

Community Partnerships Grants Letter of Interest

May 28, 2021

TO THE LEA / DISTRICT and/or SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED

Re: Competitive Letter of Interest (LOI) for Community Partnerships Grants Program

I. PURPOSE

The Texas Education Agency is preparing to award Community Partnerships/Student Success Initiative grants to Texas public schools districts and open enrollment charter schools to support the creation of innovative school and community partnerships. The vision of Community Partnerships is to create great schools in supported and supportive communities. The grant will provide support and technical assistance to schools and community partnerships for wrap-around and holistic services for students. The grantee must work with technical assistance providers to identify other community organizations that will help plan and implement innovative and educationally sound ideas that contribute to the achievement and well-being of students in the schools and community. This collaborative approach will deliver services that increase the competency within a community to effectively serve and support students and their families.

Eligible entities are Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with schools in a feeder pattern that have at least one school with a D or F rating in state accountability and have an average of 85% economically disadvantaged students. The proposals of the LEAs are intended to support public schools or open enrollment charter schools that meet the program's eligibility criteria outlined in this document.

A. Background Information

Consistent with the General Appropriations Act, 87th Legislature, Texas Education Agency Rider 43 Student Success Initiative, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will award grants to schools with high percentages of students who do not perform satisfactorily on relevant state assessments, and serve the most academically struggling neighborhoods, as determined by the Commissioner of Education. The vision of the grant is to create great schools in supported and supportive communities. The schools receiving these grants must implement a comprehensive support program in a feeder pattern of schools that increases the number of students performing on grade level by leveraging academic, community, and governmental supports. Awards shall be prioritized based on applications that demonstrate a commitment to improved student outcomes on clearly identified performance measures.

B. Eligibility Requirements for the LEA or School

The purpose of this program is to support significant improvements in educational and developmental outcomes for children and youth who live in distressed communities by providing access to great schools and creating strong partnerships to increase family and community support that will prepare students to receive an excellent education from early learning and progressing to college and a career. Eligible entities are Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with schools in a feeder pattern that have at least one school with a D or F rating in state accountability and have an average of 85% economically disadvantaged students. All LEAs, regardless of size, must have at least one school in a feeder pattern of schools that is Improvement Required or previously Improvement Required.

C. Project Description and Requirements

The grant is designed to provide support, leadership, and guidance to designated schools in a feeder pattern and their communities to ensure fidelity of implementation and innovation for community partnerships. The following sections provide applicants additional information.

1) Grant Phases and Funding

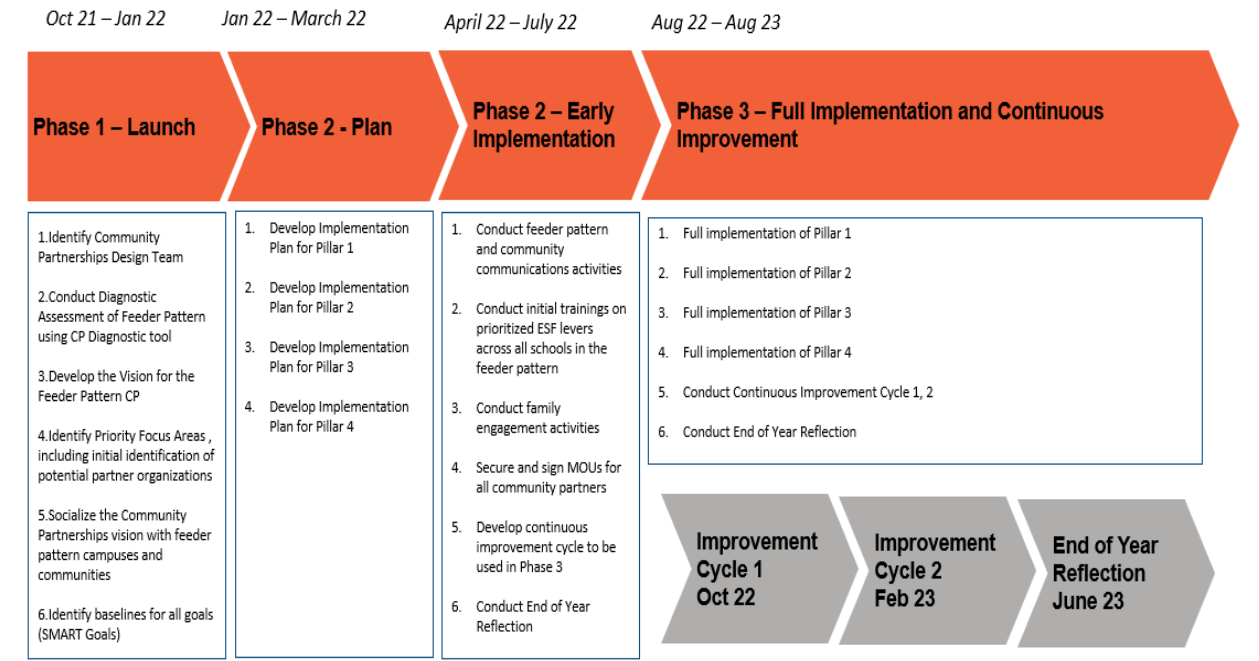
All application proposals must address implementation plans in all phases of the Community Partnerships grants. Funding will be distributed according to the following three grant phases.

- a) **Year 1**– The TEA will select at least six communities to receive up to \$200,000 in initial Planning Grants.
- b) **Year 2** – Of the communities with planning grants, the TEA will select at least six communities to receive up to \$400,000 in additional funds for the Full Implementation Phase of the grant. The TEA will select communities based on the quality of initial implementation plans and the ability to show progress toward the predetermined outcomes.

2) Timeline

The following visual represents the expected timeline of the grant phases described above. The timeline is an estimate and is subject to change by TEA.

Phases in a Timeline



3) Conferences

The TEA is currently planning to host the following conferences throughout all phases of the grant. The conference list of activities and dates are subject to change at the discretion of the TEA. Grantees are expected to attend all conferences.

Item	Description	Description	Participants	Location	Estimated Timing	Timing Rationale
1	Conference 1: Partnership Planning	Review planning phase expectations and activities; discuss launch of partnerships	Full Group	Austin	Spring 2022	Bring together Design Teams
3	Conference 2: Implementation Best Practices	Review best practices; discuss barriers to date	Full Group	Austin	Fall 2022	Bring together Design Teams
5	Conference 3: Sustainability Planning	Enhance sustainability plan as grant nears completion	Full Group	Austin	Spring 2023	Bring together Design Teams

4) Inspiring Analogy

The vision of Community Partnerships is to create great schools in supported and supportive communities. The ultimate goal is to build community strength and provide families in a feeder pattern with effective schools and access to high quality coordinated programs for social services, health, and academic support.

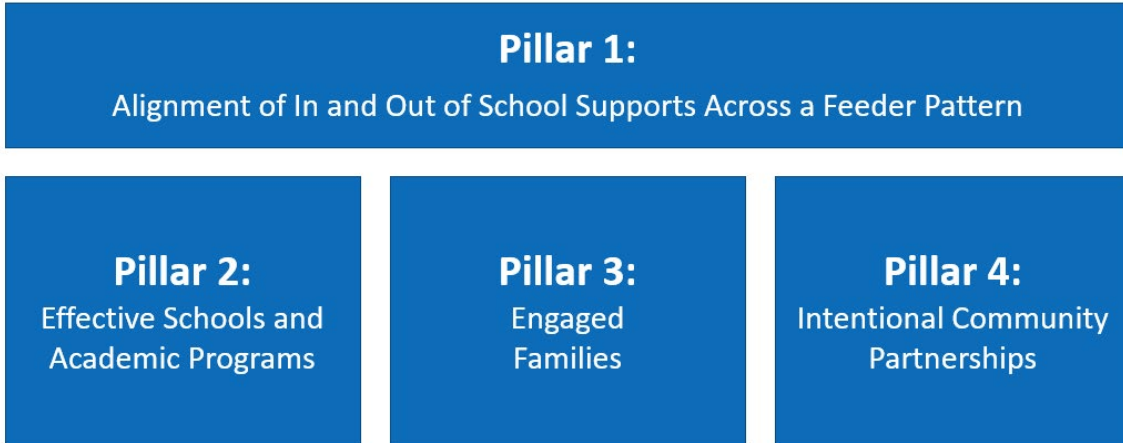
LEA's are expected to create a pipeline of wrap-around and holistic services for their students, families, and the community. These services will exist as deliverables throughout the feeder pattern of schools to assist with meeting the needs of the children. The inspiring analogy for the Community Partnerships initiative is related to the work of the Harlem Children's Zone for whole child education. School districts participating in the Community Partnerships grant initiative will visit the Harlem Children's Zone during the first year of the grant and will construct its pipeline of support and services like the image depicted below.



5) The Community Partnerships Framework

The framework consists of 4 Pillars with each one serving a distinct function. The 4 Pillars are supported by strong project managers with identified personnel assigned to each pillar to assist with the planning and implementation activities. An image of the Community Partnerships framework is below.

Community Partnerships Framework (The What)



6) Implementation Models

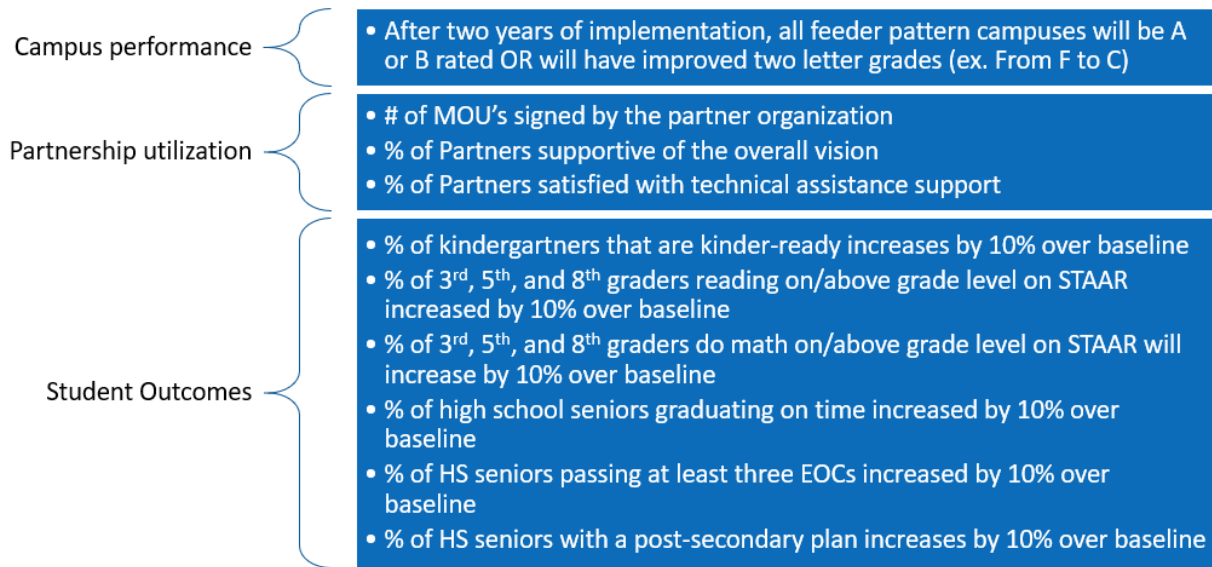
The LEA must follow the feeder pattern implementation model as a requirement to participate in the grant initiative. The Texas Education Agency expects the LEA to develop a vision in local context, and the Community Partnerships design deliverables must be implemented with fidelity by the design team according to the framework. The applicants shall, however, provide a clear description of the implementation approach they seek to execute when they submit the Letter of Interest. Applicants must adhere to the model below:

- a) **Feeder Pattern Improvements** – Districts are seeking to improve outcomes in a feeder pattern, inclusive of Pre-K, serving students across multiple schools in the designated community.

7) Outcome Goals

The Texas Education Agency has selected a set of minimum required goals in advance to depict expectations of a successful program across a feeder pattern of schools. All partners are expected to work together to achieve the stated goals in the selected category. While these outcomes are required to be considered a successful program, schools in the feeder pattern and community partners will have the flexibility to determine how outcomes will be achieved through different partnership strategies and approaches.

Community Partnerships Initiative Outcome Goals



8) Required Use of TEA Approved Technical Assistance Providers

Selected grantee LEAs and communities will be required to complete plans for Pillars I, II, III, and IV of the Community Partnerships Framework during each phase of the grant to demonstrate progress towards academic outcomes. These plans will be evaluated by TEA, or a TEA approved vendor, prior to the end of each phase to determine if the grantees receive the next round of funding. To ensure grantees are completing the plans with high fidelity, the grantees will be required to collaborate and plan with the state-approved technical assistance provider while monitoring grant activities by utilizing a fidelity of implementation tracker. These activities will be reported to TEA on a monthly basis.

LEAs will work collaboratively with technical assistance providers and other community organizations to diagnose, plan, and implement innovative and educationally sound ideas that contribute to the improvement of school achievement and the well-being of participating schools in the feeder pattern. TEA is currently in the process of identifying the vendors as the preferred TEA state approved technical assistance vendors for this grant.

Once TEA selects the state-approved vendors, an organizational overview of the technical assistance vendors will be provided to the selected LEA grantees. The LEA grantees will then be assigned a vendor to support them in the development of implementation plans that are required as part of the grant. Grantees will work directly with the vendor to outline the statement of work that meets their specific needs.

9) Matching Funds

LEAs receiving the Community Partnerships grants at any phase must agree to implement the program phase performance tasks and activities and provide matching funds of 20% of the grant award.

II. LOI CRITICAL DATES FOR APPLICANTS

Please review the critical dates below in the chart below and follow the submission instructions listed for each step.

TEA will review the application proposals and make selections based on school readiness levels and high-quality response submissions to the Community Partnerships LOI. Successful proposers will be contacted regarding timeline, decision points, and next steps.

Date	Event
May 28, 2021	LOI available
June 8, 2021	Last date to submit FAQs to TEA contact person. General and Fiscal Guidelines , Frequently Asked Questions; submit to Harold.Wright@tea.texas.gov
June 11, 2021	FAQs posted to TEA Grant Opportunities page
June 11, 2021	Notice of Intent to Submit a Response due to the TEA no later than 5:00 PM. Send notice to Harold.Wright@tea.texas.gov
July 1, 2021	Due date for the LOI application, which may be submitted via email to competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov ; the LOI application must be received by 11:59 p.m., Central Time. See General and Fiscal Guidelines , <i>LOI Application Due Date and Time</i>
July 6, 2021– August 13, 2021	LOI review period See General and Fiscal Guidelines , <i>LOI Review Process</i>
August 20, 2021	Anticipated award announcement
October 1, 2021	Beginning date of grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines , <i>Grant Period</i>
June 2, 2022	Final date to submit an amendment (if selected for funding)
August 31, 2022	Ending date of grant (if selected for funding) See General and Fiscal Guidelines , <i>Grant Period</i>

If any assistance is needed, please contact Dr. Harold Wright, Director of Community Partnerships at Harold.Wright@tea.texas.gov.

A. Information

All interested applicants should review the TEA SSI/Community Partnerships website located at tcpschools.org to learn more about the initiative.

B. Requests for Additional Information

To ensure that no prospective proposer may obtain a competitive advantage because of acquisition of information unknown to other prospective proposers, any additional information, that is different from or in addition to information provided in this LOI will be provided only in response to written inquiries.

The TEA will not be bound by any communication with Proposers other than the written addenda issued by the Agency.

III. OVERVIEW OF REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS

A. The Application Requirements

The application templates are included as attachments in the “**To The Administrator Addressed Letter.**” Please be sure to complete all attachments which are outlined in the bulleted items below.

All selected grantees must adhere to the following requirements of the grant:

- Comply with any additional general requirements from TEA to ensure grantees are working towards the grant outcomes for the project
- Work with at least **three** partners through the duration of the grant. Of the three partners, at least one must be a community partner for after school programming, one must be an academic partner, and one must be a government partner per Rider 43
- Attend all TEA sponsored conferences and spotlight meetings held during the duration of the grant
- Attend the Harlem Children’s Zone 3 Day Institute
- Cooperate with the TEA to share promptly any and all data when requested including completing program evaluation at the conclusion of the grant
- Grantees must designate and provide for a project manager who will be available to dedicate at least 50 percent of his/her time to implementing the plan, including but not limited to overseeing TEA required performance tasks, coordinating with community and government partners, and completing all other TEA project requests
- LEAs receiving the Community Partnerships grants at any phase must agree to implement the program phase performance tasks and activities and provide matching funds of 20% of the grant award.

B. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be selected based on the ability of each Proposer to carry out all the requirements contained in the Letter of Interest.

The following diagram shows the scoring criteria and associate points that will be used to review responses to the Letter of Interest.

Item	Community Partnerships Grant Scoring Criteria	Possible Points
1	Quality of Program Description	50
1.1	Clearly articulated project goals and target outcomes	10
1.2	Clearly articulated implementation model and supporting rationale	10
1.3	Describes the strategies within the implementation model to support goal attainment	10
1.4	Describes current activities completion and plans for deeper implementation	10
1.5	Describes the type of community partnerships that will support addressing priorities based on the needs assessment.	10
2	Community Partnerships Initiative Planning	30
2.1	A detailed description of completed activities in preparation for the planning phase of the Community Partnerships Initiative	10
2.2	Describes how milestones of the project will be monitored over time	10
2.3	A description of the management structures and tools to monitor milestone progress and completion	10
3	Quality of Management Plan	40
3.1	Description of the leadership support structure that will ensure program implementation	10
3.2	Describes how stakeholders will be including in executing the initiative	10
3.3	Describes the resources that will be used to match grant funding	10
3.4	Describes how the LEA will sustain the program beyond the grant life cycle	10
4	Quality of Data Collection and Program Evaluation	20
4.1	The LEA designs and proposes a set of fidelity of implementation metrics to ensure on-track implementation and program goals achievement	10
4.2	Describes the process for collecting and reporting formative and summative data to local stake holders and to the Texas Education Agency	10
5.0	School Commitment	40
5.1	Explains the school mission and vision aligned to how it intends to achieve the predetermined goals of the grant initiative	10
5.2	Explains how Community Partnerships fits into its overall strategies for school improvement	10
5.3	School describes how it will leverage the Community Partnerships initiative to improving achievement levels for all students	10
5.4	Describes its campus leadership personnel and other resources that will support implementation of Community Partnerships.	10
	TOTAL	180