

Request for Application

Program Guidelines

2025-2026 Strong Foundations Direct Implementation Grant

Authorized by Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A, Section 1003

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Introduction to the Program Guidelines

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) administers federal¹ and state grant awards to its subgrantees² to carry out a program. Such entities include primarily school systems (referred to as local educational agencies [LEAs] in statutes), including independent school districts and charter schools; education service centers (ESCs); and, to a lesser degree, institutions of higher education (IHEs), nonprofit organizations (NPOs), and other statutorily allowable organizations. The following Program Guidelines apply to all eligible subgrantees for the designated grant program.

The Program Guidelines, as part of the request for application (RFA), are to be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and any application instructions or other RFA requirements, as listed for the grant on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. The Standard Application System (SAS) consists of Application Part 1 (PDF narrative schedules) and Application Part 2 (Excel budget schedules). An eligible applicant must submit both parts of the SAS to apply for funding, unless specifically delineated in these guidelines.

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 cross-referenced sections when preparing your application.

Errata Notices

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

¹ TEA is the grantee and pass-through entity for federal education funding awarded by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). *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 pursuant to a subgrant or contract. (34 CFR §77.1) *Pass-through entity* is defined as a recipient or subrecipient that provides a subaward to a subrecipient (including lower tier subrecipients) to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR §200.1)

² *Subgrantee* is defined by TEA to be the same as a *subrecipient*, which is defined in 2 CFR §200.1 as an entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal award. The term does not include an individual that is a beneficiary or participant of the program. *Subgrantee* is defined in 34 CFR §77.1 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided. For purposes of the request for application (RFA), TEA may use the terms *subgrantee*, *grantee*, *subrecipient*, and *applicant* synonymously.

Contact for Clarifying Information

Grant Program Contact

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

The following is provided in compliance with federal appropriations acts:

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project	\$317,000
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	\$317,000
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	\$0

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

Strong Foundations Direct Implementation Grant provides direct grant funds to school systems for technical assistance to support high-fidelity implementation of the Texas open education resource (OER) instructional materials, including high-quality professional learning for teachers, instructional coaches, school leaders/campus administrators, and school systems leaders on effectively implementing OER on Title I served campuses. Strong Foundations Implementation is the OER Instructional Material Support program established by Chapter 31 of the Texas Education Code.

Eligible Applicants

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

The eligible applicants are:

- La Joya ISD - \$317,000

Shared Services Arrangement

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

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed.

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 10% of the total grant award.

Indirect Costs

For this grant program, the grantee may claim a maximum for allowable indirect costs equal to its current approved restricted indirect cost rate.

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 February 20, 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)

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.

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. Ensuring approval by the Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer (or equivalent leader) to participate in the program.
2. Ensuring approval of the board of the local governing agency/trustees of the district to use the instructional materials
3. Ensuring evidence showing classroom teachers support the use of the instructional materials
4. Contracting with an Approved Provider from the LASO Cycle 3 Approved Provider List for Strong Foundations Implementation
5. Submitting Approved Provider contracts and required funding summary reports to TEA
6. Appointing a LEA lead as the primary point of contact responsible for all grant-related activities and designating at least one additional point of contact
7. Ensuring attendance and engagement by the LEA lead at periodic check-ins with the Approved Provider
8. Ensuring participation of at least 1 school leader/campus administrator per participating campus
9. Ensuring attendance and engagement by participating school leaders/campus administrators at periodic check-ins with the Approved Provider Submitting all required grant deliverables (e.g., district-level instructional materials transition plan, district-level implementation action plans for all participating campuses)
10. Ensuring participation of at least 1 coach per instructional material (coaches may include instructional coaches, administrators, leaders, or other individuals directly supporting teachers)
11. Submitting participant registration information by designated deadlines

12. Following the year-long scope and sequence for the instructional materials
13. Meeting the minimum number of instructional minutes for the instructional materials
14. Using the curriculum-embedded assessments included in the instructional materials
15. Ensuring participating school system leads, school leaders/campus administrators, coaches, and teachers are able to attend all required professional learning
16. Ensuring teachers have sufficient planning time and use the required protocols
17. Providing print materials for all participating teachers and students
18. Ensuring digital access and rostering (if applicable) for the instructional materials
19. Ensuring participating school system leads, school leaders/campus administrators, coaches, and teachers complete all program requirements
20. Submit all required data
21. 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](#). The grantee is required to regularly request payment for allowable expenditures as grant program requirements are carried out.

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.

Note regarding travel costs, if allowable per guidance below: Any personnel approved in this grant must be reimbursed for travel according to the applicant's written policies and procedures; however, reimbursement may not exceed State of Texas mileage allowance, General Services Administration (GSA) hotel rate, and per diem rate existing in the current Texas State Appropriations Act. The state travel guidelines require only reimbursement of actual costs paid and, therefore, prohibit per diem payments to travelers without reconciliation to actual costs expended. Note: Contractor travel is paid as it is described in the individual contract, not to exceed the State rates, and may or may not be delineated out specifically in the contract.

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
- Capital outlay
- In-state travel as necessary to meet the program requirements of this grant. Travel costs must follow the travel guidance provided at the beginning of this Allowable Activities and Use of Funds section

LEAs are required to use:

- 50% of grant funds to contract with a single Approved Provider per instructional material from the LASO Cycle 3 Approved Provider List for Strong Foundations Implementation to support grant activities (it is highly recommended that school systems contract with the same Approved Provider for all instructional materials);
- 20% of grant funds for additional support from the Approved Provider and/or salaries or partial salaries for instructional coaches or other positions directly supporting implementation of the instructional materials; and
- 30% of grant funds for other allowable expenses.
 - Up to 30% of grant funds may be utilized for the procurement of approved core instructional materials in printed format, as well as for covering the associated reasonable and necessary freight costs for shipping these printed materials. Please confirm any local allowability with your business office or independent auditor.

Other allowable expenses include, as applicable to the core approved instructional materials awarded:

- Additional support from the Approved Provider
- Stipends for teachers implementing the instructional materials
- Stipends for instructional coaches supporting implementation of the instructional materials
- Salary or partial salary for instructional coaches or other positions directly supporting implementation of the instructional materials
- In-state travel to support grant activities (e.g., site visits to HQIM Learning Labs)
- Licenses for supplemental materials approved through the **HB 1416 Ratio Waiver List (RWL), Math Supplemental Curriculum (MSC) initiative, or the Blended Learning Grant Program (BLGP)**:
 - Math
 - Carnegie Mathia (MSC, BLGP for 6-8, Alg I, Geom, Alg II)

- iReady Math (MSC, BLGP for K-8)
- IXL Math (MSC, RWL for PK-12)
- MyMathAcademy (MSC, BLGP for PK-2)
- ST Math (MSC, RWL for PK-8)
- Zearn Math (MSC, BLGP for K-8)
- RLA:
 - Amira Learning (RWL for K-6)
 - HMH Read180 Flex (RWL for 3-12)
 - IXL Language Arts (RWL for PK-12)
 - Boost Reading Texas (district-proposed through BLGP, K-8)
 - iReady Reading (district-proposed through BLGP, K-8).
- Licenses for assessment platforms supporting the approved core instructional materials
- Print materials (including manipulatives and trade books) for teachers and students

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

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. Travel cost reimbursement must follow the travel guidance provided at the beginning of this Allowable Activities and Use of Funds section. Only the following travel costs may be allowable for these positions:

- Travel associated with grant activities.
- Travel expenses are capped at 5% of the 30% discretionary spending allotment (1.5% of the total award).

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:

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- Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITA) — Principal Costs (6514)
- Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITA) — Interest Costs (6526)
- Capital Lease Liability — Principal Costs (6512)
- Capital Lease Liability — Interest Costs (6522)
- Interest on Debt Costs (6523)
- Audit services for federally funded grants, unless the subrecipient meets the Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) threshold and is required to conduct the federal audit.
- Out-of-state travel
- Travel for students to conferences
- Educational field trips
- Stipends for non-employees (Other than those included in 6419)
- Non-employee costs for conferences
- Cost of membership in any civic or community organization
- Hosting or sponsoring of conferences
- Advisory Council
- Expenses that support the use of Tier 1 instructional materials other than the core approved instructional materials, including previous core approved instructional materials in K-5 RLA (K-5 OER RLA COVID Emergency Release V3, currently called Amplify Texas Elementary Literacy Program/Amplify Texas Lectoescritura en Español) and/or K-5 Math (K-5 OER Math COVID Emergency 2024-2025 V2, currently called Eureka Math TEKS Edition) and/or 6-12 Math (6-12 OR Math COVID Emergency Release V2, currently called Carnegie Learning 6-12 Texas Math Solution)
- Contracts with a provider not included on the LASO Cycle 3 Approved Provider List for Strong Foundations Implementation
- Stipends or salaries for positions not directly supporting implementation of the core approved instructional materials
- Expenses for print materials of the core approved instructional materials above the 30% threshold
- Expenses for licenses for supplemental materials not included on the approved supplemental materials list
- Expenses for materials and supplies not directly related to implementation of the core approved instructional materials
- Expenses for technology (e.g., computers)
- Expenses for in-state travel not directly related to grant activities

- 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. School system artifacts submitted using TEA-provided templates
2. Observation data submitted using TEA-provided observation forms
3. Completion and submission of periodic feedback and implementation surveys of teachers, coaches, school leaders, and district leaders administered by TEA
4. Teacher identification numbers, including Texas Unique ID
5. Class rosters for each campus indicating students enrolled at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the school year
6. Assessment data, which may include, but is not limited to, data from the curriculum-embedded unit/module assessments and interim/benchmark assessments administered by the school system. Assessment data is not evaluative but will inform continuous improvement of the products and implementation supports provided to school systems.

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.

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.