

IDEA B Discretionary Technical Assistance and Support Grant Opportunity for 2019-2020

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is actively seeking Letters of Interest (LoI) from potential grantees to provide opportunities for specific work toward statewide ***Inclusive Services and Practices for Improved Student Outcomes***. Interested regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) and/or Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) should submit an LoI in the template included in Attachment A to TEA **by September 1, 2018 at 5 pm CDT**. Potential grantees are encouraged to seek cooperative partnerships or collaborative agreements to successfully meet all goals and objectives of the grant. Funding is allocated from IDEA B Discretionary funds and scheduled for implementation in the 2019-2020 school year.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to the 20 regional education service centers, and all institutions of higher education located in Texas. Other nonprofits or for-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply; however, they may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner (encouraged, as applicable).

1.1 Program Description

The ***Inclusive Services and Practices for Improved Student Outcomes*** grant will significantly increase local education agencies' (LEAs) capacity to effectively implement evidence-based models of inclusion and inclusive practices. Both of which have been shown to produce significantly better academic and functional student outcomes than more restrictive models. However, implementing these programs with fidelity is critical to their success. Therefore, the grant awardee will develop a comprehensive and coherent plan for best practice models of inclusive services and practice. This plan will include evidence-based fidelity of implementation evaluation tools that LEAs can use for self- evaluation and reporting progress to stakeholders. The plan will also include professional development and resources geared specifically to support LEAs so that they may move along a continuum until they have reached an exemplary level of implementation and beyond. Existing support systems in the state will be evaluated for effectiveness and alignment to the mission and subsequently either be improved and incorporated, or discontinued.

The content of all resources and professional development materials produced through this grant must be firmly grounded in current literature and policy on special education best practice with explicit citations. All resources must be made available to all stakeholders.

Additional considerations for materials and resources produced through this grant:

- TEA maintains the right to final approval on all materials and resources before publication or presentation.
- All materials and resources will carry the TEA logo in addition to the logo of the grant awardee.
- All materials and resources are the property of TEA and must be provided to TEA at the end of the grant period or upon request.
- All materials or resources intended for use with parents and families will be made available in English, and Spanish.

Grant awardees will make formal quarterly reports to TEA on identified outcomes-based, quantifiable lead measures with lag measure reporting at the end of the grant period. These measures must be

mutually approved by the grantee and TEA and should be clearly proposed in Lol response. Additionally, budget proposals and final budget tables must include line-item/deliverable-based pricing.

1.2 Program Goal

The goal of the *Inclusive Services and Practices for Improved Student Outcomes* is designed to build a statewide culture of high expectations for students with disabilities and significantly improve academic and functional outcomes for students served by special education. This will be accomplished by building LEA capacity to develop and appropriately implement instructional programs that provide meaningful access to inclusive environments and grade-level standards, where appropriate.

1.3 Program Activities

Strong applications will demonstrate the ability and structure for foundational and logistical support to achieve the program goal. Additionally, strong applications will include robust plans for thoughtful planning toward increasing access to and progress in all instructional and extra-curricular activities, continuum of services and service locations, and innovative, evidence-based models that result in quality services and supports.

It is required that the proposed programs contain at a **minimum**, the following:

- Develop a comprehensive plan for the state with regard to best practice for inclusive services and practices including evaluation tools and rubrics
- Professional development and resources to support educators in the development and delivery of specially designed instruction to build a foundation in math and reading, including specific support for educators to address the unique needs of students identified with dyslexia and related disorders
- Professional development and resources targeted to increase LEA capacity in the implementation of models of inclusion supports and practices that promote services to students as opposed to students to services
- Professional development and resources to support educators in the effective use of assistive technology for accommodations to achieve meaningful and full access and involvement in their educational experience
- Professional development and resources to support educators in effective implementation of high-yield instructional strategies and universal design for learning
- Professional development and resources for LEAs and training and resources to parents to effectively support student self-advocacy and self determination

1.5 Program Budget

\$1,000,000

1.6 Timeline

Lols must be submitted electronically to sped@tea.texas.gov by 5pm (CDT) on September 1, 2018 in order to be considered. Hard copy mailed or delivered Lols will not be accepted. Applicants should combine all attachments and documents into one PDF to include a cover sheet and table of contents. Grant awardees will be notified by October 1, 2018 with the grant period to begin July 1, 2019. This is a one-year grant that may be extended for additional years at TEA discretion.

1.7 Closing and Next Steps

Strong applications with a likelihood of award will be innovative in nature, demonstrate clear planning toward stated goals, and focus on producing desired outcomes rather than simply activity completion.

A virtual applicants' conference will be held the week of July 16, 2018. Questions submitted to sped@tea.texas.gov prior to July 13, 2018, will be answered at that time and an FAQ will be published. When submitting questions, applicants should include the name of this grant in the subject line. Applicants should refer to www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED for details and updates regarding the applicants' conference and this request for Lol generally.