

Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities (LASO) 2024

2024-2026 Effective Schools Framework- Focused
Support (ESF-FSG) Grant
Program Guidelines

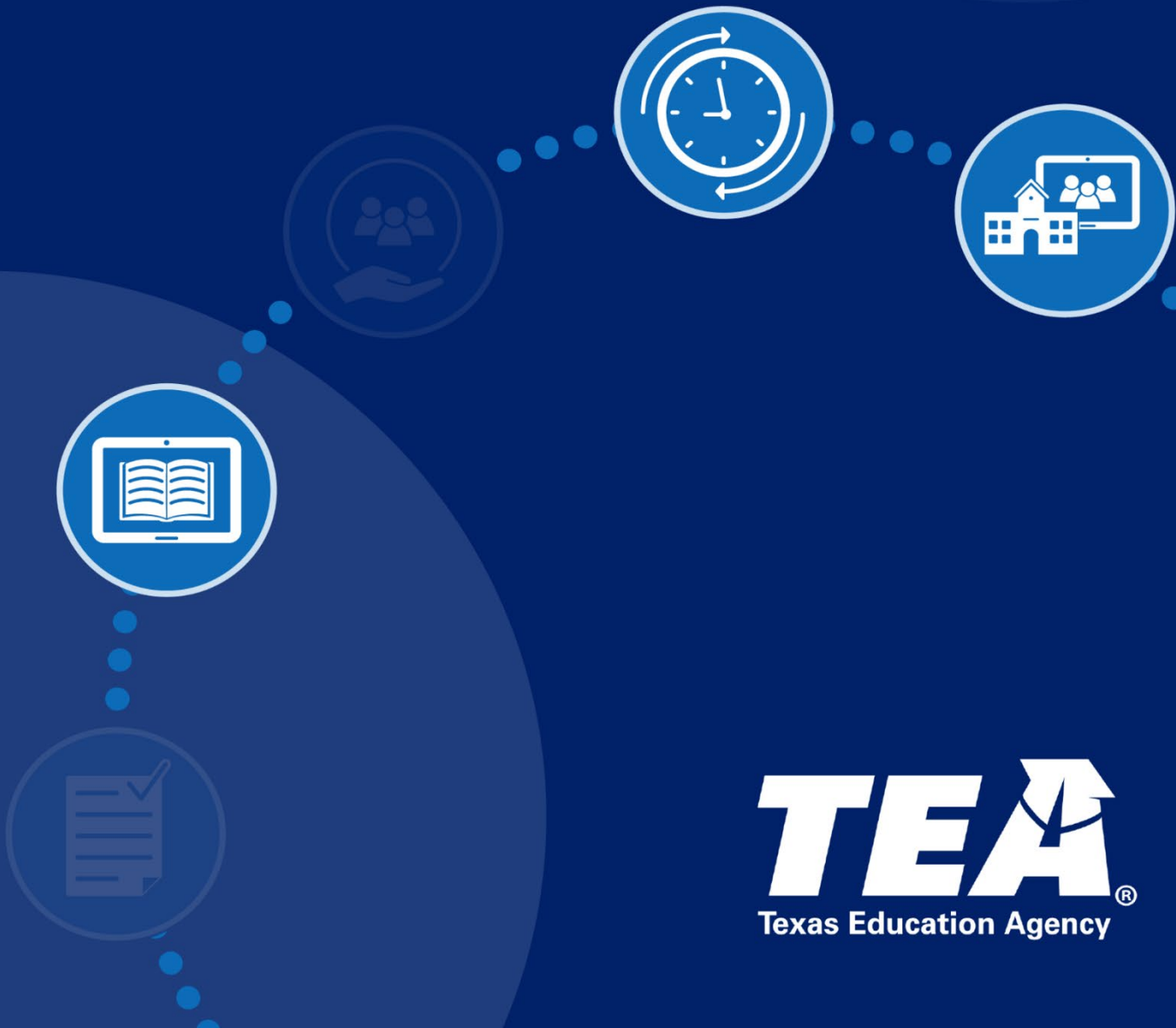


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Grant Program Guidelines

Grant Name as it will appear on the TEA Grant Opportunities Page	2024-2026 Effective Schools Framework-Focused Support (ESF-FSG) Grant
Application Due Date	April 1, 2024; 11:59p.m. CST
Program Authority	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), P.L. 114-95, Section 1003, School Improvement

Introduction

The Texas Education Agency (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, open-enrollment 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 document **MUST** be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and the specific program instructions. The Standard Application consists of all forms to be completed 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 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.**

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.

Overview of the Process

The following steps provide a high-level overview of the process for responding to a grant opportunity, including submitting an application, and being selected for funding:

1. TEA publishes grant application and supporting documents on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) webpage.
2. Eligible applicants submit grant application via Qualtrics to TEA by the specified deadline on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) webpage.
3. Grant applications are reviewed and scored. Note: Applicants may be required to attend an oral interview or respond to additional questions regarding their application.
4. TEA announces applicants selected for funding on the TEA [Grants Awarded Data](#) webpage.
5. **Awarded applicants will be required to submit an eGrants application for funding.**
6. TEA staff conducts budget negotiations on the eGrants application.
7. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) will be issued upon successful completion of the negotiation process.

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

The following is provided in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education Appropriations Act:

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Total funds available for this project	\$55,000,000
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	\$55,000,000
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	\$0

Applicant Assistance

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

Contact for Clarifying Information

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *TEA Contacts*.

The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions:

Division of School Improvement
SIdivision@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-5226

Errata Notices

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

Timeline

DATE	EVENT
February 15th, 2024	Grant application available, ESF FSG individual application links will be emailed to Superintendents on February 15 th , 2024.
Friday, February 23, 2024	General Webinar recording release. Webinar Link on School Improvement Grants Website
March 1, 2024	Deadline to submit questions for FAQ. Questions must be submitted to SIDivision@tea.texas.gov
March 8, 2024	FAQ Publishing The FAQs for this grant program will be posted to the TEA Grant Opportunities webpage no later than the date listed on the Grant Timeline. Applicants may email their questions to the SI Division central inbox at SIDivision@tea.texas.gov
April 1, 2024; 11:59 p.m. CST	Due date for the application. The application must be received by the TEA by 11:59 p.m. Central Time. Please see the SI Website for more information. <i>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Application Due Date and Time</i>
April 2, 2024, to April 30, 2024	Application review period. <i>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Review Process</i>
May 22, 2024	Anticipated award announcement, eGrants application opens.
July 1, 2024	Beginning date of grant (if selected for funding) <i>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Grant Period</i>
July 1, 2026	Final date to submit an amendment (if selected for funding)
September 30, 2026	Ending date of grant (if selected for funding) <i>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Grant Period</i>

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. If a due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the date will be on 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 is authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), P.L. 114-95, Section 1003, School Improvement. This grant is funded through the Title I, Part A, Improving Basic programs operated by Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Any recipient of this grant must be eligible for and receive Title I, Part A funds.

Where to Submit the Grant Application

ESF-FSG individual application links will be emailed to Superintendents on February 15, 2024. Please see the [SI Website](#) for more information.

Purpose of Program

The ESF Focused Support Grant provides resources and support to LEAs to ensure that campuses identified for improvement reach full implementation of the Foundational Essential Actions in the ESF to significantly and sustainably improve student outcomes.

Title I, 1003 ESF-Focused Support Grant funds are supplemental to the Title I, Part A funds. These funds must only be used to support LEA and school- level improvement efforts to directly benefit the awarded Comprehensive, Targeted or Additional Targeted schools. LEAs may reserve up to 30% of the total awarded funds at the district level to assist students who will be entering and/or have exited the federally identified campuses to address the gaps that were created on the Comprehensive, Targeted or Additional Targeted campus(es). These campuses must be Title I Served and be within one level in the direct feeder pattern of the awarded campus(es).

Districts will engage in an ESF Diagnostic that results in a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) and select and work with a [Vetted Improvement Program](#) (VIP) that has been approved to support one or more of the Essential Actions (EAs) identified for prioritization in the diagnostic. The LEA will select a VIP and will confirm their availability.

The grant will fund applicants during a 2-year grant period ending on September 30, 2026. Districts must satisfactorily complete required elements of the ESF-Focused Support Grant program Guidelines and provide data and information to the Texas Education Agency as requested.

Eligible Applicants

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Eligibility To Apply*

- Eligible applicants are LEAs with Title I served campuses with federal identifications at the time of application (Comprehensive Identified, Comprehensive Progress, Targeted Support, Additional Targeted Support in the 2023 federal accountability identification).
- Campuses must remain in operation throughout the grant cycle and remain Title I served for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years.
- A campus may not receive funding concurrently from another ESF Focused Support Grant or any School Action Fund grant, School Redesign grant, or a School Transformation grant.

Education Service Centers (ESCs) are not eligible to apply

Shared Services Arrangement

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed for this grant program.

Application Attachments

This section describes the required attachments that must be included with the application.

Required Attachments

See the following section of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Required Program-Related Attachments*

There are no required program-related attachments for this program.

Application Requirements and Assurances

This section describes the types of requirements that applicants must assure adherence to to be eligible to be considered for funding:

- 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 TEC §22.0834, 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](#), *Program Requirements*.

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

Districts will engage in an ESF Diagnostic that results in a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) and select and work with a [Vetted Improvement Program](#) (VIP) that has been approved to support one or more of the Essential Actions (EAs) identified for prioritization in the diagnostic. The LEA will select a VIP and will confirm their availability

Program-Specific Assurances

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

The program-specific assurances are listed on the application.

The following assurances apply to this program. To meet the requirements of the program, the applicant must comply with these assurances. Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2024-2026 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines.
4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024-2026 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
5. The applicant provides assurance that they accept and will comply with the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances.
6. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.
7. Title I served Federally Identified campuses awarded this grant will engage in the Effective Schools Framework (ESF) continuous improvement process, including an ESF Diagnostic if the campus has not received a diagnostic in the last three years, and create a plan to be submitted to TEA that addresses

- how they will increase the implementation level of Essential Actions (EA) identified in the ESF Diagnostic.
8. The applicant ensures it will notify the [Vetted Improvement Program](#) provider of intent to apply and, if awarded, will work in good faith with the [Vetted Improvement Program](#).
 9. The applicant will identify a campus leader, on each awarded campus, who will be responsible for managing the grant project.

Program Elements

This section provides detailed information about the grant.

Description of Program

The ESF Focused Support Grant provides resources and support to LEAs to ensure that campuses identified for improvement reach full implementation of the Foundational Essential Actions in the ESF to significantly and sustainably improve student outcomes.

Title I, 1003 ESF-Focused Support Grant funds are supplemental to the Title I, Part A funds. These funds must only be used to support LEA and school- level improvement efforts to directly benefit the awarded Comprehensive, Targeted or Additional Targeted schools. LEAs may reserve up to 30% of the total awarded funds at the district level to assist students who will be entering and/or have exited the federally identified campuses to address the gaps that were created on the Comprehensive, Targeted or Additional Targeted campus(es). These campuses must be Title I Served and be within one level in the direct feeder pattern of the awarded campus(es).

Districts will engage in an ESF Diagnostic that results in a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) and select and work with a [Vetted Improvement Program](#) (VIP) that has been approved to support one or more of the Essential Actions (EAs) identified for prioritization in the diagnostic. The LEA will select a VIP and will confirm their availability.

The grant will fund applicants during a 2-year grant period ending on September 30, 2026. Districts must satisfactorily complete required elements of the ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines and provide data and information to the Texas Education Agency as requested.

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division's [Administering a Grant](#) page.

The supplement not supplant provision applies.

Qualifications and Experience

The applicant agrees to provide data on the qualifications and experience of the existing or future staff members as requested by the Texas Education Agency.

Performance and Evaluation Measures

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

1. Engage in all interventions and submissions communicated by the Texas Education Agency including, but not limited to:
 - a. ESF Diagnostic that results in a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) focused on the highest priority or highest impact Essential Actions identified in the diagnostic (if the campus has not received a diagnostic within 3 years)
 - b. Funding Summary Report submissions aligned to the TIP
 - c. Fidelity of implementation trackers and/or evidence
2. Assign a Campus Intervention Team (CIT) that must include:
 - a. the District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI) who is responsible for overseeing fidelity to this grant program, and
 - b. the campus principal's supervisor (if not the DCSI)
3. Engage with a [Vetted Improvement Program](#) to build capacity on the campus and budget funds to support partnership with the VIP, over the two year life of the grant, and implement new systems and processes with fidelity
4. Monitor the fidelity of implementation of ESF Essential Actions on the campus and make necessary adjustments when implementation is off track and grant the campus operational flexibility needed to implement systems and practices that lead to full implementation of ESF Essential Actions
5. Engage and participate in grant orientation meetings, technical assistance meetings, other periodic meetings of grantees, and sharing of best practices through the TEA program office

Limits on Contracted Evaluators

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

Application Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Continuation Funding, Fund Management, and Use of Funds*

It is anticipated that approximately 200 will be awarded ranging in amounts from approximately \$75,000 to \$120,000.

Selection of Applicants for Funding

LEAs will be selected in rank order according to the following process:

Step 1: Quality of responses to grant application survey in Qualtrics (sent to each LEA superintendent)

Step 2: Priorities for Funding

Applicants will have priority points added for the following:

1. 2023 Comprehensive Support Identification
2. Relative performance of campuses identified for 2023 Comprehensive Support for each school type (elementary, middle, high school/ K–12, and alternative education accountability)
3. Economically Disadvantaged Campus

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Cost Share/Match Requirement*.

- There is no cost share or matching requirement

Limitation of Administrative Funds

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Administrative Costs*.

NOTE: Administrative funds include **both** direct administrative costs **and** allowable indirect costs. TEA limits the amount of funds that may be budgeted to administer the program, including direct administrative costs and indirect costs, to no more than 15% of the total grant awarded.

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*.

Pre-award costs:

- are not permitted

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 may include but are not limited to the following:

Out-of-State Travel

Out-of-state travel costs:

- ☒ may be funded under this grant program

Note 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 related to the implementation of the Targeted Improvement Plan and Vetted Improvement Program 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 Out-of-State Travel Justification form, refer to the Administering a Grant page.

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

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:

- Site visits during the grant period as outlined in the application
- Travel to and from TEA required events
- Travel to and from ESC and/or Vetted Improvement Program training

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

Allowable costs under this grant are costs related to engaging with a Vetted Improvement Program and developing and implementing the Targeted Improvement Plan.

Allowable uses of funds include, but are not limited to, costs associated with participation in the Vetted Improvement Program, supplies and materials to implement the Vetted Improvement Program and Targeted Improvement Plan, teacher stipends, professional development, instructional materials, and travel expenses.

General 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)
- Field trips
- Advisory Council
The cost of membership in any civic or community organization,
- Hosting or sponsoring conferences.
- Travel for Students to Conferences
- Stipends for Non-Employees
- Non-Employee Costs for Conferences

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 program.

Private Nonprofit School Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Private Nonprofit School Participation*.

This requirement

- ☐ does not apply to this federally funded program.

Maintenance of Effort

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Maintenance of Effort*.

This requirement

- ☒ does apply to this federally funded program.

Scoring And Review

This section provides information on the scoring and review of grant applications.

Grant Review and Funding Criteria

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Review Criteria*.

Priority points will be added to scores from the initial review. Applicants will be eligible to receive a grant award based on their total point ranking.

Standard Review Criteria

Standard Review Criteria responses will be captured on the Application. LEAs will complete this section, providing information specific to how the LEA will support eligible campus(es). Applicants must meet all Standard and Specific Review Criteria to be eligible for the grant.

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Standard Review Criteria.

Priorities for Funding

Applicants that receive 100% of the points available through the standard and specific review criteria will have priority points added, if earned and if available, per the program guidelines.

Area Scored	Points Possible
Comprehensive Support Identification	15 points
Relative performance of campuses identified for Comprehensive Support for each school type (elementary, middle, high school/ K–12, and alternative education accountability) - Bottom quartile-lowest 25% of performance (20 points) - Bottom half- Lowest 50%-25% of performance (10 points)	20 points
Economically Disadvantaged Campus (10 points) 70.1-85% economically disadvantaged (5 points) 85.1-100% economically disadvantaged (10 points)	10 points
Total Priorities for Funding Points Possible	45 points

Once priority points are assigned, CSI ranking will be used to rank candidates with tied priority points.

Oral Interviews for Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Oral Interviews for Funding*.

Oral interviews do not apply to this grant program.