REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

# Program Guidelines

# 2021-2024 Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS)

Authorized by CARES Act, American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Section 2001, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund; and General Appropriations Act (GAA), Article IX, Section 18.15 (TCLAS), 87th Texas Legislature

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

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# Contents

# Introduction to the Program Guidelines

TEA, as the pass-through entity[1], is the grantee[2] from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities[3] such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees[4]. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

This part of the request for application (RFA), Program Guidelines, is to be used in conjunction with the General and Fiscal Guidelines and the schedule instructions. The Standard Application System (SAS) consists of all schedules (i.e., forms) to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding. The application to which these instructions refer must be submitted electronically through the eGrants system.

For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

## Requirement for User Name and Password

To access eGrants and apply for this grant, you must have access to the TEA Login (TEAL). Follow these steps to apply for user names and passwords on TEAL:

1. Visit the TEA Login (TEAL) page of the TEA website. Select Request New User Account to begin the process of applying for a TEAL account online.

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[1] Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

[2] Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term "grantee" does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

[3] Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

[4] Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

2. Once you have been assigned a TEA Login (TEAL) account, log into TEAL and under Self-Service select My Application Accounts.

3. The My Accounts tab will open. Select Request New Account and find eGrants in the list and follow the instructions to submit your request.

## Application Submission through eGrants

Submit the application for this grant program electronically through the TEA eGrants system. Refer to the General and Fiscal Guidelines for more specific information about accessing eGrants and obtaining the required TEA Login (TEAL) user ID and password.

Applications must be submitted as follows:

- Those submitted by public LEAs must be signed electronically by the superintendent of the school district or a designee.

- Applications submitted by regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) must be signed electronically by the executive director or a designee.

- Applications submitted by open-enrollment charter schools must be signed electronically by the chief operating officer of the school or a designee.

- Campuses and campus charter schools must apply through their public school district, and the application must be signed electronically by the superintendent or designee.

## Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The General and Fiscal Guidelines provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs. Throughout the Program Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines. **It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines when preparing your application.**

## US Department of Education Appropriations

The following is provided in compliance with the US Department of Education Appropriations Act:

| Category | Amount |
|---|---|
| Total funds available for this project | ESSER III (5280): Approximately $368,222,430 GR (0387): Approximately $345,550,407 Total: Approximately $713,772,837 |
| Percentage to be financed with federal funds | Approximately 52% |
| Amount of federal funds | ESSER III (5280): Approximately $368,222,430 |
| Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources | Approximately 48% |
| Amount of nonfederal funds | GR (0387): Approximately $345,550,407 |

# Grant Timeline

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the TEA Grant Opportunities page. If a report due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report will be due the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

# Grant at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

## Authorizing Legislation

This grant program is authorized by the CARES Act, American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund; and General Appropriations Act (GAA), Article IX, Section 18.15 (TCLAS), 87th Texas Legislature.

## Purpose of Program

**Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS)** is a set of targeted supports available to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) **to accelerate student learning in the wake of COVID 19** utilizing funds from the state discretionary ESSER III allocation and general revenue appropriated in the 87th Texas Legislature**.** Through TCLAS, TEA aims to:

- Provide a **strategic approach** to accessing learning acceleration supports that meet the local needs of students, teachers, communities, and school systems

- Leverage **statewide resources** to allow for deeper, more targeted supports and services for LEAs at a lower cost to the state
- Develop **coordinated and coherent supports** for LEAs based on needs identified by Texas educators for the coming school year

This grant may include a combination of direct funds to LEAs and in-kind awards via direct supports from TEA.

The **Learning Acceleration Framework** is designed to support LEAs in the prioritization of strategies, decisions, and supports aimed at accelerating student learning. The framework is divided into **five strategies**.

1. **Strategic planning and performance management** to prioritize, launch, and continuously improve learning acceleration strategies.
2. Rigorous, **high-quality instructional materials** designed to make up ground and master grade level TEKS.
3. **Talent pipelines that support teachers** to deliver excellence in the classroom, getting more than one year of growth in one year of time.
4. **More time** for the students most in need, including expanding instructional time in the summer and targeted tutoring.
5. **Innovative school models** to incorporate all aspects of the learning acceleration framework.

# Eligible Applicants

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Eligibility Requirements.

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), including Public School Districts and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools.

## Eligibility List

The entitlement list is posted in the Application and Support Information section of the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page.

## Shared Services Arrangement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed.

# Application Funding

See the following sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

- Grant Funding

- Continuation Funding

- Fund Management

- Use of Funds

## Cost Share or Matching Requirement

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Cost Share/Match Requirement.

There is no cost share or matching requirement for this grant program.

## Limitation of Administrative Funds

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Administrative Costs.

NOTE: Administrative funds include **both** direct administrative costs **and** allowable indirect costs.

### Direct Administrative Costs

TEA limits the amount of direct administrative costs for this grant program to no more than 10% for each federal and state grant awards.

### Indirect Costs

The grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to their current approved unrestricted indirect cost rate for this federally and state funded grant.

To calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant, complete the Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet, posted on the Administering a Grant page, under the Handbooks and Other Guidance section.

### Pre-Award Costs

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Pre-Award Costs.

Funds allocated from ARP ESSER III (5280): Pre-award costs are permitted, if requested, from March 1, 2021, to stamp-in date.

Funds allocated from General Revenue (0387): Pre-award costs are permitted, if requested, from September 1, 2021, to stamp-in date.

# Applicant Assistance

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

# Contacts for Clarifying Information

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, TEA Contacts.

### Program Contact

Alice Keller, Manager of Grant Strategy and Alignment, Division of District Systems and Strategies
alice.keller@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-9788

### Funding Contact

Karyn Gukeisen, Grant Manager, Grants Administration Division
karyn.gukeisen@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8525

## Errata Notices

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Errata Notices.

## Email Bulletins

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Email Bulletins.

# Program Elements

This section provides detailed information about the grant program.

## Program Description

The **Learning Acceleration Framework** is designed to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the prioritization of strategies, decisions, and supports aimed at accelerating student learning. The framework is divided into **five strategies: Strategic Planning, Instructional Materials, Teacher Pipelines, More Time, and Innovative School Models.** These strategies are divided into **ten decision points** for LEAs to consider when selecting support with TCLAS. The application is designed around these ten decisions so LEAs can more easily determine which learning acceleration supports they want to access via TCLAS that meet local needs. Refer to the TCLAS Guidance Document beginning on page 5 for information regarding the decision points.

## Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division Administering a Grant page.

The supplement, not supplant provision does not apply to this grant program.

## Application Requirements and Assurances

This section describes the two types of requirements that applicants must address in the application (such as with a narrative description, an activity timeline, or a checklist) to be eligible to be considered for funding:

See the following sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines:

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)

- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

## Statutory Requirements

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Statutory Requirements.

Per Section 22.0834 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding grant funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Fingerprinting Requirement.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program. The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1.  Comply with reporting requirements.

2.  Complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying."

3.  Have on file with TEA a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).

4.  Comply with the provisions of all applicable acts, regulations, and assurances; the following provisions of Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 81, 82, 84, 97, 98, and 99; the OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485; and the Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

5.  Cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of (i) the Department and/or its Inspector General; (ii) any other federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority; or (iii) TEA.

6.  Records pertaining to the ARP ESSER III award, including financial records related to use of grant funds, will be retained separately from the ESSER I and ESSER II funds.

## TEA Program Requirements

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Program Requirements.

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. The applicant must comply with each of the program requirements listed by Decision Point in the TCLAS Guidance Document beginning on page 53:

1.  The LEA understands that if the above commitments are not met by the LEA or the LEA disengages with the supports/initiatives provided, the TEA reserves the right to terminate the LEA's membership.

2.  The LEA superintendent has approved participation in all supports LEA applies to in application.

3.  The LEA Chief Academic Officer (or equivalent leader) has approved participation.

## Program-Specific Assurances

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Provisions and Assurances.

The program-specific assurances for this grant program are listed in the SAS. Refer to Schedule CS7000—Provisions, Assurances, and Certifications.

# Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

See the [Administering a Grant](#) page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

## Statutorily Allowable Activities:

1. LEA discretion for any activity authorized under:
    a. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
    b. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
    c. Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)
    d. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

2. Providing principals and others school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools;

3. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population;

4. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the LEA that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment;

5. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care

6. Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in LEAs and continuing to employ existing staff of the LEA.

7. Addressing learning loss among LEA students, including low-income students, SWD, English learners, racial & ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care:
    a. …Administering and using high-quality assessments
    b. …Implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students
    c. …Providing information and assistance to parents and families on effectively supporting students
    d. …Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education

## Field Trips

Field trips may be funded under the grant program. Only the following types of field trips are allowable:

- Field trips allowable under the TCLAS Guidance Document

Field Trips will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Field Trips Justification form, refer to the Administering a Grant page.

## Travel Costs for Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

The cost of travel costs for officials such as the executive director, superintendent, or board members may be funded under the grant program. Only the following travel costs are allowable for these positions:

- Travel costs for officials allowable under the TCLAS Guidance Document

## General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- LEAs will follow budget guidance for each decision point as outlined in the TCLAS Grant Budget Summary

# Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

In general, refer to the Budgeting Cost Guidance Handbook on the Administering a Grant page for unallowable costs.

In addition, unallowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

- Debt service (lease-purchase)
- Advisory Council
- Cost of Membership in Any Civic or Community Organization
- Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences
- Out-of-State Travel
- Lobbying or any activity that appears to be lobbying
- Subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of individuals who are not employees of TEA or LEAs
- Expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations
- Stipends for non-employees
- Non-employee costs for conferences
- Travel for students to conferences (does not include field trips)

# Performance Measures

The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance measures:

1. LEAs will meet assurances and performance measures as outlined by decision point in the TCLAS Guidance Document.

# Limits on Contracted Evaluators

When a grantee chooses, or is required under a grant, to hire a contracted evaluator, TEA believes that the evaluator must have the capability to remain independent and objective in carrying out the evaluation. "Independent and objective" implies that there is no influence or control, real or perceived, exerted on the evaluator by any person who is involved in the provision of program services. Therefore, the only way in which a contracted evaluator can be truly independent and objective is not to be involved in any manner with the provision of program services or activities. Otherwise, the evaluator is, at least in part, evaluating its own services.

In addition, TEA is aware that some grant writers develop and design the grant program, write the entire grant application, and then wish to evaluate the grant program. TEA also believes that this scenario poses a conflict of interest for the evaluator, in that the evaluator is evaluating the grant program that he or she designed, developed, and wrote. Again, it is not possible for the evaluator to function independently and objectively if the evaluator performed in this capacity. It is certainly acceptable for the grant writer to receive some information from a potential evaluator to include in the evaluation section of the grant application with regard to an appropriate evaluation plan or design, but communication between the grant writer and evaluator should be limited to that specific topic.

Applicants should make every effort to ensure that contracted evaluators be independent and objective.

Program evaluation costs must be charged as a direct cost to the grant program.

# Federal Grant Requirements

## Equitable Access and Participation

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Equitable Access and Participation.

This requirement does apply to this federally funded grant program.

## Private Nonprofit School Participation

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Private Nonprofit School Participation.

This requirement does not apply to this federally funded grant program.

## Maintenance of Effort

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Maintenance of Effort.

This requirement does not apply to this federally funded grant program.

# Application Elements

This section describes the requirements and attachments that must be addressed in and included with the application.

## Required Attachments

See the following sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

- Fiscal-Related Documentation Required to Be on File

- Required Fiscal-Related Attachments

- Required Program-Related Attachments

This section describes the two types of attachments that may be required to be submitted with the application: fiscal-related attachments and program-related attachments.

### Required Fiscal-Related Attachments

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Required Fiscal-Related Attachments, for a general description of fiscal-related documents that can be required as attachments to the application.

For a list of the fiscal-related attachments required for this grant application, refer to the Program Information section of the main eGrants page for this grant. Required attachments are noted "Attachment" in the list of RFA documents provided in the Program Information section.

### Required Program-Related Attachments

No program-related attachments are required for this grant program.

### Adding Attachments

The instructions in the following sections describe how to attach files to an eGrants application.

#### General Instructions

The size of each attachment cannot exceed 10MB. If you have a larger file, use a different scanning setting or zip the file to make it take up less space.

Documents only need to be attached once. Do not attach duplicate documents with each amendment. Only attach more than once if the attachment is being revised.

#### Naming Attachments

Name the files you are going to attach with no spaces (for example, 501C3letter.doc or 501C3_letter.doc). Use a meaningful name that identifies the specific document.

Make sure that each attachment has a file extension (.pdf, .doc, .rtf, .xls, .bmp, .zip, .txt).

Note that attachments with very long names may not be able to be uploaded. If you have difficulty, try renaming the file and starting over.

## Scanning Documents

If a document must be scanned to create an electronic copy, use the following hints to ensure that the document size is as small as possible:

- Use an OCR or DPI setting of 200 DPI.

- Try to avoid creating .jpg files. If possible, create PDF documents with the scanner.

## Zipping Files

If your files are too large, add them to a zip file to save space (download a free version of WinZip and find instructions on creating zip files).

## Attaching Files to an eGrants Application

1. Ensure that the security level for your internet browser is set to Medium (Tools > Internet Options, Security tab).

2. On the Grant Summary Table of Contents, select the Attach File icon.

3. Consult the instructions for naming files, outlined under Technical Instructions on the Attach File Page.

4. Ensure the document is saved on your computer according to the naming instructions.

5. Enter the Document Title of the attachment.

6. Select the Browse button. A standard Windows browser appears. Find the file.

7. Select Attach.

8. Select Refresh to see the name of the document in the Documents Submitted in This Version pane. If the attachment does not appear, you may have to rename your document with a shorter name and start over.

9. Repeat this process to attach all your documents.