

# Program Guidelines

## 2026-2027 Texas ACE – Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Cycle 13, Year 1

### **Application Due Date**

11:59 p.m. Central Time, February 17, 2026

### Authorized by

Public Law 114-95, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act, Title IV, Part B (20 U.S.C. 7171-7176)

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# Introduction to the Program Guidelines

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TEA, as the pass-through entity<sup>1</sup>, is the grantee<sup>2</sup> from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities<sup>3</sup> such as school systems, including school districts, charter schools, and education service centers (ESCs), and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees<sup>4</sup>. 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 part of the request for application (RFA), Program Guidelines, is to be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and any application instructions. The Standard Application System (SAS) consists of all schedules (i.e., forms) to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding. The application to which these guidelines and instructions refer must be submitted electronically through the eGrants system.

For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

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<sup>1</sup> 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)

<sup>2</sup> 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)

<sup>3</sup> 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)

<sup>4</sup> 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.

## Requirements for Username and Password

To access eGrants and apply for this grant, you must have access to the [TEA Login \(TEAL\)](#). Follow these steps to apply for usernames and passwords on TEAL:

1. Visit the [TEA Login \(TEAL\)](#) page of the TEA website. Select [Request New User Account](#) to begin the process of applying for a TEAL account online.
2. Once you have been assigned a TEA Login (TEAL) account, log into TEAL and under Self-Service select My Application Accounts.
3. The My Accounts tab will open. Select Request New Account, then find eGrants in the list and follow the instructions to submit your request.
4. Entities with existing TEAL accounts but no eGrants accounts should email [competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto:competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov) to ensure proper access to eGrants and this application.
5. If the application does not appear in your “Apply for Eligible Grants” section in your eGrants homepage, please email [competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto:competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov).
6. For those entities without a prior relationship with TEA, and no TEAL accounts please email [competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto:competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov) with the following information prior to requesting a TEAL account:
  - Entity name
  - Entity full address – Street, city, state, zip code
  - County
  - Entity phone number
  - Entity email address
  - Entity Legal Authority - Name, title, email and phone
  - Entity Legal Authority Backup – Name, title, email and phone
  - Vendor ID/FEIN
7. All requests for TEAL and eGrants accounts must be submitted well in advance of the application deadline to avoid delays. Please note that this application process is both detailed and time intensive. It is the applicant’s responsibility to plan accordingly and allocate sufficient time to **complete, certify, and submit the application before the deadline.**

Late submissions caused by delays in obtaining TEAL or eGrants access, or by technical issues, **will not be accepted under any circumstances.** To ensure a smooth process, we strongly recommend initiating account setup and application work as early as possible.

## Application Submission Through eGrants

Submit the application for these grant programs electronically through the TEA eGrants system. Refer to the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) for more specific information about the eGrants application process.

Applications must be submitted as follows:

- Those submitted by public LEAs must be signed electronically by the superintendent of the school district or another LEA representative with the status of Grantee Official in eGrants.
- Applications submitted by regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) must be signed electronically by the executive director or another ESC representative with the status of Grantee Official in eGrants.
- Applications submitted by open-enrollment charter schools must be signed electronically by the chief operating officer of the school or another charter representative with the status of Grantee Official in eGrants.
- Campuses and campus charter schools must apply through their public school district, and the application must be signed electronically by the superintendent or another LEA representative with the status of Grantee Official in eGrants.
- Applications submitted by all other entities must be signed electronically by the Grantee Official designated by submitting organization
- For Shared Services Arrangements (SSAs), all school systems and ESCs applying as part of a SSA, both the fiscal agent and the member districts, must submit the Application Designation and Certification Form (ADC). See the “Shared Services Arrangement” on page \*\* for more information.

**\*Attention: DO NOT OPEN THE EGRANTS BUDGET SCHEDULES.** This application will not utilize the BS6001 and its associated budget schedules for the initial submission. Submitting the budget is unnecessary for the initial application of this competitive grant opportunity. Instead, applicants must utilize the Request for Grant Funds section of the PS3014 to outline their proposed grant budget. Upon grant approval, selected applicants will need to complete the BS6001 and supporting budget schedules during the negotiation process. **IMPORTANT: If the BS6001 is opened in error during the initial submission it must be saved with a zero-dollar balance to successfully submit the application.**

## 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 referenced sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) when preparing your application.

## Errata Notices

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

## Overview of Competitive Process

The following steps provide a high-level overview of the process for responding to Informal Discretionary Competition (IDC), including submitting an IDC application, and being selected for funding:

1. TEA publishes competitive application and supporting documents on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#).
2. Eligible applicants submit competitive application, and any required attachments to TEA via eGrants by the specified deadline.
3. Competitive applications are reviewed and scored. Note: The highest scoring applicants may be required to attend an oral interview or respond to questions regarding their competitive application.
4. TEA announces applicants selected for funding on the TEA [Grants Awarded Data](#) webpage and via email.
5. *For competitive applicants selected for funding, the competitive application will serve as the grant application. This eliminates the need for selected applicants to submit a separate grant application.*
6. TEA staff conducts narrative and budget negotiations on the competitive application.
7. Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) issued upon successful completion of the negotiation process.

## Email Bulletins

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), GovDelivery Bulletins.

## Contact for Clarifying Information

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### Grant Program Contact

Sarah Daly, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC State Coordinator  
Division of Expanded Learning Models  
[21stCentury@tea.texas.gov](mailto:21stCentury@tea.texas.gov)  
Phone: (512) 463-8282

### Funding Contact

Competitive Grants Unit  
Grants Administration Division  
[Competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto:Competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov)  
Phone: (512) 463-8525

## US Department of Education and/or State Appropriations

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The following is provided in compliance with the US Department of Education Appropriations Act:

Total funds available for this project	\$52,000,000*
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	\$52,000,000*
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	\$0

**\*Important funding notice: Awards are dependent upon the State receiving the Federal Grant Award Notice (GAN) from the United State Department of Education (USDE). The Texas Education Agency has not received a preliminary funding amount for the next fiscal year. Without this information, TEA is projecting funding amounts based on previous cycles however, this is subject to change once the Federal GAN is received. If the funding is not received Cycle 13 will not be funded and no awards will be issued.**



## Competitive Timeline

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For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. If a report due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report will be due the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Date	Event
November 14, 2025	Competitive application available in <b>eGrants</b> . RFA available; notice of the RFA published in the <i>Texas Register</i>
November 21, 2025	Last date to submit questions to be addressed in the Applicants' Conference/Webinar to: <a href="mailto:21stCentury@tea.texas.gov">21stCentury@tea.texas.gov</a> by 5:00pm. See <a href="#">General and Fiscal Guidelines</a> , Applicants' Conference/Webinar
December 5, 2025	Applicants' Conference/Webinar  Pre-record and posted by 4:00 p.m. CST on the <a href="#">TEA Grants Opportunities</a> webpage.
December 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Technical Assistance Office Hour at 10:00-11:00 a.m. CST. Office hours for questions regarding gaining access to TEAL, eGrants and troubleshooting application submission issues only. <a href="#">Register here</a>
December 12, 2025	Due date for the <a href="#">Notice of Intent to Apply</a>
December 12, 2025	Last date to submit questions for FAQs to: <a href="mailto:21stCentury@tea.texas.gov">21stCentury@tea.texas.gov</a> by 5:00pm. See <a href="#">General and Fiscal Guidelines</a> , Frequently Asked Questions
December 19, 2025	FAQs posted to <a href="#">TEA Grant Opportunities</a> page
January 14, 2026	Technical Assistance Office Hours at 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. CST. Office hours for questions regarding gaining access to TEAL, eGrants and troubleshooting application submission issues only. <a href="#">Register here</a>
January 20, 2026	Technical Assistance Office Hours, 2:00-3:00 p.m. CST. Office hours for questions regarding gaining access to TEAL, eGrants and troubleshooting application submission issues only. <a href="#">Register here</a>
January 23, 2026	Technical Assistance Office Hours, 2:00-3:00 p.m. CST. Office hours for questions regarding gaining access to TEAL, eGrants and troubleshooting application submission issues only. <a href="#">Register here</a>

Date	Event
February 17, 2026	Due date for the competitive application, which must be submitted <b>via eGrants</b> . The competitive application must be received by the TEA via eGrants by <b>11:59 p.m., Central Time</b> . See <a href="#">General and Fiscal Guidelines</a> , Competitive Application Due Date and Time
February 17, 2026 – July 1, 2026	Competitive review period. See <a href="#">General and Fiscal Guidelines</a> , Competitive Review Process
July 1, 2026	Anticipated award announcement. Award announcement is dependent upon receiving the Federal GAN (Grant Award Notice). If the notification is late, the timeline may be delayed. If the funding is not received Cycle 13 will not be funded and no awards will be issued.
September 1, 2026	Beginning date of grant (if selected for funding). See <a href="#">General and Fiscal Guidelines</a> , <b>Grant Period</b>
June 02, 2027	Final date to submit an amendment (if selected for funding)
August 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2027	Ending date of grant (if selected for funding). See <a href="#">General and Fiscal Guidelines</a> , <b>Grant Period</b>

## Grant at a Glance

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This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

### Authorizing Legislation

Public Law 114-95, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act, Title IV, Part B (20 U.S.C. 7171-7176)

### Purpose of Program

Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)

The Federal Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic and enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for students, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet State and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. Title IV, Part B, specifies that 21st CCLC funds are to be used to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities in community learning centers that do the following:

- Provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet the challenging State academic standards.
- Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, service learning, nutrition and health education, drug- and violence-prevention programs, counseling programs, arts, music, physical fitness and wellness programs; technology education programs, financial literacy programs, environmental literacy programs, mathematics, science, career and technical programs, internship or apprenticeship programs, and other ties to an in-demand industry sector or occupation for high school students that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.
- Offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

21st CCLC program activities must meet the following Federal measures of effectiveness.

- Be based upon an assessment of objective data regarding the need for afterschool and summer programs and activities in the schools and communities.
- Be based upon an established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high-quality academic and enrichment opportunities.
- Be based upon evidence-based research that the program or activity will help students meet the challenging State academic standards and any local academic standards.
- Ensure that measures of student success align with the regular academic program of the school and the academic needs of participating students.

### **Texas ACE**

The Texas 21st CCLC program operates as Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (Texas ACE). When referencing the federal program, 21st CCLC will be the naming convention, but in other circumstances, the State's program will be referred to as either Texas 21st CCLC or Texas ACE.

This application is grounded in the [Texas ACE Roadmap to High-Quality Out-of-School-Time](#). It is recommended that applicants review the roadmap to fully understand the program expectations and required state activities. Texas ACE programs are required to participate in state activities that support continuous improvement, including quality and compliance monitoring, state and local evaluation, training, and technical assistance.

## **Eligible Applicants**

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

### **Eligible Entities**

The eligible applicants are:

- School systems, including local educational agencies (LEAs), independent school districts (ISDs), and open-enrollment charter schools
- Regional education service centers (ESCs)
- Community-based organizations (CBOs) including Faith-based organizations (FBOs)
- Tribal organizations (as such terms are defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act (25 U.S.C. 450b))
- Other public or private entities
- A consortium of two or more eligible organizations

An entity is ineligible if it meets the following conditions.

- The entity was deemed ineligible for a Cycle 11 (Y2, Y3, Y4, or Y5) or Cycle 12 (Y2, Y3) continuation application by TEA.
- The entity selected not to complete a Cycle 11 (Y2, Y3, Y4, or Y5) or Cycle 12 (Y2, Y3) continuation application and voluntarily ended the program before the end of the grant cycle.

Each eligible applicant is limited to one grant application. Each grant application is limited to a maximum of 10 centers, with each center serving a primary campus with up to two additional feeder schools. If multiple applications are submitted for the same eligible campus or campuses, all such applications will be disqualified from peer review.

**Applicants must include required program-related attachments 1-5 to be eligible for funding as these attachments are necessary for determining the criteria listed above. Failure to include these required attachments could result in an application being disqualified or being deemed ineligible for funding. More information regarding the required attachments for this RFA can be found beginning on page 24 of these program guidelines.**

### Eligible Campuses

Applications must propose to serve campuses that are eligible for schoolwide programs under ESSA, Title I, Part A, Section 1114 and had an economically disadvantaged (low-income) rate of at least 40% during the 2024-2025 school year.

A campus is ineligible if it meets the following conditions. Applications that propose to serve one or more ineligible campuses will be deemed ineligible for peer review.

- The campus was newly opened in the school year 2025-2026.
- The campus is an active center or center feeder in the Texas ACE - 21st CCLC, Cycle 12 grant.
- The campus serves pre-kindergarten only.

Applicants that propose to serve campuses that meet the following conditions will receive priority points. Choosing not to serve campuses that meet these priorities will not disqualify the application.

- **Federal Priority 1: Target Services A** – The campus is implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities under ESSA, Title I Part A, Section 1111(d).
- **Federal Priority 1: Target Services B** – The campus has an at-risk average above the state average.
- **State Priority 1: Previous Performance** - The campus is an active center in the Texas ACE – 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, Cycle 11 grant that met all student and adult family member participation requirements, and operation requirements in Year 3 and Year 4.

Priority points will be given to applications that include a center or centers that meet the following conditions:

- **Federal Priority 2: Partnership** - The center will operate in partnership between two eligible entities consisting of not less than one school system and another eligible entity. **A letter or letters of support outlining the partnership(s) must be attached to the application.**

- **State Priority 2: 175+ Instructional Calendar** - The center will be hosted on a campus that has a 2025-2026 calendar with at least 175 instructional days. **A board approved calendar must be attached to the application.**

## Eligible Participants

Programs may serve students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. Grantees must use a comprehensive, campus-based needs assessment process to identify and serve students who would most benefit from assistance in meeting State standards in reading and math, as well as participation in enrichment activities that complement the regular academic program.

The grant program must also provide the families of the students served in the grant program with opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Expenditures for Prekindergarten-only centers are not allowed. Prekindergarten students may be served on a limited and targeted basis and when the evidence is compelling that expenditures on these students would be the most beneficial use of funds toward achieving goals of the program.

## Eligibility List

### Eligibility List

An Eligibility List that includes eligible campuses and campuses that meet the requirements for Federal Priority 1A, Federal Priority 1B, and State Priority 1 is posted in the Application and Support Information section of the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page (Reference 1).

## Shared Services Arrangement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Shared Services Arrangements, eGrants SSA Application Designation and Certification Form (ADC).

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) **are** allowed. Only school systems and Education Service Centers are eligible for Shared Service Arrangements.

Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) **may** serve as fiscal agents for an SSA for this grant.

**Important\*\***- All school systems and ESCs applying as part of an SSA must submit the Application Designation and Certification Form (ADC) prior to application submission. This includes the fiscal agent and all member districts/school systems. The fiscal agent must complete and submit the ADC **first**, so the member districts/school systems can select the correct fiscal agent from the drop-down menu when completing and submitting their own ADC. Reminder, the ADC can only be submitted by a person with the role of Grantee Official in eGrants.

## Application Funding

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

It is anticipated that 40 applicants will be awarded amounts ranging from \$150,000 to \$2,000,000 each year for the five-year grant cycle.

Annual funding after Year 1 (“continuation funding”) is contingent on satisfactory progress of prior year compliance with requirements, achievement of stated service and performance targets, general budget approval by the commissioner of education, and appropriations by the United States Congress. Continuation funding and renewability funding requires grantees to submit a noncompetitive continuation grant application each year of the total subgrant period.

**The projected Federal budget for the GAN (Grant Award Notice) that will fund Cycle 13, Year 1 is unknown. If appropriations by the United States Congress are not received, Cycle 13 will not be funded and no awards will be issued by the Texas Education Agency.**

### Renewability Policy

During the final year of continuation funding, TEA may renew a subgrant based on the eligible entity’s performance during the preceding subgrant period. If TEA renews existing grants, the agency will use a standard set of criteria to determine whether a grant is eligible to be renewed. Criteria may include risk scores and findings for TEA monitoring and local evaluations, improvements in quality over time, compliance with grant requirements, engagement in state-supported opportunities, needs assessment results, and performance on outcomes. The renewal period will not exceed the total grant period of the original award.

### Funding Methodology

TEA intends to fund applications at a level that allows grantees to meet requirements and provide high-quality services to students and families, while also scaling Texas ACE across the State. The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant is intended build capacity so that eligible entities can sustain out-of-school-time activities beyond the grant cycle. To facilitate that goal, state activities will include a deliberate focus on sustainability planning.

The following funding methodology is anticipated for a five-year cycle. **TEA reserves the right to make changes to this projected methodology during the grant cycle.** Changes may occur to this projection due to budgeting constraints or guidance from the U.S. Department of Education.

**Table 1: Projected Awards during 5-Year Cycle**

Cycle 13, Y1 (2026-2027)	Competitive Award	Full award based on Y1 approved budget.
Cycle 13, Y2 (2027-2028)	Continuation	Full award based on Y2 approved budget.

		<p>Grantees must meet at least 75% of attendance and operation requirements for each funding allocation (afterschool, summer, and HIT) at the grant level in Y1 to qualify for Y2 continuation funding for each respective allocation (afterschool, summer, and HIT).</p> <p>Grantees that met 100% of attendance and operation requirements in Y1 have the opportunity apply for additional funding to scale the program to include more participants.</p>
Cycle 13, Y3 (2028-2029)	Continuation	<p>Full award based on Y3 approved budget.</p> <p>Grantees must meet at least 85% of attendance and operation requirements for each funding allocation (afterschool, summer, and HIT) at the grant level in Y2 to qualify for Y3 continuation funding for each respective allocation (afterschool, summer, and HIT).</p> <p>Grantees that met 100% of attendance and operation requirements in Y2 have the opportunity apply for additional funding to scale the program to include more participants.</p>
Cycle 13, Y4 (2029-2030)	Continuation	<p>Grantees must meet at least 95% of attendance and operation requirements for each funding allocation (afterschool, summer, and HIT) at the grant-level in Y3 to qualify for Y4 continuation funding for each respective allocation (afterschool, summer, and HIT).</p> <p>Grantees that met 100% of attendance and operation requirements in Y3 have the opportunity apply for additional funding to scale the program to include more participants.</p>
Cycle 13, Y5 (2030-2031)	Continuation	<p>Grantees must meet at least 100% of attendance and operation requirements for each funding allocation (afterschool, summer, and HIT) at the grant level in Y4 to qualify for Y5 continuation funding for each respective allocation (afterschool, summer, and HIT).</p>

An analysis of actual per-pupil cost expended during Texas ACE - 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Cycle 11, Year 3 and Cycle 12, Year 1 as well as national norming data was used to determine per-pupil and total grant awards for Cycle 13. To support applicants in planning a budget with enough funding to meet grant requirements while planning for long-term sustainability, standard allocations have been determined. **All applicants will be issued the same standard per-pupil allocations.**



**Table 2: Standard Per-Pupil Allocations**

Per Pupil Allotments	
Targeted afterschool participants	\$2,000
Targeted summer participants	\$200
Targeted High-Impact Tutoring participants	\$200
Maximum per-pupil	<b>\$2,400</b>

Grants will be issued at a minimum of \$150,000 and a maximum of \$2,000,000.

**Table 3: Maximum Grant Awards**

Maximum Grant Awards	
Programs operating afterschool	\$1,800,000
Programs operating afterschool with HIT	\$1,900,000
Programs operating afterschool without HIT and in the summer	\$1,900,000
Programs operating afterschool with HIT and in the summer	\$2,000,000

## Selection of Applicants for Funding

### Selection of Applicants for Funding

Applications received by the deadline will follow a four-step scoring process.

#### Step 1: Eligibility Confirmation

TEA confirms entity and campus eligibility.

Nonprofits must submit proof of nonprofit status. See the Required Fiscal-Related Attachment section for more information.

**Applications that propose to serve one or more ineligible campuses will be deemed ineligible for peer review. If multiple applications are submitted for the same eligible campus or campuses, all such applications will be disqualified from peer review.**

#### Step 2: Peer Review

The application and attachments are scored by peer review from a national pool of qualified and trained reviewers with experience in K-12 education, community-based education and/or out-of-

school programs. Peer reviewers utilize a standard rubric to assess program viability and quality based on their experience and expertise.

All applications are scored five times. The lowest and highest scores are removed, and the three remaining scores are averaged.

### **Step 3: TEA Priority Scoring**

Applications that receive a score of at least 70 will move forward to TEA priority point scoring.

Priority points will be given to applications that include a campus or campuses that meet the following conditions:

- **Federal Priority 1: Target Services A** – The campus is implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities under ESSA, Title I Part A, Section 1111(d).
- **Federal Priority 1: Target Services B** – The campus has an at-risk average above the state average.
- **State Priority 1: Previous Performance** - The campus is an active center or center feeder in the Texas ACE – 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, Cycle 11 grant that met all student and adult family member participation requirements, and operation requirements in Year 3 and Year 4.

Priority points will be given to applications that include a center or centers that meet the following conditions:

- **Federal Priority 2: Partnership** - The center will operate in partnership between two eligible entities consisting of not less than one school system and another eligible entity. **A letter or letters of support outlining the partnership must be attached to the application.**
- **State Priority 2: 175+ Instructional Calendar** - The center will be hosted on a campus that has a 2025-2026 calendar with at least 175 instructional days. **A board approved calendar must be attached to the application.**

### **Step 4: Geographic Equity**

To support geographic equity of fund distribution, after priority points have been applied, the highest scoring application from each Education Service Center Region that moved to the priority point stage will be awarded. The remaining applications regardless of region, with a minimum score of 70 points, will be awarded in rank order.

TEA reserves the right to remove any application from scoring if any portion of the application does not meet requirements stated herein.

### **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 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 restricted indirect cost rate. For IHE and NPO grantees with only an approved unrestricted indirect cost rate, the maximum indirect administrative cost that can be claimed for this grant program is 8%.

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 the date of announcement, to grant start date, August 01, 2026.

## Application Elements

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This section identifies the types of requirements in which applicants must comply to be eligible for funding:

PS3013-Program Plan: Standard, Statutory and Program-specific Assurances

PS3014-Program Narrative: Standard Review Sections

PS3014-Program Narrative: Statutorily and TEA Required Responses (requirements defined in the authorizing statute and TEA program staff)

eGrants Budget Schedules  
Application Attachments  
Notice of Intent to Apply

## PS3013-Program Plan: Statutory, Standard and Program-Specific Assurances

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

### A. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- a. The applicant assures 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.
- b. The applicant acknowledges that 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.
- c. The applicant assures that the proposed program was developed, and will be carried out, in active collaboration with the schools that participating students attend. This includes sharing relevant data among the schools and any partnership entities in compliance with applicable laws relating to privacy and confidentiality and in alignment with the challenging State academic standards and local academic standards.
- d. The applicant accepts and will comply with [Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances](#) requirements.
- e. The applicant assures that the community has been given notice of intent to apply, and the application and any waiver request will be available for public review after submission of the application.
- f. The applicant assures that during the application process; meaningful consultation has taken place with Private Nonprofit School (PNP) Officials in the attendance zone. If the applicant is awarded and if private schools choose to participate, the signed Affirmation of Consultation with Private Nonprofit School (PNP) Officials, Title IV, Part B: 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC form will be submitted as required to the Federal Program Compliance Division – PNP Affirmations Smartsheet WorkApp by September 30, 2026.
- g. The applicant assures that 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.
- h. The applicant assures 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 competitive grant 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.

- i. The applicant will adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, Cycle 13, Year 1 Program Guidelines.
- j. The applicants will target students who primarily attend schools eligible for Title I schoolwide programs under section 1114 and the families of such students.
- k. The applicants acknowledge that grant funds remaining unexpended at the end of the annual expenditure reporting period will remain with TEA.
- l. The applicant acknowledges that non-public education grantees must have a valid data sharing agreement with the school system(s) attended by participants that provides required information for TX21st data collection and addressing Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements.

**B. Safety and Facility Use**

- a. The program will take place in a safe facility that is properly equipped and easily accessible. This includes providing access to classrooms, gyms, cafeterias, computer labs, laptops and other technology, equipment and/or spaces necessary to provide high-quality activities.
- b. Site Coordinators will have a dedicated space to conduct administrative requirements, store supplies and confidential information, and meet with staff, students, and parents.
- c. The program will always supervise activities with qualified staff at adult-to-student ratios of 1:15 or better.
- d. The program will comply with TEA orders to cease all or partial grant operations at any center when unsafe conditions are reasonably documented or observed.
- e. The program will offer all activities at an approved center or, on a limited and pre-approved basis, at an adjunct site or during an approved field trip. Feeder schools are not considered centers and must be approved as adjunct sites for limited program activities.

**C. Program Design and Implementation**

- a. The program will begin services for students and families no later than October 5, 2026, unless specifically approved by TEA.
- b. The program will begin services for students and families no later than the first Tuesday after Labor Day in all continuation years, unless specifically approved by TEA.
- c. The program will provide all services at no cost to participants or their families.

- d. The program will comply with the prohibition on generating program income described herein.
- e. The program will comply with limits on contracted services described herein.
- f. The program will adhere to the targeted student and adult family member participation requirements and meet the targeted participation numbers established in the Year 1 award. Applicants acknowledge that proposed amendments that reduce the level of services to below the Year 1 targeted participation numbers will be approved only in extreme or unusual circumstances and that failure to adhere to service targets may result in funding reductions or being disqualified for grant continuation.
- g. The program will adhere to the minimum operation requirements. Applicants acknowledge that failure to adhere to minimum requirements may result in funding reductions or being disqualified for grant continuation.
- h. The program will implement schedules that promote consistent participation by students most in need. The program will not use scheduling practices designed to temporarily enroll students just to meet participation targets and then remove them from the program.

**D. State Support Activities and Reporting Requirements**

- a. The program will participate in all state support activities as outlined in the Program Guidelines and Texas ACE Roadmap to High-Quality Out-of-School Time. This includes engaging with TEA and its contractors in conducting state-required activities, including but not limited to strategic planning, action planning or corrective actions, site visits, program quality and compliance monitoring, statewide evaluation, impact reporting, technical assistance, and training.
- b. The program will adhere to all Texas 21st Century Student Tracking (TX21st) system data reporting requirements, including entering program attendance at least weekly.

**E. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication**

- a. The program will regularly engage a group of stakeholders to serve as the Texas ACE steering committee charged with providing feedback to increase program quality, build community awareness, evaluate program effectiveness, and inform operations and sustainability plans. Membership will be voluntary, diverse, and qualified to support efforts to increase quality and visibility of the program in the community.
- b. The program will use the Texas ACE logo in all outreach and communication materials, and the grantee will comply with Texas ACE branding guidelines.
- c. The program will make annual Texas ACE Impact Reports available to the public.

**PS3014 -Program Narrative: Standard Review Sections**

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program and/or are required by TEA. The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding. The prompts below are required responses for all applications. Responses will be submitted through the eGrants application. TEA will only accept responses to these prompts entered

into the narrative boxes in eGrants. TEA will not accept narrative responses submitted by other means (i.e. attachments or emails).

**A. Shared Service Arrangements and Partnerships**

Shared Service Arrangements (SSAs), and Partnerships are permitted for this application. Only school systems and ESCs may apply as an SSA. If applying as the fiscal agent for an SSA, please use this space to list the fiscal agent and all member school systems. If applying in Partnership, use this space to list all partnering eligible entities. If applying as a single entity, state that in the space below.

**B. Identify/Address Needs**

Applicants must conduct a needs assessment to evaluate the community and campus needs that will be addressed at the proposed center(s) and to evaluate current available resources.

1. List at least three quantifiable needs, as identified in your needs assessment that these program funds will address. Include compelling demographic and academic performance data.
2. Describe the multiple data sources used, and stakeholder feedback provided when conducting the need assessment.
3. Describe why the needs assessment indicates the need for afterschool and summer programs.
4. Describe of how the proposed program will address those needs, including the needs of working families.

**C. SMART Goals**

Establish and list summative program-level SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timely) goals for each of the State Indictors that will be accomplished by August 31, 2027.

1. Improvement in school-day math academic performance
2. Improvement in school-day reading academic performance
3. Improvement in school-day attendance
4. Improvement in student engagement
5. Improvement in family engagement

**D. Measurable Progress**

Identify the quantifiable benchmarks that you will use at the end of the first three Year 1 grant quarters to measure progress toward meeting the SMART goals defined for the grant. Benchmarks should be identified for the following months:

1. November (2026)
2. February (2027)
3. May (2027)

**E. Project Evaluation and Modification**

If the quantifiable benchmarks or summative SMART goals do not show progress, describe how you will use evaluation data to modify your program. Include example(s) of how your organization successfully managed high quality grant implementation in the past.

## F. Request for Grant Funds

List all allowable grant-related activities for which you are requesting grant funds. Include the amounts budgeted for each activity. Group similar activities and costs together under the appropriate heading. If awarded, grantees will be required to budget planned expenditures in the BS6001 and associated budget schedules during negotiations.

1. Payroll Costs: Include a description of the cost(s) and a dollar amount. If you will not be budgeting in this class/object code, please enter "N/A" or "\$0."
2. Professional and Contracted Services: Include a description of the cost(s) and a dollar amount. If you will not be budgeting in this class/object code, please enter "N/A" or "\$0."
3. Supplies and Materials: Include a description of the cost(s) and a dollar amount. If you will not be budgeting in this class/object code, please enter "N/A" or "\$0."
4. Other Operating Costs: Include a description of the cost(s) and a dollar amount. If you will not be budgeting in this class/object code, please enter "N/A" or "\$0."
5. Capital Outlay: Include a description of the cost(s) and a dollar amount. If you will not be budgeting in this class/object code, please enter "N/A" or "\$0."
6. Total Grant Award Requested: Be sure to include the sum of the amounts in all class/object codes and any administrative costs in this total. If selected for award, the amount entered here will determine the amount awarded. Only a dollar amount will be accepted for this answer.

**\*All eGrants narrative response boxes have a character limit of 1500 including spaces.**

## PS3014 -Program Narrative: Statutorily and TEA Required Responses

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Statutory Requirements.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program and/or are required by TEA. The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding. The prompts below are required responses for all applications. Responses will be submitted through the eGrants application. TEA will only accept responses to these prompts entered into the narrative boxes in eGrants. TEA will not accept narrative responses submitted by other means (i.e. attachments or emails).

### G. One Texas ACE Community

Texas ACE grantees regularly engage a variety of stakeholders to support continuous improvement and plan for sustainability beyond the grant cycle.

1. Describe how the proposed program will recruit, screen, train, and retain required FTE positions, teachers, and other qualified staff. If the program plans to use volunteers in activities, describe how the program will encourage and use volunteers appropriately. If the program plans to employ high school students, explain how they will be supported and supervised.
2. Describe how the proposed program will engage a representative steering committee for the life of the grant cycle. Describe the proposed members, engagement methods, and primary responsibilities of the committee.



3. If applicable, describe the proposed partnership(s) between local educational agencies, community-based organizations, and any other public or private eligible entities. Include how the partnership will contribute to program goals and sustaining the program over time. To receive priority points, the applicant must provide information that demonstrates the activities proposed in the application are, as of the date of the submission of the application, not accessible to students who would be served; or that it would expand access to high-quality services available in the community. Enter "N/A" in the box below if not participating in a planned partnership.

#### **H. Two Crucial Times**

Texas ACE centers operate at two crucial times, afterschool and in the summer. More time engaged with high-quality learning experiences enables students to accelerate learning, particularly when using evidence-based design principles.

1. Indicate if the program will operate afterschool; afterschool with HIT; afterschool and in the summer, or afterschool with HIT and in the summer. Provide a need-based rationale for the selected schedule. If the program will offer additional activities in the morning or during other times when school is not in session, describe those activities and explain how they meet student needs. If the program plans to serve an Alternative Education Campus or Special Assignment School and is requesting a 30-day afterschool participation target, include a justification for this request.
2. Describe the recruitment, retention, and engagement strategies that will be conducted to meet target attendance goals for students and adult family members. Describe the applicant's plan to inform the community about the centers in a manner that is understandable and accessible.

#### **I. Three Key Strategies**

Texas ACE centers implement the key strategies of strong program operations, alignment with the school-day, and community involvement. These strategies ensure a safe and academically enriching environment that is community-centered and more likely to sustain.

1. Demonstrate how the proposed program will ensure strong program operations. Include a description of the transportation needs of participating students and how those needs will be addressed. Specifically describe how students participating in the program will travel safely to and from each center and home.
2. Describe how the proposed program will align with the school day. Demonstrate how the proposed program will coordinate federal, state, and local programs and make the most effective use of public resources. This includes coordination with, but not limited to, academics, food services, security, health services, and special education.
3. Describe how the proposed program will involve the local community in sustainability efforts. Demonstrate a preliminary plan for how the community learning center will continue after funding under this grant ends. Include how the resources provided by this grant will assist the program in local sustainability efforts.

#### J. Four Activity Types

Texas ACE centers strive to provide a variety of coherent activities aligned with local needs, resources, and interests. All centers must provide targeted academic support, student interest-based enrichment, college and career readiness, and family engagement activities.

1. Demonstrate how the program will use best practices, including research or evidence-based practices, to provide educational and related activities that will complement and enhance academic performance, achievement, postsecondary and workforce preparation, and positive youth development of the students.
2. Describe the proposed program activities within each activity type and how the activities are expected to improve student academic achievement and overall student success. If choosing to implement HIT and/or summer programming provide descriptions of these specific activities.

#### K. Five Measurable Goals

Texas ACE grantees report performance on goals determined by the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) and set local SMART goals aligned with state indicators. Refer to the summative SMART goals established for the proposed program and provide descriptions of how these goals will align with the “measures of effectiveness” set forth in federal statute.

1. Describe how this set of established performance measures is aimed at ensuring the availability of high-quality academic enrichment opportunities.
2. Describe how the proposed program is based upon evidence-based research that will help students meet the challenging State academic standards and any local academic standards.
3. Describe how the measures of student success align with the regular academic program of the school and the academic needs of participating students and how the program will collect the data necessary for the measures of student success.

**\*All eGrants narrative response boxes have a character limit of 1500 including spaces.**

#### eGrants Budget Schedules

**\*Attention: DO NOT OPEN THE EGRANTS BUDGET SCHEDULES.** This application will not utilize the BS6001 and its associated budget schedules for the initial submission. Submitting the budget is unnecessary for the initial application of this competitive grant opportunity. Instead, applicants must utilize the Request for Grant Funds section of the PS3014 to outline their proposed grant budget. Upon grant approval, selected applicants will need to complete the BS6001 and supporting budget schedules during the negotiation process. **IMPORTANT: If the BS6001 is**

**opened in error during the initial submission it must be saved with a zero-dollar balance to successfully submit the application.**

## **Application Attachments**

eGrants submission for this grant opportunity does require attachments. Please see the following attachments section of these program guidelines for more information.

There are three types of attachments that may be submitted with your application:

1. Required Fiscal-Related Attachments
2. Required Program Related Attachments
3. Priority Point(s) Attachments

\*Reminder: **Do not** submit unsolicited attachments. Unsolicited attachments will not be reviewed.

## **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.

### **Local Educational Agencies: ISDs, Open-Enrollment Charter Schools, and ESCs and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools**

- Please see the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Fiscal-Related Documentation Required to Be on File for required fiscal related attachments required to be on file with TEA.

### **Nonprofit Organizations, Excluding ISDs and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools**

Nonprofit organizations, excluding ISDs and open-enrollment charter schools, must submit proof of nonprofit status as a required fiscal-related attachment. The following documents can be used:

- Copy of a letter from the Internal Revenue Service recognizing that contributions to the organization are tax deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Statement from a state taxing body or the state attorney general certifying that the organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the state and that no part of its net earnings may lawfully benefit any private shareholder or individual
- Certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant
- Any item described above if that item applies to a state or national parent organization, together with a statement by the parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate

Any of the above documentation submitted must be in the name of the applicant to be eligible for consideration. A grant will not be awarded to a nonprofit organization that cannot demonstrate nonprofit status at the time of application submittal.

## 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.

The applicant must submit with the application in eGrants, the following TEA Defined required program-related attachments:

1. **Center Per-Pupil Allocation Table:** All applicants must submit one table that includes all centers in the proposed program. The form is provided by TEA on the Grant Opportunities page linked with this RFA.
2. **Cycle 13 Strategic Plan I- Center Level Information:** All applicants must submit this via Smartsheet using [this link](#). One submission form must be completed for each center included in the proposed program. Attach a copy of each form submitted to the eGrants application. These can be combined into one PDF and attached or attached individually. Attaching as one combined PDF is preferable. (See *Adding Attachments* below for naming convention instructions if attaching individually)
3. **PNP Equitable Services Attachment:** All applicants must submit one form. The form is provided by TEA on the Grant Opportunities page linked with this RFA.
4. **Proof of Nonprofit Status:** Only nonprofit applicants must submit this. This is provided by the nonprofit applicant. See *Required Fiscal Related Attachments*, the previous section.
5. **Evaluation Plan:** Only applicants choosing to employee or contract with an independent local evaluator must submit this attachment. The evaluation plan must demonstrate that services will go beyond what is provided through state provided Impact Reports.

**Inclusion of the required attachments 1-5 is necessary to determine applicant eligibility. Failure to include these required attachments could result in an application being disqualified or being deemed ineligible.**

\*Reminder: **Do not** submit unsolicited attachments. Unsolicited attachments will not be reviewed.

## Priority Points Attachment(s)

The applicant must submit with the application in eGrants the following TEA Defined Attachment(s) to be considered for priority points:

1. **Signed letter(s) of support:** If applying for Federal Priority 2: Partnerships. These can be combined into one PDF and attached or attached individually. Attaching as one combined PDF is preferable. (See *Adding Attachments* below for naming convention instructions if attaching individually)

2. **Board approved school calendar(s):** If applying for State Priority 2: 175+ Instructional Calendar. Attach for each campus applying for this priority. These can be combined into one PDF and attached or attached individually. Attaching as one combined PDF is preferable. (See *Adding Attachments* below for naming convention instructions if attaching individually)

\*Reminder: **Do not** submit unsolicited attachments. Unsolicited attachments will not be reviewed.

## Adding Attachments

The instructions in the following sections describe how to attach files to an eGrants application, if applicable.

### General Instructions

The size of each attachment cannot exceed 10MB. If you have a larger file, use a different scanning setting or zip the file to make it take up less space.

The only supported browser is Google Chrome. If you are using another browser, please change to Google Chrome before attaching files.

Documents only need to be attached once. Do not attach duplicate documents when completing an amendment. Remove an existing attached document prior to attaching a new version.

**\*Important:** Applications cannot be submitted without the TEA Defined Attachments **Center Per-Pupil Allocation Table, Cycle 13 Strategic Plan I and the PNP Equitable Services Attachment** being utilized.

### Naming Attachments

Required and priority points attachments have a TEA Defined title in the eGrants application that can only be utilized once. If applicants need to attach required or priority points attachments for each center/campus individually rather than a single PDF, after selecting the appropriate TEA Defined Attachment for the first one, you must select the Optional Attachment radio button and follow this naming convention for each additional attachment. Name the files you are going to attach with no spaces (for example, 501C3letter.doc or 5013C\_letter.doc) and no special characters. Use a meaningful name that identifies the specific document (Cycle 13 Strategic Plan 2,3,4...etc.; board approved school calendar 3, 4, 5...etc.).

Make sure that each attachment has a valid extension (.pdf, .doc, .rtf, .xls, .bmp, .txt, .docx, .xlsx).

Note that attachments with very long names may not be able to be uploaded. If you have difficulty, try renaming the file and starting over.

### Scanning Documents

If a document must be scanned to create an electronic copy, use the following hints to ensure that the document size is as small as possible:

Use an OCR or DPI setting of 200 DPI.

Scanned files must be in PDF format.

### Zippping Files

If your files are too large, add them to a zip file to save space (download a free version of [WinZip](#) and find instructions on creating zip files).

### Attaching Files to an eGrants Application

1. Ensure that the document is saved on your computer, using the naming instructions above.
2. On the grant application's Table of Contents page, select Attach File.
3. Select the appropriate radio button for a TEA Defined Attachment or an Optional Attachment.
4. Select the Browse button. A standard Windows browser appears. Find the file.
5. Select Attach.
6. Confirm the document title appears under Documents Submitted in This Version; refresh the page if necessary. If the attachment does not appear, you may have to rename your document with a shorter name and start over.
7. Repeat this process to attach all your documents.

### Notice of Intent to Apply

For competitive grants, prospective applicants are requested to submit the [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) (NOI) by the date specified in the Grant Timeline. The NOI provides helpful information that allows TEA staff to plan for the management of the applications and review processes. Failure to notify TEA of the intent to apply will **not** disqualify the applicant from applying for grant funds.

The NOI is published along with the RFA on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page.

## Program Elements

### Description of Program

Texas ACE is an afterschool and summer program funded by the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant. The purpose of the funding is to establish or expand high quality out-of-school time academic and non-academic learning experiences to students attending schools that qualify for Title I funding and their families. This application is grounded in the [Texas ACE Roadmap to High-Quality Out-of-School-Time](#). It is recommended that applicants review The Texas ACE Roadmap to fully understand the program expectations and required state support activities.

### State Support Activities for Continuous Improvement

To help awarded applicants (grantees) meet program requirements and build local capacity for implementing and sustaining high-quality programs, **TEA provides a suite of state support activities and resources. Participation in these activities is required.**

The Texas ACE Roadmap includes three cycles of continuous improvement, each with corresponding required state support activities:

- **5 to Drive: The Starting Line** (*Health Monitoring*)
- **Coaching to Quality: The Journey** (*Quality Support*)
- **Program Evaluation: The Checkpoint** (*State & Local Evaluation*)

Failure to participate in state support activities may result in disqualification from annual continuation. Grantees who choose to contract services for program planning, implementation, training, technical assistance, or evaluation may do so only if those services supplement rather than duplicate the support provided by TEA.

TEA reserves the right to redesign or modify state support activities and resources throughout the grant cycle.

## **5 to Drive: The Starting Line** (*Health Monitoring*)

The 5 to Drive monitors grantees to ensure programs remain in good health, or in compliance, with minimum program expectations. State support activities aligned to the 5 to Drive are:

- A grantee-specific dashboard that tracks progress across the standard 5 to Drive monitoring items.
- Monthly virtual check-in meetings with an assigned Performance Coach that include review of 5 to Drive health status and action planning if a compliance item is off-track.

The five monitoring items of the 5 to Drive are:

- **One Texas ACE Community**
- **Two Crucial Times**
- **Three Key Strategies**
- **Four Activity Types**
- **Five Measurable Goals**

The 5 to Drive is updated with each new grant cycle. The 2024-2025 [Texas ACE Health Monitoring Rubric](#) may be accessed to understand all current monitoring items.

Below are grant requirements and monitoring items that are particularly important to review in determining if Cycle 13 is a fit for eligible entities considering this grant opportunity.

**One Texas ACE Community: Staff, Steering Committee, and Partnerships**

## Required Staffing

Grantees must budget salary for the following full-time required staff positions. Lead teachers or administrators acting in other capacities during the school day cannot satisfy the requirements of these full-time positions.

Exceptions: For grants that operate only one center, one person may be responsible for both the Project Director and Site Coordinator responsibilities. In addition, grantees operating fewer than six centers may employ one half-time Program Specialist.

- **One dedicated full-time Project Director per grant** serving as the primary point-of-contact to TEA and TEA's contractors, qualified to lead compliance and continuous quality improvement at the grant level, including but not limited to:
  - **Annual Strategic Planning** - conduct annual strategic planning across the grant to ensure programming is high-quality, data-driven, student-focused, and grant compliant.
  - **Program Compliance** - ensure adherence to TEA systems and reporting requirements for compliance and quality monitoring, technical assistance and training, and state and local evaluation.
  - **Operations Management** - ensure a high-quality, safe, and supportive environment for program participants, staff, and partners.
  - **Budget Management** - ensure fiscal compliance.
  - **Staff Management** – recruit, supervise, and train qualified program staff.
  - **Community and Stakeholder Engagement** - maintain productive working relationships with the state office, contractors, district and school staff, program staff, partners, and vendors.
  - **Internal Monitoring** - conduct and document ongoing internal monitoring to ensure quality and compliance and provide feedback to each center through site observations, data reviews, stakeholder surveys, and related activities.
- **One dedicated full-time Program Specialist per grant** qualified to provide subject matter expertise and support in one or more of the following areas depending on the needs of the local program.
  - **Family Engagement** – provide professional development and selection, design, and implementation of family engagement activities that increase family literacy and meaningful connections to school-day learning.
  - **Community Engagement** – build connections between the school, the community learning centers, and community partners to support implementation of high-quality student and family activities, and program sustainability. Support or lead the Texas ACE steering committee.
  - **Accelerated Learning** – manage implementation of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), High-Impact Tutoring (HIT) and other school-day aligned academic support. Aid in aligning enrichment, college and career readiness, and family engagement with



academic support. This may include selecting, designing, and evaluating activities for students and families; coordinating with district and campus staff; leading ongoing professional development, program observations, and/or coaching to improve program quality.

- **Summer Learning** – manage design and implementation of a robust and rigorous summer program that includes school-day aligned academic support, student interest-based enrichment, college and career readiness, and aligned family engagement activities. This may include selecting, designing, and evaluating activities for students and families; coordinating with district and campus staff; leading ongoing professional development, program observations, and/or coaching to improve program quality.
- **One dedicated full-time Site Coordinator per center** qualified to lead a high-quality program at the center level, including but not limited to:
  - Development and implementation of a well-balanced, student-focused activity schedule that is designed to meet local needs and use available resources.
  - Recruitment, retention, and management of center staff.
  - Recruitment, retention, and ongoing support for program participants.
  - Daily operations management to ensure a safe, supportive, and educationally enriching environment.
  - Daily relationship building and professional communication with school staff, program staff, community partners, and adult family members.
  - Data entry and reporting as required by TEA systems and grant requirements.

## Recommended Staffing

Staffing at Texas ACE centers varies based on local needs and resources. In addition to the required full-time positions, below is a list of recommended and allowable staffing.

- **Certified teachers** – supplemental pay for teachers leading tutoring or activities within the four activity types. Supplemental pay issued through the 21st CCLC grant must be 100% dedicated to the 21st CCLC program.
- **Support roles** – teaching assistants, youth workers, nurses, security officers and other hourly or extra-duty roles necessary for implementation of a safe, high-quality program. Extra-duty or hourly pay issued through the 21st CCLC grant must be 100% dedicated to the 21st CCLC program.
- **High school students** – programs may pay high school students to work for the program if it is allowable within local policies. High school students paid with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC may not be counted as program participants. High school students must remain under adult supervision, should be properly selected and trained in accordance with local policies, and should not be solely responsible for students.
- **Volunteers** – programs may use qualified volunteers as allowed within local policies.

- **Contracted activity providers** – programs may contract with organizations or service providers to lead student and family activities. However, it is unallowable to contract with an organization or service provider to divest oversight of the program administration or implementation to another entity.
- **Additional Program Specialists** – programs may hire additional subject matter experts as determined by the needs assessment to offer grant level support in family engagement, community engagement, accelerated learning, or summer learning.

### Steering Committee

All Texas ACE programs are required to convene a representative steering committee that meets at least once per term, with a recommended monthly meeting cadence. Steering committees provide community and campuses stakeholders an opportunity to engage in program development, implementation, and evaluation; and support data-driven continuous improvement and program sustainability.

### Partnerships

A partnership is a formal agreement between two or more eligible entities that expands the capacity of those organizations to achieve shared goals. Partnerships increase the scope or quality of services that could be provided by the grantee alone and may increase sustainability. Partnerships often include in-kind contributions that support the objectives of the program, such as, but not limited to, participation on the steering committee, offering activities to students and families for free at a reduced cost, providing professional development, participating in school-day events or other community outreach opportunities, and supporting program sustainability.

**Shared Service Agreements (SSA) are not necessarily partners.** If the SSA functions only to share administrative and fiscal responsibilities but does not but does not participate with the grantee as an active partner as described above, it is not a partnership for the purposes of Texas ACE.

**Contractors are not necessarily partners.** If a contractor provides services on behalf of the grantee, such as tutoring services or enrichment activities, but does not participate with the grantee as an active partner as described above, it is not a partnership for the purposes of Texas ACE.

To receive priority points for applying in partnership, the applicant must submit letter(s) of support that demonstrate:

- How the partnership will establish or expand high-quality activities beyond what would be available without the partnership.
- Agreement on center locations and ensure that the center locations are safe, properly equipped facilities appropriate for a high-quality afterschool and summer program.
- Development of aligned policies and procedures that comply with all grant requirements, federal, and state laws.
- Joint participation on the steering committee and other strategies to support continuous improvement and program sustainability.

The letter(s) of support must be signed by leadership from the applicant, leadership for the partnering eligible entity, and all campus principals to be served by the partnership. When an applicant receives priority points for applying in partnership, it is expected that the partnership will extend for the life of the grant cycle and beyond. Awarded grantees that receive priorities for partnership must submit a formal Partnership Agreement annually. If a partnership created for this priority is dissolved or substantially changed, this information must be reported during the annual strategic planning and grant continuation process for approval.

To support partnerships, in accordance with Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, the Texas Education Agency provides a list of prescreened external organizations, as described under section 4203(a)(11), for the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

- The 2025-2026 [Prescreened External Organizations List](#) is now available.

This list is a resource to support applicants in finding partners within each Education Service Center region. **Inclusion on the Prescreened External Organizations list does not constitute TEA's endorsement or approval of the quality of programs and services offered by an external organization.**

## **Two Crucial Times: Operation and Participation Requirements**

### **Operational Facilities**

Texas ACE operates at designated centers, which are typically eligible campuses. However, a center may be a non-campus facility if it has been approved by the school system served by the grant. Each grant application is limited to a maximum of 10 centers, with each center serving a primary campus and up to two additional feeder schools. Additionally, adjunct sites may be used in conjunction with the center on a limited basis with prior approval.

#### **I. 21<sup>st</sup> Center Community Learning Center Community Learning Center (Center)**

Applicants may propose operating up to 10 centers.

A center is the program's approved physical site where daily activities are provided for students and family members. A center is characterized by an appropriate, safe, and equipped physical facility; defined hours of operation; a routine and consistent schedule of activities for a well-defined student group; and program-dedicated staff operating under an organized administrative structure. Each center will operate on a TEA-approved schedule that meets or exceeds program service requirements and provides a consistent and dependable schedule of weekly activities for all students enrolled.

A center may be in a facility other than a campus only if that facility is at least as accessible to the students as a campus location and the facility is approved by the school system served by the grant. Transportation must be provided to non-campus centers, and the transportation time shall not exceed 20 minutes from school dismissal to center arrival. Transportation must be operated in compliance with all related local, state, and federal statute and guidance.

**Centers must be located within a reasonable geographic distance**, such that the Project Director can conduct regular site visits or provide real-time ad hoc support without requiring overnight stay. TEA reserves the right to disqualify applications that do not propose to serve centers within a reasonable geographic distance.

**Requests to change approved center locations during the grant cycle will not be approved except in very limited circumstances.**

## II. **Program Feeder Schools**

The number of program feeder schools is limited to no more than 2 per center.

A feeder school is an eligible campus from which students are routinely transported to the approved center for regular participation in the Texas ACE program. The learning environments in a center's feeder pattern must be appropriate to the needs of the grade levels served. For example, centers for elementary students work best on elementary campuses, and secondary students are most appropriately served on secondary campuses.

Feeder schools must be within reasonable geographic proximity to the host center.

Transportation must be provided from the feeder school to the center, and the transportation time shall not exceed 20 minutes from school dismissal to center arrival. Transportation must be operated in compliance with all related local, state, and federal statute and guidance.

## III. **Adjunct Sites**

An adjunct site is a physical location hosting specialized activities that cannot take place at the designated center – usually because of facility limitations or the need for specialized equipment. Typical examples include a local community college or university, public library, science center, nature center, park, museum, or community center.

Activities taking place at adjunct sites must meet all the same requirements as those offered at centers. Typical examples of activities that occur at adjunct sites include field science, lab experiments, large art projects, cultural exploration projects, research projects, and structured physical activity.

Adjunct sites are not required to be listed in the application but must be reviewed and approved prior to serving students. If awarded, applicants will provide information about adjunct sites if applicable.

## **Operational Requirements**

Texas ACE operates during two crucial times: afterschool and summer. While centers may also offer programming in the mornings, during school holidays or breaks, or during intersession, these additional times do **not** count toward the minimum operational requirements. All centers are required to provide afterschool programming. In addition, centers may choose to incorporate High-Impact Tutoring (HIT) as part of their afterschool program and may also opt to offer summer programming.

### I. **Afterschool**

All Texas ACE centers are required to operate afterschool programming that meets the minimum operational requirements established by TEA.

During the school year, centers must provide programming five days per week (Monday through Friday) after school. Exceptions are permitted only when the school is closed (e.g., holidays, inclement weather, special events). Programs must operate for a minimum of 155 days per school year.

Afterschool programming must begin at school dismissal and continue until at least 6:00 PM, with a minimum duration of two hours. For example, if school dismisses at 4:15 PM, the program must remain open until at least 6:15 PM to satisfy the two-hour requirement.

School systems operating on a four-day instructional calendar are still required to provide Texas ACE programming five days per week, and all program days must extend until 6:00 PM. Texas 21st CCLC funds may not be used to support the traditional school day. All activities funded by 21st CCLC must comply with grant assurances and requirements. Additionally, school systems operating on a four-day calendar may not use the fifth day solely for drop-in childcare.

## **II. Summer**

Centers that choose to operate in summer must meet the minimum summer operational requirements established by TEA. The minimum requirement is 25 days, 6 hours per day, 4 days per week.

To be impactful, summer programs must be strategically planned. Applicants choosing to offer a summer program are expected to use planning tools aligned to TEA's [Summer Learning Framework](#) to develop an intentionally designed program.

School systems implementing summer programming under the state-funded Additional Days School Year (ADSY) program are encouraged to consider how Texas ACE can supplement ADSY programming by establishing or expanding summer offerings. Thoughtful coordination of these two programs is a recommended strategy for effective use of public funding sources. ADSY and Texas ACE requirements have been designed to work together cohesively. If priorities or requirements create a conflict with implementation, awarded grantees should reach out to [21stCentury@tea.texas.gov](mailto:21stCentury@tea.texas.gov).

### **I. High-Impact Tutoring (HIT)**

High Impact Tutoring is measured through student participation goals, not through operations requirements.

Texas ACE centers are encouraged to implement High Impact Tutoring (HIT) using High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM). To learn more about HIT and accelerated instruction, visit [Accelerated Instruction | Texas Education Agency](#).

## **II. Family Engagement**

All centers must provide family engagement opportunities for adult family members.

Centers are required to offer at least one family engagement activity that is at least 45 minutes in length, every month that the program is open.

**Table 4: Minimum Operational Requirements**

	<b>PK-5</b>	<b>6-12</b>	
<b>Afterschool</b>	155 days from school dismissal until 6pm (and for at least 2 hours) 5 days per week	155 days from school dismissal until 6pm (and for at least 2 hours) 5 days per week	Required
<b>Summer</b>	25 days 6 hours per day 4 days per week	25 days 6 hours per day 4 days per week	Optional
<b>High Impact Tutoring</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Family Engagement</b>	at least monthly 45 minutes or longer	at least monthly 45 minutes or longer	Required

**All center profiles in the Texas 21st Century Student Tracking (TX21st) system data will be set to the program schedule minimum requirements.**

If awarded, grantees submit center operation schedules demonstrating how these minimum grant requirements will be met. In considering if this grant opportunity is a fit, it is critical to understand the minimum operational requirement. Failure to meet the operation requirements may lead to funding reductions, disqualification for continuation applications, or impact future 21<sup>st</sup> CLCC eligibility.

#### **Targeted Participation Requirements**

Texas ACE is not intended to be a drop-in program. Applicants must develop strategies for recruiting students with a demonstrated need for the program and retaining those students' overtime. Ideally, students enroll in the program and continue attending over fall, spring, and summer and over multiple years. Texas ACE state evaluations have consistently found that the extent of participation in the program is related to positive student outcomes, and research from RAND indicates that access to a 25-day summer program can mitigate summer learning loss. With these findings in mind, **only students with documented program attendance that meet the thresholds in Table 5 will be counted towards the targeted attendance requirements.**

In the required attachments, Cycle 13 Strategic Plan Part I: Center-Level Information and the Center Per-Pupil Allocation Table, applicants must indicate

- the number of students they will serve afterschool, afterschool with HIT, and in the summer, and
- the number of adult family members they will serve during fall, spring, and summer.

Note that the method for counting participant numbers differs from previous cycles and should be reviewed carefully when setting targeted participation numbers. Targets must reflect the number of participants meeting each requirement (afterschool, summer, HIT), and individual students may count toward more than one target. Refer to Table 6 for examples.

Exception to 60 day requirement – Applicants proposing to serve Alternative Education Campuses or Special Assignment Schools may request a 30-day afterschool participation target, by providing a needs-based justification in the narrative response of the application.

In considering if this grant opportunity is a fit, it is critical to understand the targeted participation requirements. Failure to meet the targeted participation requirements may lead to funding reductions, disqualification for continuation applications, or impacts on future 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC eligibility.

**Table 5: Targeted Participation Requirements**

	<b>PK-5</b>	<b>6-12</b>	
<b>Afterschool *</b>	60 days 120 minutes per day	60 days 90 minutes per day	Required
<b>Summer</b>	15 days 240 minutes per day	15 days 240 minutes per day	Optional
<b>High Impact Tutoring</b>	30 days 30 minutes per day	30 days 30 minutes per day	Optional
<b>Family Engagement</b>	1 day, 45 minutes	1 day, 45 minutes	Required

\*Minutes attended during morning programs count towards the total minutes per day, per participant. Therefore, although morning programs do not count towards operational minimum requirements, they do count towards the afterschool targeted participation goal.

**Table 6: Targeted Participation Count Examples**

	<b>Afterschool</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>HIT</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Student A</b> Grade 2	60 days 120 minutes per day	15 days 240 minutes per day	30 days 30 minutes per day	Student A met the target for afterschool, summer, and HIT.
<b>Student B</b> Grade 4	20 days 120 minutes per day	15 days 240 minutes per day	0 days	Student B met the summer target.
<b>Student C</b> Grade 7	85 days 90 minutes per day	0 days	30 days 30 minutes per day	Student C met the afterschool and HIT target.
<b>Student D</b> Grade 9	60 days 30 minutes in the morning 60 minutes afterschool	20 days 240 minutes per day	0 days	Student D met the afterschool and summer target.
<b>Student E</b> Grade 12	40 days 90 minutes per day	10 days 240 minutes per day	10 days 30 minutes per day	Student E did not meet any of the targets.

**Three Key Strategies: Strong Operations, School-day Alignment, Community Involvement**

- Applicants must propose strategies that reflect local needs and available resources, ensuring that each center operates effectively, aligns with the school day, and actively engages the community. Awarded applicants will complete a strategic planning process and receive 1-to-1 coaching to build upon the strategies developed for the application.

**Four Activity Types: Targeted Academic Support, Student Interested-Based Enrichment, College and Career Readiness, Family Engagement**



- Applicants must propose a well-rounded activity schedule that considers local needs and resources. Awarded applicants will complete a strategic planning process and receive 1-to-1 coaching to build upon the schedule developed for the application.

#### **Five Measurable Goals: Local SMART Goals Aligned to State Indicators and Federal GPRA**

- Applicants must propose SMART goals that consider local needs and resources. Awarded applicants will complete a strategic planning process and receive 1-to-1 coaching to build upon the SMART goals developed for the application.

### **Additional Monitoring**

In addition to ongoing programmatic monitoring through the 5 to Drive, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees are subject to fiscal and compliance monitoring through TEA's [Risk Assessment](#) and Federal Fiscal Monitoring process within the [Department of Grant Compliance and Administration](#).

### **Coaching to Quality: The Journey (*Quality Support*)**

The Coaching to Quality system supports grantees along their journey to provide high-quality programing. The Coaching to Quality system is designed to meet grantees where they are and support them in moving beyond compliance to focus on providing a need-based, high-quality program that will improve student academic, attendance, and engagement outcomes. State support activities provided within the CTQ are:

- The Coaching to Quality (CTQ) tool - using the CTQ, grantees receive two in-person visits per grant year from an assigned Performance Coach and then receive feedback to improve program quality. Applicants are encouraged to review the [Coaching to Quality \(CTQ\) tool](#).
- Monthly virtual check-in meetings with an assigned Performance Coach that include feedback from bi-annual CTQ visits.
- Annual strategic planning support.
- Training and professional development - TEA offers a robust annual calendar of in-person and online training opportunities to grantees. Applicants are encouraged to review the [Texas ACE 2025-26 Training Calendar](#).

### **Program Evaluation: The Checkpoint (*State and Local Evaluation*)**

**State Evaluation** -TEA conducts an ongoing state evaluation of Texas ACE that includes extensive research on what factors lead to high-quality programing and improved program outcomes for students. Grantees are required to support data collection, surveys, interviews, and related activities as part of the state evaluation. All previous state evaluations are available at [Out-of-School Learning Opportunities | Texas Education Agency](#).

**Local Evaluation** - In alignment with the annual statewide evaluation, TEA provides grantees with [Texas ACE Impact Reports](#). Awarded grantees work with their Performance Coach to complete the reports. The Impact Reports must be made available to the community served by the grant.

**Grantees may choose to contract with an independent evaluator only if the services provided go beyond what is provided through the Impact Reports.** Grantees are expected to use the results from the Impact Reports, and any additional evaluation services to action plan and improve programming over time. Grantees using an independent evaluator must attach an evaluation plan when applying.

## Other State Activity Supports and Resources

- **Data Collection and Reporting System** - TEA developed the Texas 21st CCLC Student Tracking system (TX21st) to collect data required to monitor progress, conduct program evaluation, and provide required reports to the federal program. Grantees use the system to enter daily activity attendance and outcomes data. Grantees have access to reports to monitor adherence to grant requirements in real time.
- **My Texas ACE website** - Texas ACE grantees have continuous access to a variety of federal and state resources including an extensive library of training resources including webinars, resources, and sample templates.
- **Texas ACE brand** - TEA requires use of this dynamic tool to communicate the nature and characteristics of the statewide program, create statewide awareness of services, and identify Texas ACE centers. Grantees may adopt their own branding but are also required to include the Texas ACE branding in their local program materials and promotions.
- **Texas ACE Resource Network (ARN)** - TEA facilitates a subgroup of grantees that provides input on trends and best practices across the State to increase professional interaction of local program leadership and respond to local needs. Awarded grantees have the opportunity to apply for participation in the ARN.

### SMART Goal

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), SMART Goals, Additional SMART Goal Guidance from TEA, and Measurable Goals and Progress.

### Measurable Progress

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), SMART Goals, Additional SMART Goal Guidance from TEA, and Measurable Goals and Progress.

### Performance Measures

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

- The applicant agrees to collect student and adult participant data and other data within the designated TEA terms (fall, spring, summer, annual) and enter all required data into the TX21st

Data System. TEA uses this data along with data from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to:

- Assess grantee progress toward full implementation
- Assess grantee progress toward program goals
- Monitor grantee compliance with program requirements
- Produce required federal reports to the U.S. Department of Education
- Create sets of data for state-level program evaluation

Awarded grantees are responsible for establishing local processes that protect confidential student information and education records according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Awarded grantees must review and approve data on a routine basis, to ensure data is both accurate and entered on time. **Weekly data entry of attendance information is required; daily data entry is highly recommended.**

Measures may change or develop over the course of the project based on federal and state reporting requirements. **Non-attainment of targets may result in funding reduction or non-continuation or renewal of the grant.**

The State is required to report on the following mandatory Federal Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures. Data collection for the GPRA will be collected from the PEIMS system except for GPRA #3 and #6, which must be entered in the Texas 21st CCLC Student Tracking system (TX21st) by the grantee.

- Percentage of students in Grades 4–8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who demonstrate growth in reading/language arts on state assessments.
- Percentage of students in Grades 4–8 participating in 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who demonstrate growth in mathematics on state assessments.
- Percentage of students in Grades 7–8 and 10–12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer with a prior-year unweighted grade point average (GPA) less than 3.0 who demonstrated an improved GPA.
- Percentage of youth in Grades 1–12 participating in 21st CCLC during the school year and summer who: a. had a school-day attendance rate at or below 90% in the prior school year; and b. demonstrated an improved attendance rate in the current school year.
- Percentage of students in Grades 1–12 attending 21st CCLC programming during the school year and summer who experienced a decrease in in-school suspensions compared to the previous school year.
- Percentage of students in Grades 1–5 participating in 21st CCLC programming in the school year and summer who demonstrated an improvement in teacher-reported engagement in learning.

In addition to the federal GPRA, the State has established the following state indicators.

- Improve School-day Academic Performance in Math
- Improve School-day Academic Performance in Reading

- Improve School-day Attendance
- Improve School-day Engagement in Learning
- Improve Family Engagement

### Limits on Contracted Evaluators

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

When a grantee chooses, or is required under a grant, to hire a contracted evaluator, TEA believes that the evaluator must have the capability to remain independent and objective in carrying out the evaluation. “Independent and objective” implies that there is no influence or control, real or perceived, exerted on the evaluator by any person who is involved in the provision of program services. Therefore, the only way in which a contracted evaluator can be truly independent, and objective is not to be involved in any manner with the provision of program services or activities. Otherwise, the evaluator is, at least in part, evaluating its own services.

In addition, TEA is aware that some grant writers develop and design the grant program, write the entire grant application, and then wish to evaluate the grant program. TEA also believes that this scenario poses a conflict of interest for the evaluator, in that the evaluator is evaluating the grant program that he or she designed, developed, and wrote. Again, it is not possible for the evaluator to function independently and objectively if the evaluator performed in this capacity. It is certainly acceptable for the grant writer to receive some information from a potential evaluator to include in the evaluation section of the grant application with regard to an appropriate evaluation plan or design, but communication between the grant writer and evaluator should be limited to that specific topic.

### Limits on Other Contracted Services

Grant funds may not be used as a pass-through to another entity to operate the Texas ACE program. Applicants are not allowed to divest oversight of the program administration or implementation to another entity including, but not limited to, entities applying in partnership. The fiscal and program compliance and assurances to all requirements herein are the responsibility of the applicant.

Grantees are prohibited from contracting or employing with the grant funds individuals or entities hired to prepare the grant application. Grant funds must not be used to pay for grant writing services.

## 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
- 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)
- Other Operating Costs
- Capital outlay

Under ESSA, each eligible entity that receives an award may carry out activities designed to advance student academic achievement and support student success, including:

- Academically aligned enrichment activities, structured mentoring programs, accelerated learning and tutoring services that are aligned with the challenging state academic standards, including the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and state-required assessments and end of course exams.
- Well-rounded education activities, including credit recovery or attainment and dual credit programs for secondary students.
- Literacy education, including financial literacy.
- Activities that support a healthy and active lifestyle, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical activity.
- Services for individuals with disabilities.
- Activities that emphasize language skills and academic achievement for students who are English learners.
- Cultural programs.

- Telecommunications and technology education programs.
- Expanded library service hours.
- Programs that assist students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled to improve their academic achievement.
- Drug and violence prevention and counseling.
- Activities that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), including computer science, and activities that foster innovation in learning by supporting nontraditional STEM education teaching methods.
- Programs that partner with in-demand fields of the state or local workforce or build career competencies and career readiness and ensure that career readiness skills are aligned with the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Providing parents and legal guardians of students participating in the grant program with active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Specific activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

- Salaries for the required Texas ACE project director, site coordinators, program specialist, and instructional staff to implement and deliver the program.
- Hourly pay for high school students leading tutorials or other activities under the supervision of an adult staff member, if the student is not a Texas ACE participant at the center. Students working for the program may not be counted toward program attendance.
- Extra-duty pay for staff working beyond their normal contracted hours to provide activities/services that supplement the regular school day for the local Texas ACE program.
- Independent evaluation (internal or external) costs up to, but no more than \$2,000 per center for a full year of evaluation services. This is considered an administrative cost. Evaluation services must go beyond the evaluation support provided by the State through Impact Reports and the state-wide evaluation.
- Supplies and materials for student and family engagement activities.
- Computer hardware and software required to implement the program.
- Nutritional snacks for students and families of students during program offerings.
- Travel to required Texas ACE state and regional training, meetings, conferences, and workshops.
- Transportation for students from feeder schools to the program center and transportation for all program students from the center home.
- Virtual family engagement activities (virtual student activities are not allowable).

## 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 if 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.

To avoid excessive out-of-state travel costs and to balance this expenditure with the needs of local communities, grantees may expend funds for a reasonable number of staff members to attend no more than one approved out-of-state conferences each year. Grantees are encouraged to present best practices if attending out-of-state conferences. Requests for out-of-state travel outside of the pre-approved conferences listed must be submitted at least 45 days in advance to the TEA's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC State Coordinator.

Pre-approved conferences are limited to:

- U.S. Department of Education's Summer Institute,
- National Afterschool Association,
- Foundations, Inc.'s Beyond School Hours Conference,
- National Summer Learning Association Conference,
- Best of Out of School Time (BOOST) Conference.

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.

### Field Trips

Field trips may be funded under the grant program. Only the following types of field trips may be allowable:

Educational field trips are allowed when they consist of approvable, planned instructional activities that involve students in learning experiences that are difficult to duplicate in a classroom situation. Field trips must support Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), be reasonable in cost, and be necessary to accomplish the objectives of the local ACE program. Examples of educational field trips include the following

- Laboratory and field investigation
- Supplemental curricular academic activities that are focused on science, technology, engineering, and/or math

- Educational tours and interactive activities with local science centers, arts centers, museums, zoos, horticultural centers, historic sites, archaeological sites, or nature preserves
- Intentionally directed time at public libraries to conduct research and access reading and study materials
- Organized visits to colleges and universities to encourage interest in and familiarity with the pursuit of higher education
- Unallowable types of field trips include those that:
  - are not reasonable in cost or are not necessary to accomplish the objectives of the grant program
  - occur on a frequent basis
  - primarily are for social, entertainment, or recreational purposes
  - transport students to a location further than necessary when a similar experience is available closer to the center
  - require staying overnight
  - supplant and do not supplement local, state, or federal expenditures or activities, including those that expend funds on students who are not enrolled in the Texas ACE program
  - are not properly documented

Before budgeting for field trip expenses, applicants are encouraged to explore cost-saving opportunities to bring remote locations into the classroom by arranging for hands-on engaging presentations at the center or by accessing live and interactive virtual tours and educational experiences available online.

Field trips will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Justification for Educational Field Trips 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:
  - Capital Lease Liability — Principal Costs (6512)
  - Capital Lease Liability – Interest Costs (6522)
  - Interest on Debt Costs (6523)
- Stipends for non-employees other than those included in 6419
- Non-employee costs for conferences



- Travel costs for officials such as executive director, superintendent, or board members
- Travel for students to conferences (does not include field trips)
- Cost of membership to any civil or community organization
- Hosting or sponsoring of conferences
- Advisory councils
- Grant writing or evaluation services in exchange for grant writing
- Contracted services that divest oversight of the program administration or implementation to another entity.
- Matching expenditures for any other federal, state, or local grant program
- Expenditures related to students not enrolled in, served by, or eligible for the program
- Stipends for students or family members to participate
- Payment or reimbursement to students for receiving tutoring or mentoring services
- Funding student participation in any University Interscholastic League (UIL) competition, activity, or event
- College tuition for students except for dual credit courses
- Religious instruction or provision of sectarian materials
- Infrastructure or installation of infrastructure needed for computer access
- Furniture, portable buildings, and vehicles
- Funds to invest in the stock market or savings or bank accounts
- Any activity not specified above in the Allowable Activities and Use of Funds section

## **Program Income**

Generating program income is not allowed. Program income is the gross income earned by the non-federal entity that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the federal award during the period of performance. (2 CFR §200.80) A simple definition is revenue generated as a direct result of the federal award and that is in addition to the federal funds provided by TEA through the competitive subgrant application process. Program income generated must be reported and will be deducted from the funds awarded to the subrecipient. (2 CFR §200.307(b)) Program income that the grantee did not anticipate at the time of the grant award must be used to reduce the grant award rather than to increase the funds committed to the project. Expenditures of program income must be for the purposes and under the conditions of the grant award. Donations are not considered program income.

## Federal 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 apply to this federally funded grant program.

If awarded, the grantee must submit the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, Title IV, Part B PNP Affirmation Smartsheet Data Form where the grantee will upload a copy of the signed affirmation of consultation forms to the Federal Program Compliance Division – PNP Affirmations Smartsheet WorkApp by September 30, 2026. The submission window opens July 1, 2026, and instructions for submitting the affirmation will be posted on the following webpage when the submission window opens - [ESSA Private School Equitable Services | Texas Education Agency](#).

Following the passage of ESSA, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education directed states to require all sub-grantees and applicants to consult with private schools on equitable access to federal programs under Every Student Succeeds Act, Title IV, Part B, Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC. All applicants seeking new or continuation funding must comply with the policy in this section and any subsequent policy published by TEA. The program's PNP policy is as follows:

#### ***Title IV, Part B Definitions of Terms***

- Eligible Students: Students must primarily attend a campus that is eligible for schoolwide programs under Section 1114 of Title I, Part A. Grantees must use needs assessment data to identify students that would most benefit from assistance in meeting student standards in reading and math and benefit from participating in enrichment activities that complement the regular academic program that students attend.
- Eligible Private Schools: Private non-profit schools that reside in the attendance zones of a public school eligible for schoolwide programs under Section 1114 of Title I, Part A.
- Center: The physical location at which the program takes place. This is usually a school campus, but it could also be a community center or privately-owned facility.

#### ***Guidance by Title IV, Part B Applicant Type***

Services must be provided to students in the same grade levels as offered by the grant-funded program. For example, a private school wants Grade 2 students to participate, but the grant-funded program serves Grades 6-12. The grant-funded program is not obligated to serve students not in Grades 6-12 because the program was awarded based on a peer-reviewed competition and is not awarded based on the assumption it will serve all students in all grades.

Student targets and related budgets must include costs for providing services to eligible private school students identified in consultation.

***Public School Districts, Charter Districts, and Education Service Centers***

- Districts and charter schools may consult on Title IV, Part B in the consolidated application on a contingent basis. That is, private school participation would be contingent on TEA awarding the entity a competitive grant under Title IV, Part B. This consultation may be reported in a competitive or continuation application for the applicable timeframe.
- Services must only be provided to eligible private school students in the attendance zones of the campuses and feeders served by the “center.” That is, students must reside in or attend a public charter school in the attendance zone for a public school campus that is eligible for schoolwide programs under Section 1114 of Title I, Part A.

***Charter Districts and Private School Campuses***

- Charters and private schools that operate or propose to operate a center under Title IV, Part B must determine the public school attendance zones in which the center physically resides and consult with the eligible private non-profit schools in those boundaries.

***Non-profit and Community-Based Organizations (NPO/CBO), Institutes of Higher Education, Private Companies***

- Non-profit organizations generally propose serving one or more public or charter school campuses. These applicants must consult with the eligible private schools that are within the boundaries of the campuses proposed to be served by the program in the manner described in the sections above.
- It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all eligible private schools are consulted. An offer of services without consultation does not meet the requirement of the law.

## **Maintenance of Effort**

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

This requirement does apply to this federally funded grant program.

## Scoring and Review

This section provides information on the scoring and review of applications for competitive grants.

### Standard Review Criteria

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

Note: The Standard Review Criteria of Statutory/Program Requirements of 25 points is included within the Specific Review Criteria.

Scoring Criteria	Points
<b>B: Identify/Address Needs</b>  Quantifiable needs have been identified and strategies to address those needs have been clearly described.	10
<b>C. SMART Goals</b>  The summative SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timely) goals are clearly described and related to either student outcomes or are consistent with the purpose of the grant program.	5
<b>D: Measurable Progress</b>  The benchmarks are clearly described and related to either student outcomes or are consistent with the purpose of the grant program.	5
<b>E: Project Evaluation and Modification</b>  The applicant clearly describes how project evaluation data will be used to determine when and how to modify the project plan, including if progress or summative SMART goals do not show progress.	5
<b>F: Request for Grant Funds</b>  The costs reflected in the budget are appropriate for the expected results. The budget, including personnel, materials, and other identified expenses, supports the activities outlined in the grant application.	10
<b>Total Maximum Number of Standard Review Criteria Points</b>	<b>35</b>

## Specific Review Criteria

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

Scoring Criteria	Points
<b>Section G: One Texas ACE Community</b>  The applicant describes how the proposed program will build and maintain highly qualified program staff, engage with a steering committee, and partnerships to support provide opportunities that would not otherwise be available and to support program continuous improvement.  <i>Section G, Attached Letters of Support (if applying in partnership)</i>	15
<b>Section H: Two Crucial Times</b>  The applicant describes a need-based determination for selecting to operate afterschool; afterschool with HIT; afterschool and in the summer, or afterschool with HIT and in the summer. The applicant describes a realistic plan for meeting participation targets.  <i>Section H, Cycle 13 Strategic Plan Part I, Center Per-Pupil Allocation Table</i>	15
<b>Section I: Three Key Strategies</b>  The applicant describes how it will ensure strong operations, align and coordinate with the school day, and involve the community to ultimately support program sustainability when grant funding ends.  <i>Section I</i>	15
<b>Section J: Four Activity Types</b>  The applicant describes the best practices it will use to select and implement the four required activity types. If the program proposes to offer HIT or summer programing, it specially describes those activities.  <i>Section J</i>	15
<b>Section K: Five Measurable Goals</b>  The applicant summarizes the proposed program by describing how it will use federal “measures of effectiveness” to meet GPRA and SMART performance goals.  <i>Section K</i>	5
<b>Total Maximum Number of Grant Specific Criteria Points</b>	<b>65</b>

## Priority Points

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

In addition to the factors considered in awarding competitive grants as outlined in the previous sections above, TEA will award grants with the priorities listed below. TEA will only review applications for priority points that receive a score of 70 or higher from the peer review of the standard and specific criteria.

Statutory or TEA Priority	Points
<b>Federal Priority 1: Target Services A</b> – The percentage of campuses in the application are implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities under ESSA, Title I Part A, Section 1111(d).	10-25% = 1 26-50% = 2 51%-100% = 3
<b>Federal Priority 1: Target Services B</b> – To support enrollment of students who may be at risk for academic failure, dropping out of school, involvement in criminal or delinquent activities, or who lack strong positive role models, the percentage of campuses that serve a student population above the State’s at-risk average of 53.3%.	10-25% = 1 26-50% = 2 51%-100% = 3
<b>Federal Priority 2: Partnership</b> – The percentage of campuses in the application will be operating in partnership between two eligible entities consisting of not less than one school system and another eligible entity (not applicable to feeder schools). <b>A letter of support outlining the partnership must be attached to the application.</b>	10-25% = 1 26-50% = 2 51%-100% = 3
<b>State Priority 1: Previous Performance</b> - The percentage of campuses in the application are active centers or center feeder in the Texas ACE – 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC, Cycle 11 grant that met all student and adult family member participation requirements, and operation requirements in Year 3 and Year 4.	10-25% = 1 26-50% = 2 51%-100% = 3
<b>State Priority 2: 175+ Instructional Calendar</b> - The percentage of campuses in the application that have a 2025-2026 calendar with at least 175 instructional days (not applicable to feeder schools). <b>A board approved calendar must be attached to the application.</b>	10-25% = 1 26-50% = 2 51%-100% = 3
<b>Total Maximum Number of Priority Points</b>	<b>15</b>