

Request for Application

# Program Guidelines

## 2026-2027 ESC School Improvement Facilitation

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

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The Texas Education Agency (TEA) administers federal<sup>1</sup> and state grant awards to its subgrantees<sup>2</sup> 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 the grantee review all cross-referenced sections when preparing the application.

## Errata Notices

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

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<sup>1</sup> TEA is the grantee and pass-through entity for federal education funding. *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)

<sup>2</sup> *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. For purposes of the request for application (RFA), TEA may use the terms *subgrantee*, *grantee*, *subrecipient*, and *applicant* synonymously.

## Contact for Clarifying Information

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### Grant Program Contact

Scott Taylor, Director of School Improvement Operations  
Division of School Improvement  
[scott.taylor@tea.texas.gov](mailto:scott.taylor@tea.texas.gov)  
Phone: (512) 463-5226

### Funding Contact

Eleanor Blais, Grant Manager  
Grants Administration Division  
[eleanor.blais@tea.texas.gov](mailto:eleanor.blais@tea.texas.gov)  
Phone: (512) 463-8525

## Federal and/or State Appropriations

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The following is provided in compliance with federal appropriations acts:

| Category  | Amount              |
|---|---------------------|
| Total funds available for this project            | <b>\$17,000,000</b> |
| Percentage to be financed with federal funds      | 100%                |
| Amount of federal funds                           | \$17,000,000        |
| Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources | 0%                  |
| Amount of nonfederal funds                        | \$0                 |

## Grant Timeline

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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

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This section provides detailed information about the grant program.

## Program Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

The School Improvement Facilitation Grant's purpose is to increase the capacity of Education Service Centers (ESCs) to provide sustained support to and work cooperatively with school systems and campuses that are federally identified based on the 2026 accountability release. The ESCs will support campuses by providing ESF Diagnostics, technical assistance for meeting School Improvement (SI) plan submission requirements and due dates, coaching and implementation of Foundational Leadership Instructional Practices and Systems (FLIPS), coaching for identified school systems in the development and implementation of their Talent and Resource Allocation Plans to recruit, assign, support, and retain effective teachers to close academic growth gaps between student groups, coaching and implementation of performance management structures, and/or functioning as the District Coordinator of School Improvement for SI school systems.

## Eligible Applicants

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

All 20 regional ESCs are eligible for this grant.

## Eligibility List

An eligibility list is posted by regional ESC in the Application and Support Information section of the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page.

## Shared Services Arrangements (SSAs)

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

Shared services arrangements 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](#), Classification of Direct and Indirect 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 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 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)

### 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.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program. The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. All Education Service Centers applying for this grant will use a survey to collect the approval of all school systems that will receive services. That survey will collect the school system's approval to use Title-I Section 1003 funds to directly provide school improvement services by the Education Service Center.

## 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. Deliver the ESF Orientation and conduct ESF or EDF Diagnostics at federally identified campuses that have not had a diagnostic since July 1, 2023.
2. Deliver training, resources, and services to federally identified, non-term limited campuses, including:
  - a. Coaching and implementation of Foundational Leadership Instructional Practices and Systems (FLIPS), including but not limited to:
    - i. On-site coaching of campus leaders
    - ii. Implementation support of Instructional Leadership Practices, including:
      - Direct support in the development of key tools (e.g., protocols for ILT meetings)
      - Training for District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI) and campus leaders on implementing the tools and practices
  - b. Coaching and implementation of performance management structures, including but not limited to:
    - i. On-site coaching of district and campus leaders
    - ii. Provide ongoing technical support and on-boarding to the Instructional Insights App (IIA) for district and campus leaders
3. Support the development and implementation of the Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) or Turnaround Plan (TAP) for federally identified campuses, including but not limited to:
  - a. Providing technical support to school systems developing or implementing a TIP or TAP
  - b. Support the facilitation of the Superintendent and/or TAP Consultation
  - c. Attending the Performance Management Stepback At BOY, MOY, and EOY

4. Collect, document, and report data of on-going support, including but not limited to:
  - a. Reporting campus visit data for FLIPs and Performance Management
  - b. % of required diagnostics completed by October 31
- **ESSA Talent and Resource Allocation Support**
  - a. Provide ongoing coaching and support to school systems creating Talent and Resource Allocation Plans.
  - b. Provide technical support to school systems as needed in order to Ensure all Talent and Resource Allocation plans are submitted on time.
  - c. Region 13 will continue to serve as the point of contact with TEA and ESCs for planning supports
- Provide intensive case management and support coordination for rural or small size districts as needed.

## Program-Specific Assurances

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

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
- Costs associated with development support, on-going progress monitoring, and data tracking for campuses as it relates to the ESF Orientation, Effective Schools Framework or Effective District Framework Diagnostic, FLIPS, performance management coaching, and TIP/TAP development and implementation support.
- General costs associated with fulfillment of program requirements
- 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.
- Stipends for non-employees other than those included in 6419 may be funded under the grant program. Documentation must be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request.

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

### 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:

- School improvement Orientation
- Effective Schools Framework Orientation

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.

## 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 federally funded grants, unless the subrecipient meets the Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) threshold and is required to conduct the federal audit
- Capital outlay
- Furniture
- Travel for students to conferences
- Advisory councils
- Out-of-state travel
- Field trips
- Travel costs for officials such as executive director, superintendent, or board members
- 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

## Expenditure Reporting (ER)

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Cash Management, as well as the [Expenditure Reporting](#) webpage.

The grant program will be funded by reimbursement once the NOGA has been issued and the grantee submits payment (drawdown) requests through the Expenditure Reporting (ER) system. The grantee is required to request payment regularly, at minimum quarterly, for allowable expenditures as grant program requirements are carried out. However, it is best practice to request funds monthly to support program implementation.

**Note:** Not requesting payments at least quarterly may cause noncompliance findings on improper program implementation in TEA subrecipient monitoring.

## Performance Measures

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

1. 100% of completion, success, and student outcome data are submitted on time, as it relates to SI and ESF/EDF Orientation, SI plan submission, SI plan implementation support, touchpoints with school systems for FLIPS or PM coaching, and Performance Management Stepbacks.  
Mandatory performance measure

## 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 (MOE).

This requirement does not apply to this federally funded grant program.

## Attachments

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There are two types of attachments that may be required to be submitted with the 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.