreed upon deliverables.

ESC-20 will conduct a landscape analysis to determine the integration of existing school district support systems and the Student Support Team (SST) structure designed. This analysis will explain the connections and student entry points/referral pathways into the Student Support Team through existing avenues of district support. The integration will focus on linking the SST to urgent student referrals for ongoing support and monitoring based on outcomes of campus behavior threat assessments which may include student threats of self-harm, suicidal ideation, or intent to harm others. Additionally, a link will be established with the SST based on the outcomes of administrative bullying investigations for both the alleged bully and the recipient of the bullying behavior. Critical analysis and links will be described and identified between the SST and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) committee at the campus level. Understanding the integration, shared responsibilities, and differences between these two campus support systems will be essential in the successful case management and referral process for additional needs as student progress is monitored. The SST will establish a direct referral pathway from teachers, parents, school staff, or students themselves. Identification of students demonstrating mental health needs is a collective effort, and school staff will receive comprehensive training in warning signs and symptoms (substance abuse/use, and patterns of behavioral change impacting daily activities, meaningful relationships, and/or school attendance). Another protocol utilized will be the selection of a campus needs assessment similar to the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System (SHAPE). This will be used to establish a school mental health profile determining what existing supports are available & where expansion opportunities are evident. The ESC will support the management of technical assistance providers and agreed-upon deliverables using a Project Management approach to work production. This will include establishing milestones of all deliverables and activities based on backward planning from the deadline of completion. The project manager will be responsible for creating ongoing checkpoints with individual technical assistance providers at least monthly and convening all contributing technical assistance providers to align the vision and work at least quarterly.

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:** 4. Describe how the ESC will provide professional learning to the twenty ESCs and participating LEAs including content delivery, technical assistance, and resources to effectively implement the Student Support Program.

In collaboration with TEA and selected technical assistance providers, ESC-20 will establish a Center for Student Support training pathway for designated ESC staff from all twenty regions to receive certification in the Student Support Program content. This certification will function as a train-the-trainer (TOT) model, verifying that the ESC staff from each region have met rigorous training standards, modeled training/coaching delivery, and demonstrated the knowledge acquisition required to be able to turn around the content to LEA recipients within their geographic regions. The TOT model will include multiple offerings throughout the year to onboard and certify new ESC staff and will include multiple modalities for participation such as a combination of virtual and in-person coursework. The Center for School Supports Director will lead and facilitate the training implementation and serve as an executive coach for ESC staff needing support during the process. LEAs receiving the Stronger Connections competitive grant will receive localized and direct support from the ESC staff certified in their designated regional affiliation. ESC-20 will also establish a website to house all resources that are public-facing, explain the purpose of the center, provide contact details on how to connect with all twenty service centers for more information and visualize data outcomes as needed. The website may also house a connection to the participating LEA data entry dashboard and contain a section accessed through an ESC login that curates all training materials needed. To maintain effective communication with all twenty ESCs, TEA, and technical assistance partners, ESC-20 will produce a monthly bulletin containing activity progress, reporting on data metrics, and other timely project updates.

**Statutory/Program Requirements Cont'd**

**DATA REPORTING:** 5. Describe the system the Student Support Center will use to support participating LEAs with tracking referrals to the student support team and collecting data on supports provided to students and families to monitor effectiveness. Participating LEAs will be required to report this data to the Texas Education Agency.

ESC-20 will use focus group input to design and iterate key components of a data reporting system. Utilizing a Request for Proposals (RFP) procurement standard, ESC-20 will seek a contracted vendor to develop a digital application and database used as a reporting and analysis container for all data associated with the Student Support Program. The vendor will have proven success in developing customized digital data dashboards, data reporting systems, and educational data integration. The emphasis on vendor experience will also be weighed with a record of high-quality deliverables produced within the required time frame & budget. The data reporting system established will provide LEAs participating in the Stronger Connections grant an accessible format to submit data reporting requirements to the center and TEA. These data reporting elements will include the number of students referred for and receiving support for non-academic needs disaggregated by source of referral, type of need, type of support, level of support, time of year, and length of support provided as measured through the case management system. The data system would benefit from direct integration with existing software systems allowing for data imports of student attendance, behavior referrals, removals from class, and disciplinary outcomes for students identified for the program. Identifying the student entry point into the Student Support Team will be essential in determining the type of data elements needed for individual students. The data reporting system should contain mechanisms to document the entry type, with additional reporting mechanisms needed if the entry was based on an urgent referral due to the outcome of a behavioral threat assessment reporting self-harm, suicidal ideation, or threatened violence toward others. The data reporting system may also be constructed to allow teams to establish a baseline measurement of data associated with the referral (chronic absences, repeated substance use or possession, the intensity of bullying, conduct violations, etc.) to attain reasonable progress and improved outcomes.

**CAPACITY:** 6. Describe the ESC capacity and expertise to fulfill the program requirements.

ESC-20 has demonstrated exceptional capacity and expertise to fulfill the program requirements of this grant opportunity. The service center has adopted an integrated approach to grouping programs serving students with intensive needs together, combining the Special Education & School Support Teams to better understand coordinated school systems and a holistic student experience. The work associated with this grant will be aligned with the School Support Team, which is under the leadership and supervision of ESC-20 employees that are trained mental health providers including a certified school counselor and Licensed Specialist in School Psychology with school-based practitioner experience. The School Support Team at ESC-20 is structured to model a Safe and Supportive Schools Program (SSSP) team at a campus. The ESC-20 consultant team includes two school counselors, a registered nurse, and a campus administrator for school safety. In addition, ESC-20 has the content capacity to provide support through consultants specializing in behavior and discipline, family engagement, and MTSS. ESC-20 has the unique field experience of creating regional Critical Incident Response Cluster Teams, that have received extensive training to deploy to nearby communities and schools in the event of a traumatic crisis. ESC-20 has extensive experience with deploying crisis response through direct services and on-site support following the Sutherland Springs church shooting and the Uvalde CISD Robb Elementary school shooting. ESC-20 will be the most well-versed service center in the state in providing immediate and sustained support to schools, students, and staff following large-scale crisis events. Coordinated response efforts also included collaborative partnerships with community agencies and institutes of higher education. Finally, ESC-20 has the proven capacity to be the trusted source that leads to student success given the longevity of executing grant programs such as the Migrant Curriculum Initiative, Title III Statewide Professional Development, and Title III Web-based Resources for English Learners. ESC-20 has proven to be the definitive choice to serve TEA and the educational community in implementing large-scale and high-profile projects such as the Center for Effective Districts, Special Education Fiscal Support, and the Texas Computer Cooperative. ESC-20 builds a foundation of success on customer service, customer focus, continuous improvement, and employee talent. These service standards will be the cornerstone of all work production affiliated with this grant if selected.



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

**CAPACITY:** 7. How many TEA grants is the ESC currently administering?

**CAPACITY:** 8. How many TEA grant applications does the ESC have in progress (not including this application)?

**Budget Narrative**

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

ESC-20 has identified the cost calculations listed in Part 2 of the documents submitted for the implementation of the Texas Center Student Supports, ensuring alignment of all planned expenditures directly to the goals and objectives of the program. The proposed budget includes collaborative work with representatives from the 20 ESCs to support implementation and training across the state, costs for meeting room rentals at ESC-20 to serve as the host training site location, travel for ESC-20 program staff to visit other ESCs or vendor sites, and general supplies to support overall work execution. Three full-time positions are included in the contracted services category to include a Director, Project Manager, and Technical Specialist that align with the program guidelines and will exclusively support the work of the TCSS. These center staff will be responsible for general operations, vendor partnerships, budgetary oversight, facilitating the development of the required framework and data systems, requesting and compiling LEA data, and ongoing reporting to TEA. To be more efficient in managing project budgets, ESC-20 has adopted a Billable Hours process for allocating staff time and associated costs. Under the Billable Hours process, Administrative & Instructional Services staff payroll and other supporting costs are accounted for in an Internal Service Fund. Annually ESC-20 establishes an hourly billing rate for each professional job classification. Cost estimates in this section for billable hours employees were calculated to support the 27-month duration of the grant cycle. The budget is designed to support the majority of costs in the 6200 object category due to the anticipated need for large-scale vendor contracts and established partnerships to design and implement the deliverables required. Creating essential full-time staff positions and positioning the majority of funds within the grant to create robust partnerships with trusted sources of development and research will enable the Texas Center for Student Supports to fulfill all needs and meet or exceed all program goals defined in the grant guidelines. The majority of funds will be allocated to support payment of technical assistance providers who provide direct support for districts. In the proposed structure, \$199,328 is reserved for Indirect Costs, \$9,898 for General Supplies, \$8,200 for Travel and Operating Costs, and \$2,541,984 is applied to Contracted Services (inclusive of the billable hours salary model).

ESC-20 is implementing two existing grants with similar intent to staff only essential personnel and utilize the majority of funding for deliverable development through vendor agreements, enabling us to provide high level snapshots of how we design and implement budgets that ensure project success. Within the Center for Effective Districts grant, ESC-20 has been awarded \$5,380,000.00. In this structure, \$383,622 is reserved for Indirect Costs, \$4,000 for General Supplies, \$5,000 for Travel, and \$4,987,378 is applied to Contracted Services. Within the Inclusion in Texas Network grant, ESC-20 has been awarded \$1,200,000.00. In this structure, \$63,818 is reserved for Indirect Costs, \$22,393 for General Supplies, \$80,000 for Travel (including non-employee travel costs for all service centers), and \$1,033,789 for Contracted Services.

Funding adjustments within the budget allocation will be made to meet future needs by gathering stakeholder input to determine what needs continue to exist for student supports, identifying effective rates of implementation within the data collected, and creating a sustainability price structure for LEAs opting to engage in future ongoing service partnership with the TCSS beyond the life of the grant.

**Equitable Access and Participation**

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this program.

The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this program.

Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group  Barrier

Group  Barrier

Group  Barrier

Group  Barrier



**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**

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