

Request for Application

Program Guidelines

2025-2026 Elementary Reading Initiative

Authorized by General Appropriations Act (GAA), Article III, Rider 39, 88th Texas Legislature

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Introduction to the Program Guidelines

TEA, as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities³ 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 subgrantees⁴. 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 any application instructions. The Standard Application System (SAS) consists of Application Part 1 (PDF – narrative schedules) and Application Part 2 (Excel – budget schedules) to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding.

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

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.

Errata Notices

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Errata Notices.

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.

Contact for Clarifying Information

Grant Program Contact

Chris DeWitt, Director of System Support
Division of System Support
christopher.dewitt@tea.texas.gov

Funding Contact

Eleanor Blais, Grant Manager
Grants Administration Division
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Phone: (512) 936-2570

U.S. Department of Education and/or State Appropriations

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

| Category | Amount |
|---|------------------|
| Total funds available for this project | \$500,000 |
| Percentage to be financed with federal funds | 0% |
| Amount of federal funds | \$0 |
| Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources | 100% |
| Amount of nonfederal funds | \$500,000 |

Grant Timeline

Due dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, are available in the Critical Events section listed on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. Grantees are responsible for regularly monitoring the webpage for updated grant information and for meeting all due dates and other grant requirements.

Grant at a Glance

This section provides detailed information about the grant program.

Program Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

The Elementary Reading Initiative (ERI) provides districts with Technical Assistance to support districts leaders, campus leaders, and educators to implement high-quality instructional materials and research based instructional strategies, develop effective intervention systems, and manage continuous improvement cycles. This grant will be supplemental to existing requirements for campuses and districts and target districts with 1,000-12,500 students and at least 40% economically-disadvantaged students system-wide.

Eligible Applicants

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

The eligible applicant is Region 13 Education Service Center (ESC).

Shared Services Arrangement

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

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are allowed.

Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) may serve as fiscal agents for a SSA for this grant.

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.

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Department of Grant Compliance and Administration's [Training and Other Resources](#) page.

The supplement, not supplant provision does apply to 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 15% of the total grant award.

Indirect Costs

For this state-funded grant, the grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to **the lesser** of its current, approved restricted indirect cost rate or 15%.

To calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant, complete the [Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet](#), located on the Grants Administration Division's [Grant Resources](#) page.

Pre-Award Costs

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Pre-Award Costs.

Pre-award costs are permitted, if requested, from March 1, 2025, to stamp-in date.

Application Requirements and Assurances

This section identifies the types of requirements in which applicants must comply to be eligible for funding:

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)
- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)
- Texas Grant Management Standards (requirements defined by the state for Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) and limited other applicants)

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.

TEA Program Requirements

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

Program Guidelines

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. Promote an innovative approach to elementary reading in Texas.
2. Meet weekly with the Division of System Support to present progress on performance measures and review expenditures.
3. Manage procurement processes to identify and select qualified providers to support ERI technical assistance providers.
4. Process contracts, invoices, and reimbursements associated ERI activities.
5. Coordinate on logistics for ERI-related meetings, conferences, or other events.
6. Execute shared services agreements with ERI partner districts for approved ERI expenses.
7. The grant program will be funded by reimbursement once the NOGA has been issued and the grantee submits payment requests through the Expenditure Reporting (ER) system. See [Expenditure Reporting](#).

Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS)

See the [TxGMS](#) for detailed requirements. In general, the TxGMS apply to Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) and limited other applicants. The TxGMS do not apply to school districts or open-enrollment charter schools.

In general, the TxGMS require state-funded grants to follow federal Uniform Grant Guidelines.

Program-Specific Assurances

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Provisions and Assurances.

The program-specific assurances for this grant program are listed in the Application Part 1.

Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

Refer to the [Budgeting Costs Guidance Handbook](#) on the Grants Administration Division's [Grant Resources](#) page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds for this grant include only the following:

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- Payroll costs

- Professional and contracted services
- Consumable and durable supplies and materials
- Debt services (lease liabilities for terms greater than 12 months) — allowable costs include:
 - Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITA) — Principal Costs (6514)
 - Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITA) — Interest Costs (6526)
- Capital outlay
- Travel costs for ERI partner district representatives
- Shared services agreements for approved ERI expenses

Other Allowable Operating Costs Requiring Specific Approval in the Grant Application (6400)

Out-of-State Travel

Out-of-state travel costs are allowable. Out-of-state travel costs should be minimal. Travel costs are allowable as long as the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items are only incurred by employees on official business of the grantee and follow the grantee's regular business operations and written travel policy.

Out-of-state travel will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Justification for Out-of-State Travel form, refer to the [Forms for Prior Approval, Disclosure, and Justification](#) page.

Stipends for Non-Employees Other Than Those Included in 6419

Stipends for non-employees other than those included in 6419 may be funded under the grant program. Stipends for non-employees will require pre-authorization in writing. To access the pre-authorization form for participant support costs, refer to the [Forms for Prior Approval, Disclosure, and Justification](#) page.

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

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

- Superintendent and designee(s)
- Chief Academic Officer and designee(s)
- School Board members

Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences

Conferences may be hosted or sponsored under the grant program. Conferences must be managed to minimize costs to the grant award. The following types of conferences may be allowable:

- ERI-related conferences and events
- ERI-related design sessions
- ERI-related learning visits

Hosting or sponsoring of conferences will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Justification for Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences form, refer to the [Forms for Prior Approval, Disclosure, and Justification](#) page.

Advisory Council

An advisory council may be funded under the grant program. Only the following types of advisory council costs may be allowable:

- Travel costs for ERI advisory council(s), design committees, or equivalent groups

Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

Refer to the [Budgeting Costs Guidance Handbook](#) on the Grants Administration Division's [Grant Resources](#) page for general guidance on unallowable costs.

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

- Debt services (lease liabilities for terms greater than 12 months) — unallowable costs include:
 - Capital Lease Liability — Principal Costs (6512)
 - Capital Lease Liability — Interest Costs (6522)
 - Interest on Debt Costs (6523)
- Audit services for state-funded grants
- Travel for Students to Conferences (Does Not Include Field Trips)
- Field trips
- Non-employee costs for conferences
- Cost of membership in any civic or community organization
- Any activity not specified above in the Allowable Activities and Use of Funds section

Performance Measures

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

1. Meet 100% of identified project deadlines for technical assistance initiatives
2. 95% of technical assistance recipients rate technical assistance providers as meets or exceeds expectations on technical assistance provider surveys

Attachments

There are two types of attachments that may be required to be submitted with your application:

Required Fiscal-Related Attachments

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

Required Program-Related Attachments

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

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