

Request for Application

Program Guidelines

2025-2026 ESC Statewide Services for Students with Visual Impairments (SSVI)

Authorized by General Appropriations Act (GAA),
Article III, Rider 13(f)(1), 89th Texas Legislature;
Texas Education Code (TEC) 30.0021(f)

Contents

Introduction to the Program Guidelines	3
Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines	3
Errata Notices	3
Contact for Clarifying Information	4
Grant Program Contact	4
Funding Contact	4
U.S. Department of Education and/or State Appropriations	4
Grant Timeline	4
Grant at a Glance	5
Program Purpose, Goals, and Objectives	5
Eligible Applicants	5
Shared Services Arrangement	5
Cost Share or Matching Requirement	5
Supplement, Not Supplant	5
Limitation of Administrative Funds	6
Direct Administrative Costs	6
Indirect Costs	6
Pre-Award Costs	6
Application Requirements and Assurances	6
Statutory Requirements	6
TEA Program Requirements	7
Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS)	7
Program-Specific Assurances	8
Allowable Activities and Use of Funds	8
General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds	8
Other Allowable Operating Costs Requiring Specific Approval in the Grant Application (6400)	10
Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds	10
Performance Measures	11
Attachments	11
Required Fiscal-Related Attachments	11
Required Program-Related Attachments	12

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

Nicholas Trotter, Visual Impairment Program Administrator
Special Education Technical Assistance Division
nicholas.trotter@tea.texas.gov
Phone: 512-463-9414

Funding Contact

Meredith Edgley, Grant Manager
Grants Administration Division
meredith.edgley@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8525

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	\$5,539,891
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	\$5,539,891

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 purpose of this program is to provide services, technical assistance, and support school systems that provide services to students with visual impairments. Regional ESCs provide support and technical assistance to teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs). Such support and assistance are critical to retention of TVIs throughout the state. Effective TVIs lead to improved outcomes for students with visual impairments.

Eligible Applicants

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

An eligibility list is posted by regional ESC 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.

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 not 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 5% 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 unrestricted 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 not permitted for this grant.

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 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.

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. Each ESC will respond to a benchmark survey in the time and manner requested by TEA. The purpose of this survey will be to collect information about the anticipated needs of the ESC pertaining to the provision of training, support, and technical assistance relative to the current allowable uses of SSVI grant funds.
2. Each ESC will respond to an end-of-year survey in the time and manner requested by TEA. The purpose of this survey will be to collect information on the activities actually carried out and expenses incurred for training, support, and technical assistance relative to the anticipated needs identified in the benchmark survey.
3. In accordance with all components in this section, each ESC will develop a regional plan for the provision of training, support, and technical assistance to meet the identified State, regional, and district needs. The regional plan will include activities, resources, and staff necessary to accomplish coordinated efforts to ensure that students with disabilities have access to and progress in the general educational curriculum. Activities are to be reported to TEA in the time and manner requested via the Special Education Continuous Improvement Plan (SECIP).
4. When an ESC provides leadership, training, and support pertaining to education and related services for students with visual impairments, directly or through contract, the personnel providing such services must be appropriately licensed as a TVI or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS).
5. 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.

Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS)

See the [TxGMS](#) for detailed requirements. In general, the TxGMS apply to regional 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 the federal Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG), 2 CFR part 200.

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:

- Budgeted amounts as approved in the application are to be used for special supplemental services unique to students with visual impairments and may not be used in lieu of educational funds otherwise designated under the TEC or through state appropriations.
- Equipment purchased with SSVI funds for use by specific students may be transferred within the region or to another ESC for use by other students with visual impairments.
- SSVI funds must be used for activities that are directly related to the provision of technical assistance and support to school districts and charter schools, or for direct services to eligible students designed to improve student performance and improve program and services effectiveness for students with visual impairments, under 22 years of age.
- Staff members partially funded out of special education funds must keep appropriate time and effort records and related documentation to support any amounts charged to special education.

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- Salaries for TVIs
- Salaries for COMS
- Bonuses as a recruitment/retention incentive for TVIs and appropriately certified orientation and mobility instructors

Program Guidelines

- Unique assessments such as clinical low-vision evaluations
- Substitute teachers for TVI staff development
- Low-vision clinics
- Special programs addressing social and recreational skill development
- Parent training
- Support of programs to recruit and train new TVIs within limits of state law
- Staff development (in-state) in areas specific to the needs of students with visual impairments
- Staff in-state travel expenses for all of the above. Travel costs must follow the travel guidance provided at the beginning of this Allowable Activities and Use of Funds section.
- Assistive adaptive technology unique to the needs of students with visual impairments
- Infant programs
- Braille transcribers
- Braille production technology
- Repair for equipment purchased with SSVI funds
- Instructional supplies and materials unique to students with visual impairments
- Costs related to program evaluation and improvement
- Support for projects determined by the regional Visual Impairment plan to originate from the ESC
- Salaries of teachers with a Visual Impairment permit enrolled in an intensive Visual Impairment endorsement program if individually approved by TEA
- Other expenditures individually approved by TEA
- Support costs for staff serving TVIs and students with visual impairments at the ESCs, including:
 - Payroll costs
 - Building use fees
 - Telephone
 - Postage
 - Data processing
 - Clerical support
 - Computers
- Capital outlay

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

Travel for Students to Conferences (Does Not Include Field Trips)

Costs for travel for students to conferences may be funded under the grant program (does not include field trips). Travel costs should be minimal and must follow the grantee's written travel policy. Travel cost reimbursement must follow the travel guidance provided at the beginning of this Allowable Activities and Use of Funds section. Only travel costs for students to the following types of conferences may be allowable:

Documentation for travel for students to conferences must be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request.

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. Documentation for stipends for non-employees must be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request.

Non-Employee Costs for Conferences

Non-employee costs for conferences may be funded under the grant program. Costs must be managed to minimize costs to the grant award. The following types of conferences may be allowable:

Documentation for non-employee costs for conferences must be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request.

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:
 - 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 state-funded grants
- Out-of-state travel
- Field trips
- Travel costs for officials such as executive director, superintendent, or board members
- Cost of membership in any civic or community organization
- Hosting or sponsoring of conferences
- Advisory council
- Trips to TEA Visually Impaired/Orientation and Mobility meetings when virtual options are available
- Teachers not certified or permitted as TVIs, unless individually approved by TEA
- Speech therapy
- Physical therapy (PT)
- Occupational therapy (OT)
- Counseling
- Staff assignments that are not specific to the unique needs of students with visual impairments
- Food
- Any other expenditures which are not allowed for state funds
- 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. The applicant will collect data and report student outcomes/improvement through the performance-based monitoring system. Data will be entered during the SECIP and State Performance Indicators (SPP) annual data collections.

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.