

Request for Application

Program Guidelines

2025-2026 ESC IDEA-B Special Education Leadership

Authorized by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended (P.L. 108-446), Part B, Section 611; 34 CFR 300.149 and 300.704(b) Other State-level Activities; General Appropriations Act (GAA), Article III, Rider 13, 89th Texas Legislature

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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	\$44,054,836
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	\$44,054,836
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

IDEA-B discretionary funds must be used for activities that are directly related to the provision of technical assistance and support for school districts and charter schools to improve student performance and program and service effectiveness for students with disabilities, ages 3 through 21.

Each Regional Education Service Center (ESC) will provide leadership, training, coaching, and technical assistance in the area of special education for students with disabilities in accordance with TEA's focus on increasing student achievement and Texas Education Code (TEC) §8.051(d)(2) and (5) and will assist TEA in the implementation of IDEA 2004.

ESCs will work with TEA and participate with agency staff to promote and implement leadership and information dissemination activities.

Additionally, each ESC will participate in activities associated with and resulting from the State Performance Plan (SPP), the Statewide Initiatives Implementation Plan (SIIP), the TEA Review and Support Division's identified Focus Areas of Compliance, and the Special Education Continuous Improvement Process (SECIP). To ensure effective communication and information dissemination among the state, regions, and districts, each ESC will designate specific staff members who will be responsible for tracking/reporting activities related to these areas.

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 8% 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:

Program Guidelines

- 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. Funding awarded through this grant may only be used to support the following programs:
 - a. ESC Special Education Leadership/Basic Technical Assistance and Support
 - b. Statewide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - c. Professional Development for the Provision of Access to the General Curriculum for Students with Disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (Rider 13)
 - d. Special Project: Regional Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) Support
 - e. Special Project: Charter School Supports
2. Requirements Applicable to All Programs in the ESC IDEA-B Special Education Leadership Application:
 - a. The applicant is required to submit and receive approval from Grant Program Manager of three (3) student-outcomes-based, data-driven goals that include specified aligned activities in the Regional Goals SECIP report. Processing of the grant application or issuance of the NOGA may be delayed until this requirement is met.
 - b. In accordance with all components in this section for which the ESC receives funding, each ESC will develop a regional plan for the provision of training, support, and technical assistance to meet the identified state (as identified in Program Purpose, Goals, and Objectives section of this document), 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 and show progress in the general curriculum. Activities are to be reported to TEA as requested.

3. 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.

ESC SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP/BASIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

The ESC will:

- Prioritize and participate in statewide initiatives by providing regional leadership and implementation of the functions and projects including:
 - Providing identified training, coaching, technical assistance, and support as stated in the SIIP
 - Utilizing TEA-branded resources/content or leveraging wherever appropriate to enhance previously created ESC resources/deliverables funded through this grant
 - Supporting outreach efforts of statewide initiatives (e.g., ESC newsletters, webpages, listservs, workshop catalogs, regional meetings)
 - Submitting evidence of completion of required SIIP activities (monthly via Qualtrics) to TEA and where applicable any required quarterly data reports to statewide initiative grantees
- Serve as first point of contact for school personnel, families, and other community stakeholders in the area of special education and related services by responding to requests for information and assistance.
- Provide training, coaching, and technical assistance to school personnel, families, and other community stakeholders related to students receiving special education and related services **in collaboration and coordination with ESC general education training and technical assistance activities** that result in demonstrated evidence of improved progress toward or maintenance of state targets for SPP Indicators 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 12 to prevent disproportionality with over- or under-identification and ensure appropriate inclusionary practices for students with disabilities (e.g. specially designed instruction, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) data monitoring; differentiated general education instructional techniques).
- Post spedtex.org hyperlink and logo on the ESC's main SpEd landing webpage.
- Post Texas SPED Support hyperlink and logo on the ESC's main SpEd Landing webpage.
- Provide information/technical assistance/training/coaching to school personnel concerning:
 - Federal and state special education and related service requirements
 - Federal and state accountability monitoring systems

- Federal and state funding systems/process
- Residential application submission and approval process
- Personnel development
- Instructional best practices
- Child find activities
- Collection and submission of compliance indicators data
- Use of IDEA Part B monies for coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) and comprehensive CEIS (CCEIS)
- Least restrictive environment (LRE) requirements
- Community resource coordination groups (CRCG)
- Conduct a comprehensive regional needs assessment process including:
 - Seeking input from school districts, charter schools, private school personnel, and families
 - Identifying regional findings as a result of the consideration and interpretation of regional needs assessment data
 - Incorporating state-level data with regional needs assessment data
 - Providing regional services to address findings from regional needs assessment and state-level data
 - Reporting results of activities, training, coaching, and technical assistance associated with comprehensive regional needs assessment as requested

STATEWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)

The ESC will:

- Provide professional development, coaching, technical assistance, and support (e.g. serve as certified Tiered Interventions Using Evidence-Based Research (TIER) trainer for the behavior strand) on PBIS, Restorative Practices, and School Climate Transformation that result in demonstrated evidence of improved progress toward or maintenance of the state targets for SPP Indicators 1–8 to build capacity in schools for the provision of positive behavior supports for students with disabilities.
- Provide training and implementation that result in demonstrated evidence of improved progress toward or maintenance of the state targets for SPP Indicators 1–8 related to the Texas Behavior Support Initiative (TBSI).
- Determine regional needs in accordance with the TBSI and make resources available to all educators and/or administrators who work with students with disabilities in general and/or special education settings.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF ACCESS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (RIDER 13)

The ESC will:

- Provide professional development, training, and coaching that result in demonstrated evidence of improved progress toward or maintenance of the state targets for SPP Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 for general and special education administrators and teachers in curriculum content, instructional methodologies, and support structures for serving students with disabilities in general education settings.
- Provide professional development and coaching (e.g. TIER certified trainers provide training and coaching from essentials strand and other applicable modules, such as academics, progress monitoring and screening) that result in demonstrated evidence of improved regarding MTSS/ Rtl for struggling learners in general education settings.

SPECIAL PROJECT: REGIONAL FACILITATED INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (FIEP) SUPPORT

The ESC will:

- Assist school districts and charter schools that wish to offer FIEP meetings as a means of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in developing those programs. In addition, ESCs are asked to focus on helping school systems design district wide programs for providing facilitation when requested.

SPECIAL PROJECT: CHARTER SCHOOL SUPPORTS

The ESC will:

- Provide technical assistance, support, training, and coaching to charter schools in order to enhance their capacity to improve implementation of federal and state special education requirements, local performance on local determination elements, and local Results Driven Accountability (RDA) performance levels.

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 for staff with direct responsibilities under these grants
- 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
- 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.
- Other costs consistent with the purpose and intents of the programs authorized in this application

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. Travel cost reimbursement must follow the travel guidance provided at the beginning of this Allowable Activities and Use of Funds section.

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. 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.

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

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:

- Conferences utilizing IDEA-B discretionary funds must be directly related to technical assistance, training/coaching, and information dissemination and/or gathering to improve student performance and program/service effectiveness for students with disabilities.

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:

- Advisory councils utilizing IDEA-B discretionary funds must be directly related to technical assistance, training/coaching, and information dissemination and/or gathering to improve student performance and program/service effectiveness for students with disabilities.

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 federally funded grants, unless the subrecipient meets the Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) threshold and is required to conduct the federal audit
- Travel for students to conferences
- Field trips
- Travel costs for officials such as executive director, superintendent, or board members
- Cost of membership in any civic or community organization
- Funds can not be used to create duplicative activities where a statewide initiative-created activity (e.g., training materials, courses, one-pagers) already exists.
- Funds cannot be used based on pre-determined or arbitrary percentage calculations (such as the percentage of students in special education programs or the percentage of special education attendees at a professional development event) but must be used only to support actual time-on-task or actual costs related to the direct support of special education programs.
- Any cost that is not consistent with the purpose and intents of the programs authorized in this application

Performance Measures

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

The applicant is required to submit and receive approval from Grant Program Manager of three (3) student-outcomes-based, data-driven goals that include specified aligned activities in the Regional Goals SECIP report. Processing of the grant application or issuance of the NOGA may be delayed until this requirement is met.

The ESC will monitor their three (3) approved regional Special Education Continuous Improvement Plan (SECIP) goals and activities (described in Requirements Applicable to All Programs in the ESC IDEA-B

Special Education Leadership Application) and:

- Engage in quarterly submission in the assigned data collection platform. Be prepared to provide progress updates and data through engagement in quarterly virtual meetings with TEA OSPSS staff to evaluate the implementation and impact of activities aligned with the regional goals. SECIP quarterly submissions will be reported to TEA via assigned data collection platform no later than the last working day of the week following the end of each quarter (Quarter 1 ends October 31st, Quarter 2 ends January 31st, Quarter 3 ends April 30th, and Quarter 4 ends July 31st).
- Identify and report SECIP Goals and Key Activities for Improvement alignment with TEA OSPSS Initiatives, TEA Review & Support's Focus Areas of Compliance and/or ESC Cross-Collaboration and Integration Alignment.
- Engage in biannual engagement virtual meetings (Quarter 2 and Quarter 4) with TEA OSPSS staff to evaluate the implementation and impact of activities aligned with the SIIP and ESC trainers/coaches reported data in Qualtrics.

The ESC will also complete the annual Alignment Report including the documentation of other ESC Grants report requirements that will be checked in all cases where the ESC receives funding. The annual Alignment report must be submitted in eGrants no later than the last working day of the week following the end of Quarter 4 (Quarter 4 ends July 31st).

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.