



**2024-2025 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant**  
**Informal Discretionary Competition (IDC) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 9, 2025**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, Article IX, Section 18.114(c)(v)

This IDC application must be submitted via email to [competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto:competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov).

Application stamp-in date and time

The IDC application may be signed with a digital ID or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, April 9, 2025**.

Grant period from **May 29, 2025 - September 30, 2025**

Pre-award costs permitted from **Not Permitted**

**Required Attachments**

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)

See the Program Guidelines for additional attachment information.

**Select Focus Area (Applicants May Select One or Both Focus Areas)**

☒ Focus Area 1: Career and Technical Education Course

☒ Focus Area 2: Work-Based Learning Experiences

**Amendment Number**

Amendment number (For amendments only; enter N/A when completing this form to apply for grant funds): **N/A**

**Applicant Information**

Organization **Lasara Independent School District** CDN **245901** ESC **01** UEI **ZS7QK9UXGWP4**  
Address **6160 E Sixth Street** City **Lasara** ZIP **78561** Vendor ID **746001591**  
Primary Contact **Cynthia Ramos** Email **cramos@lasaraisd.net** Phone **956-642-5473**  
Secondary Contact **Alejos Salazar** Email **asalazar@lasaraisd.net** Phone **956-642-5473**

**Certification and Incorporation**

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

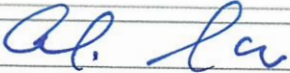
I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the LOI application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the LOI application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

☒ LOI application, guidelines, and instructions

☒ Debarment and Suspension Certification

☒ General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances

☒ Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name **Alejos Salazar** Title **Superintendent**  
Email **asalazar@lasaraisd.net** Phone **956-642-5473**  
Signature  Date **4/8/2025**

## Shared Services Arrangements

☐ Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. **Check the box below if applying as fiscal agent.**

- ☐ The LEA or ESC submitting this application is the fiscal agent of a planned SSA. All participating agencies will enter into a written SSA agreement describing the fiscal agent and SSA member responsibilities. All participants understand that the "Shared Services Arrangement Attachment" must be completed and signed by all SSA members, and submitted to TEA before the NOGA is issued.

## Statutory/Program Assurances

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

- ☒ 1. The applicant provides assurance 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 IDC 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.
- ☒ 2. The applicant provides assurance 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.
- ☒ 3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2024-2025 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant Program Guidelines.
- ☒ 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024-2025 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- ☒ 5. The applicant provides assurance that curriculum will be appropriately aligned to regional labor market supported CTE programs of study.
- ☒ 6. The applicant provides assurance to provide data to TEA on student completion of courses through the Fall PEIMS Collection Process.
- ☒ 7. The applicant assures that any 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.

**Summary of Program (Focus Area 1)**

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW** - Lasara ISD will implement a 3-week Summer Career and Technology Education (CTE) Bridge program designed to engage 20 to 25 students in 8th and 9th grades. The program will run four days a week, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. During this time, students will explore the district's diverse CTE opportunities across several Programs of Study: Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (focusing on animal science); Manufacturing (specifically Welding); and Business, Marketing, and Finance. Each student will have the opportunity to experience one week in each POS, thereby gaining hands-on experience and valuable insights into career paths.

**NEEDS** - Despite being a small and remote school district (rural - 5 priority points) with a total of 352 students in PK-12 (only a101 in 9-12th grades), Lasara ISD has a mission to provide numerous CTE opportunities for its students. The district expects to grow and build career educational offerings as quality career readiness becomes a higher priority among students and families. Lasara is 98.9% Hispanic and 87.8% of students are economically disadvantaged based on the 2023-2024 Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR). The at-risk population of 61.4% is higher than the state average (53.2%). Lasara High School is a P-TECH campus and continues to grow its CTE programs. However due to late starts by students in the CTE programs, results have not yet revealed themselves. Based on 2023-24 TAPR data, the district had no graduate receive an industry-based certification in 2022-23 (compared to 28% of graduates around the state). The district also has a low percentage of career and college ready students. Only 52.4% of Lasara ISD graduates in 2022-23 were college, career or military ready (compared to 76.35% statewide and 89.2% in Region 1). It is believed students and families need more and earlier exposure to the district's CTE offerings in order to improve its college and career readiness. Only 4.8% of graduates in 2022-23 earned an approved industry-based certification (33.4% statewide, 60.5% in Region 1).

**ADDRESSING NEEDS** - The bridge program is expected to increase student interest, increase family knowledge and understanding of each POS, with the goal to assist students in selecting the right POS. The district expects the end result of this summer bridge "head start" to include improved student interest in CTE offered at Lasara, and an increase in students graduating with industry certifications. This bridge program is intended to create early interest levels for high-demand inspired pathways so students can more knowingly select their career path earlier. The end result of the bridge is for more students to graduate from an approved CTE program at Lasara ISD and receive industry certifications that will assist students in obtaining high quality, higher paying employment.

**Summary of Program (Focus Area 2)**

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW** - Lasara Independent School District and its high school are seeking funds to establish a Summer CTE grant-funded paid internship program that aligns with the TEA opportunity guidelines. The program will offer paid internships for up to 12 students (11th and 12th graders) and will run 4-weeks (8 hours per day - 4 days per week). The internships will take place at Lasara ISD, the Lasara Community Resource Center, and Velazquez Family Grocery Store (potentially more businesses will be added later) in which students will participate in work-based learning focused on obtaining valuable real-life work/business experiences they would not typically have without this program. The district expects 8 students to participate in various activities and departments in Lasara ISD. A total of 4 are proposed to work as paid interns at the Lasara Community Resource Center and the only grocery store in the area. The Resource Center and grocery store would be unable to pay interns without this funding.

Lasara is small and remote school district (rural - 5 priority points) with limited job opportunities for high school students. The district's mission is to grow and build career educational offerings as quality career readiness becomes a higher priority among students and families. Lasara is 98.9% Hispanic and 87.8% of students are economically disadvantaged based on the 2023-2024 Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR). The at-risk population of 61.4% is higher than the state average (53.2%). Willacy County, where Lasara is located, has a high poverty rate (27.8%, compared to 11.1% statewide). The median income is just \$45,645 compared to \$78,538 in the state. Educational attainment is also lacking, with only 67.7% of residents older than 25 having a high school diploma or better (89.4% statewide) and only 12.2% have a bachelor's degree (35% statewide). These statistics highlight the need for additional opportunities for students to gain experience, earn money in summer, and break the cycle of poverty through education and high-demand skills.

The district's mission statement is to "provide the necessary resources for holistic educational experiences utilizing passionate and nurturing staff that emerges well rounded, diverse lifelong learners. This grant-funded paid internship program aligns with this mission, providing students with access to meaningful career and real-world experience. The internships will enable students to work in a professional environment related to the educational opportunities provided by Lasara ISD. The paid internships are expected to motivate students to continue pursuing certifications and gain career experience in their chosen fields. Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities, such as those offered through this program, will help students transition directly into the workforce or serve as building blocks toward post-secondary education. These paid internships and real-world experiences are intended to motivate students and demonstrate what they can achieve through career opportunities they have an interest in. However, this paid internship opportunity will not be possible without Summer CTE grant funding.



**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel (Focus Area 1)**

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

**Title and Responsibilities of Position****Required Qualifications and Experience**

SUPERINTENDENT – Responsible for supervising the grant program and ensuring all data is reported back to TEA as required.

Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Education or a related field. Experience: At least 3 years of experience being a Superintendent and involved in programs such as this, including CTE programming. Existing position.

CAMPUS PRINCIPAL – Responsible for managing day-to-day activities, overseeing faculty and staff, and assisting students in selecting career pathways

Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Education or a related field. Experience: Must have years of experience in managing day-to-day school activities, overseeing faculty and staff, and assisting students in selecting careers. Existing

CTE CAREER COUNSELOR – Responsible to oversee program staff, aligning curriculum and ensuring performance measures as cited are met.

Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Counseling or a related field. Experience overseeing programs, grants, personnel, and budgets. Proposed in grant budget, but will be handled by existing staff through stipend.

DISTRICT CTE STAFF – Responsible for teaching, supporting, and communicating the targeted CTE programs of study cited in this application.

Ability to offer the targeted CTE programs of study. Must have at least 4 years of prior experience and knowledge in programs of study being taught. Existing positions.

**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel (Focus Area 2)**

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

**Title and Responsibilities of Position****Required Qualifications and Experience**

SUPERINTENDENT – Responsible for supervising the grant program and ensuring all data is reported back to TEA as required.

Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Education or a related field. Experience: At least 3 years of experience being a Superintendent and involved in programs such as this, including CTE programming. Existing position.

CAMPUS PRINCIPAL – Responsible for managing day-to-day activities, overseeing faculty and staff, and assisting in selecting students and programs.

Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Education or a related field. Experience: Must have years of experience in managing day-to-day school activities, overseeing faculty and staff, and assisting students in selecting careers. Existing

CAREER COUNSELOR – Responsible for overseeing program staff, aligning curriculum and ensuring performance measures as cited are met.

Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in counseling or a related field. Experience overseeing programs, grants, personnel, and budgets. Proposed in grant budget, but this person is a current counselor to be paid through stipend.

BUSINESS LIAISON - These personnel will be responsible for supporting the internships and other work-based learning opportunities for students.

Ability and knowledge to offer the targeted CTE trainings and/or oversight of work-based activities. Must have at least 4 years of proven knowledge of business and work-based learning programs. Not a paid position.

COUNSELOR - To market the program and its benefits to students and parents.

Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Education or a related field. Must have at least 3 years of experience assisting students in selecting careers and CTE pathways that fit. Existing position

**Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (Focus Area 1)**

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

**GOALS/OBJECTIVES** - This bridge aims introduce students to a variety of career opportunities/pathways all supported by Lasara ISD's growing and developing CTE program. The district's CTE efforts focus on assisting more students in pursuing post-secondary education after high school, creating more college graduates who are career and college ready, and preparing more students to receive high paying positions after high school through industry certifications and licensing. The bridge program will be key to informing and educating students, parents, and families about the Programs of Study options available at Lasara. The expectation is for students experiencing the Summer CTE bridge program to be introduced to numerous pathways so they are prepared to select their career course plan earlier in their high school career. When students start their career pathways earlier, they have more time to complete all coursework and are more likely to earn their industry certifications and be ready to join the workforce in that field upon graduation.

**ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES** - Students in this bridge program will receive tours of the high school campus and the CTE Programs of Study (POS) areas and classrooms to ensure they are prepared and ready for their first day of school. A total of 20 to 25 8th and 9th graders will be able to sign up for this summer bridge program held in June. Recruitment efforts will begin upon grant award announcement/NOGA in spring to ensure as many students have the opportunity to sign up as they desire. Students who sign up will be required to attend all 3 weeks of the program so they can experience one week of each POS, which will include multiple career options. CTE courses offered during the bridge program will directly align with the exciting course options available for students' fall enrollment. Participants in the bridge program will benefit from access to essential technology, supplies, and materials needed to excel in their CTE coursework. Furthermore, the district will organize enriching field trips and site visits to local businesses, providing students with invaluable real-world experiences. All courses will be taught by highly qualified educators who bring extensive expertise and passion for their subjects. The bridge program will emphasize project-based learning and foster collaborative group projects, ensuring students engage deeply with the content and with one another. At the conclusion of the program, students will share their feedback through surveys to help identify their desired Programs of Study (POS) for high school.

**Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (Focus Area 2)**

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

**GOALS/OBJECTIVES** - These paid internship, work-based learning objective is to provide quality, CTE focused summer jobs/ experiences for students in a location where opportunities are limited due to the rural and remote nature of the district (rural - 5 priority points). The goal of the grant and this focus area is to provide hands-on opportunity for students with an authentic, work-based learning experience that directly aligns with their interests, classroom curriculum, and knowledge base. Through the paid internship program, students will obtain a better understanding of the skills and abilities required to become quality and reliable employees in any industry they choose. This work-based experience will help create a smoother transition for students moving from high school into the workforce in various industries. The purpose of the paid internships is to prepare students in ways that can't be duplicated in the classroom, especially for students focused on fields where hands-on experiences are imperative to learning and developing skills in preparation of joining the workforce after high school.

**ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES** - Lasara ISD will implement elements to met the goals and objectives in this program.

1. Provide paid internships for up to 12 students who have attended and completed some CTE coursework in Manufacturing; Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; and Business, Marketing, and Finance (digital marketing).
2. Provide students with paid employment/internship experiences at the school and in area businesses they wouldn't necessarily have the opportunity to experience without this grant.
3. Provide job experiences in businesses that are related to business knowledge, building maintenance, basic construction, retail sales, customer service, warehouse operations, and technology, among others that match Lasara POS.
4. Meet the needs of 11th and 12th grade students who request quality employment opportunities, which will have significant district oversight and align with student needs for future coursework and industry certification.
5. Provide students the opportunity to understand their skillsets, interests, and create and build a portfolio to help them in their future employment or college pursuits.

Performance and Evaluation Measures (Focus Area 1)

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES - This bridge program will focus on student outcomes and will be evaluated based on various measures and data. To effectively assess the program's performance, a range of evaluation tools will be used. These tools will include tracking the number and demographics of students who enter and successfully complete the summer bridge program. Additionally, we will monitor the number of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses offered and attended, as well as the number of students who are prepared for statewide programs of study. The program will also evaluate the number of students planning to pursue post-secondary education. Finally, student attendance in CTE courses and programs during the school year will be considered as a key performance measure.

MEASURING TOOLS - To ensure a thorough and impactful evaluation, project personnel will deploy a diverse array of tools designed to capture comprehensive data. These will include student intake forms, targeted surveys for both students and staff, performance reports from coursework and practical experiences, detailed questionnaires, progress reports for participating students, PEIMS data, attendance records, and collaborative meetings with CTE teachers to extract valuable insights. By strategically utilizing these tools, the program will effectively assess both program and student performance.

ENSURING EFFECTIVENESS PROCESS - The data collected through the aforementioned tools will play a crucial role in assessing the effectiveness of the program. The district and its leadership team are committed to conducting a comprehensive analysis to determine whether the students participating in the program are successfully meeting the established goals and objectives. 1. Weekly analysis of student work and teacher surveys will be implemented to ensure the program's effectiveness. These survey results will provide valuable insights into the program's impact, allowing for ongoing improvements in real-time. 2. A thorough review of grade records will be conducted at the end of each program week to track student progress. 3. Daily attendance records will be continuously monitored to identify trends. 4. A detailed review of PEIMS data and TAPR reports will be carried out before and after the program's conclusion.

Performance and Evaluation Measures (Focus Area 2)

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES - To ensure the program provides positive outcomes for the students, a comprehensive set of performance measures will be implemented. They include:

1. Tracking the number and demographics of students participating in the paid internship program.
2. Recording the total and average hours worked by each student, and at each location.
3. Monitoring student performance using an internship rubric and collaborating with the business liaison.
4. Weekly production reports, which will be developed jointly between program leaders and business partner liaisons, to provide further insight into student progress.
5. Creating and maintaining a list of business and industry partners, along with any agreements involved in the program.
6. Assessing the overall quality of student work and efforts to recognize the skills acquired by them.

All measures will be aligned with student outcomes and consistent with the program's objective of providing paid internships and quality work-based learning experiences. We will use various tools to evaluate data related to program and student performance. These tools include student intake forms, surveys, performance reports from the businesses hosting the internships, questionnaires from both students and business personnel, progress reports for participating students, attendance sheets, and meetings or on-site visits between program staff and business liaisons.

ENSURING EFFECTIVENESS PROCESS - To ensure the effectiveness of the program, a thorough process will be implemented. Prior to the start of the program, staff will develop individualized plans for each student, outlining their goals and objectives for the internship. This will help guide the evaluation process and ensure that students are on track to meet their targets. Throughout the program, regular communication will be maintained with business liaisons to monitor student attendance, participation, and the quality of their work-based activities. Site visits will also be conducted to ensure that students are following their individual plans. As a final assessment, students will present their portfolio, showcasing their work and accomplishments, to a panel of district stakeholders. This presentation will provide valuable feedback and help determine the overall effectiveness of the program.

Budget Narrative (Focus Area 1)

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

When considering this grant application, Lasara ISD counselors and administration met to develop a budget that would meet the needs, goals, and objectives for student development and success in a bridge program. Leadership outlined the various costs of staffing, supplies, curriculum, equipment, transportation, and equipment needed to reach the goals, based on the number of students expected to participate and length of programming.

If awarded, the district will leverage funds to impact areas in line with this grant and its purpose. The district will provide students access to classrooms, materials, software, and technology for the CTE bridge classes. Leadership will also look at any efforts to combine the bridge program with its existing T-STEM grant, including focusing on Project-Based Learning and the creation of student artifacts such as portfolios and presentations that can be developed during this bridge. The district does not have any additional funds to offer a quality bridge program such as this without the Summer CTE funding.

PAYROLL (total - \$14,420) - 1 Program Director stipend (\$3,500), 3 CTE staff x 24 hours per week (includes prep time) x \$35 per hour x 3 weeks = \$7,560; 1 Guidance Counselor x 24 hours x \$35 per hour x 4 weeks (preparation week) = \$3,360. STAFF BENEFITS - \$4,100

SUPPLIES/MATERIALS - (total - \$18,750) - Includes tech devices - Chromebooks/laptops/software - 25 @ \$550 (\$13,750) for students to work on career inventories, career surveys, create portfolios, online research, and complete project-based learning activities during their bridge program activities; Curriculum (\$1,000), consumables for hands-on activities (\$4,000)

TRANSPORTATION - \$3,500 for any daily busing and field trips/site visits for work-based experiences. INDIRECT - \$4,000

If it is determined that adjustments to the program are necessary, stakeholders will convene to collaboratively identify impactful changes that will enhance the program's success. Furthermore, Lasara ISD is dedicated to proactively pursuing additional grant funding, engaging with local businesses for contributions, securing ongoing support from the board, and thoroughly reviewing existing funding streams to ensure alignment with the program's mission and its continued success.

Budget Narrative (Focus Area 2)

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

When considering this grant application, Lasara ISD counselors and administration met to develop a budget that would meet the needs, goals, and objectives for student development and success in a paid internship, work-based learning opportunity. Leadership outlined the various costs of staffing, supplies, curriculum, equipment, transportation, and equipment needed to reach the goals, based on the number of students expected to participate and overall need.

If awarded, the district will leverage funds to impact areas in line with this grant and its purpose. The district will provide students access to classrooms, materials, software, and technology for the CTE bridge classes. Leadership also will look at any efforts to combine with bridge with its existing T-STEM grant, including focusing on Project-Based Learning and the creation of student artifacts such as portfolios and presentations that can be developed during the internship work. The district does not have funds to offer a paid internship program such as this without the Summer CTE funding.

PAYROLL (\$5,300) - 1 Guidance Counselor x 30 hours x \$35 per hour x 4 weeks responsible for developing student plans, collecting data, scheduling, ensuring proper training, and overseeing the internships = \$4,200. STAFF BENEFITS - \$1,100

PAY FOR STUDENTS (total \$23,040) - 12 students at \$15 per hour, 8 hours per day, 4 days per week, for 4 weeks.

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS - (total - \$11,660) - Includes technology devices - Chromebooks/laptops (\$10,160) for all students to work on career inventories, career surveys, create portfolios, and complete project-based learning activities during the program. Various supplies and materials (\$1,500).

TRANSPORTATION - \$3,500 for any daily busing and field trips/site visits for work-based experiences. INDIRECT - \$4,000

If adjustments are required, district administration will meet with program leaders (career counselors) to discuss what changes will ensure success of the bridge program. Any changes will follow the proper TEA procedures, including amendments to the application (if needed). If additional guidance is required, the district will contact TEA for assistance. If modifications significantly impact program operation, the district will communicate with students, staff, and parents.



## Program Requirements

1a. Needs Assessment (Focus Area 1): Applicants must complete a Needs Assessment Summary indicating specific area of need the LEA has that hinders the completion of courses within programs of study. (For example: describing scheduling conflicts, specific program of study teacher availability, etc.)

**UNDERSTANDING CTE OPPORTUNITIES** - In a district that already has a T-STEM program, CTE pathways sometimes play second fiddle to T-STEM career opportunities. District leadership personnel have noticed about half of families and students in the district are unaware of the career and technology opportunities available at Lasara ISD. Despite providing information regularly to students and families about programs such as welding, business, and agriculture, school officials continue to receive numerous questions from parents and students who are unaware of the opportunities. Even for those students who are aware, there is a lack of understanding regarding the certifications, job potential, and college choices associated with the district's CTE programs as opposed to T-STEM. In 2022-23, only 4.8% of graduates earned industry-based certifications and only 14.3% graduated career or military ready (36.45% statewide) according to Texas Academic Performance Reports.

This lack of knowledge of CTE programs hinders early involvement and interest, leading to issues with course completion. To address this, the district is proposing this bridge program in the summer for incoming 8th and 9th graders. The bridge program aims to ensure students are aware of the opportunities available to them and provide them with a glimpse into what they will learn and the careers they can pursue in the district's CTE offerings. By experiencing several programs during a quality summer program, students can make informed decisions about their program of study earlier in their high school career, increasing the likelihood of CTE program completion and industry certification upon graduation.

**CAREER SUPPORT NEEDED** - In addition to the need for increased understanding of opportunities, there is also a need for additional career and college support. District officials have recognized that not enough has been done to provide wrap around services related to career choices. To address this, the bridge program will offer individualized opportunities for students to spend time with the CTE Program personnel to help students determine their skills and interests and align with the career education opportunities offered by the district. By providing this career information during the summer, students and their families will have a guide for their high school career, leading to increased participation, skill development, and commitment. Ultimately, the bridge and career education opportunities are expected to improve CTE program completion, including more students obtaining industry certifications to be ready for the workplace.

1b. Needs Assessment (Focus Area 2): Applicants must complete a Needs Assessment Summary indicating specific area of needs the LEA has to offer work-based learning opportunities. (For example: describing transportation limitations, describing scheduling conflicts, specific program of study teacher availability, etc.)

**TEENS NEED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES** - Lasara ISD is a rural district (5 priority points) with just one business located within its boundaries. The district is 10 miles from Raymondville (population 20,143) and 30 miles to Harlingen (population 71,678). Although there are employment opportunities in those areas, Willacy County and Harlingen are both high poverty areas - more than double the poverty rate of the state of Texas, and have higher than the state unemployment rates. In the area, employment opportunities, especially for younger people, are limited. Most teens seeking a job will have to travel to potentially find one. But, that isn't easy due to transportation obstacles and competition from the hometown students. The needs for high-school age students residing in Lasara have existed for years. Because of sports and other activities in this small district, students don't always have time to work during the school year. This Summer CTE paid internship program would help youth obtain jobs in Lasara (minimal travel needed), especially positions that complement educational and career endeavors that would build on and benefit the district's efforts. The lack of available work-based opportunities during the school year and summer has shown that it leads to less interest in the school programming and less understanding from students and parents as to what skills and coursework is required to obtain high-demand jobs.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES** - Because of the location and rural nature of the district and the hurdles accompanying that issue, district officials have data that backs up the narrative that fewer students obtain employment during the summer months, even in jobs not related to college and career aspirations. However, the district's administration and Career and Technical Education (CTE) staff are determined to provide a range of work-based, real-world experiences to their students. District leaders have acknowledged that such experiences are crucial for the success of students after graduation, particularly in gaining an understanding of the importance of soft skills. Work-Based Learning (WBL) programs, such as a paid internship as proposed here, are an effective way for students to gain experience.



**Program Requirements, cont'd.**

**2. Focus Area 1:** Applicants must specify which program(s) of study and the CTE course(s) in the program(s) of study that will be offered (see <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/college-career-and-military-prep/career-and-technical-education/cte-programs-of-study> for a list of the approved statewide programs of study). Include the number of students who be engaged and supported in this focus area.

Lasara ISD will build and provide a 3-week Summer Bridge Program for 8th and 9th grade students. During this summer bridge, 20-25 students will be provided the opportunity to take part in course sampling through a 3-week long program where students will rotate through and attend 1 week (Monday through Thursday) of each Statewide Program of Study, including - Agriculture Food and Natural Resources, Manufacturing (Welding), and Business Marketing and Finances. These are all programs available at Lasara ISD through its continuously growing and developing CTE opportunities.

This summer CTE programming will include, but is not limited to, the following Level 1 approved CTE courses:

- Principles of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources - leads to careers such as veterinarians, wildlife biologists, agriculture engineers, food science technicians, landscaping supervisors, and soil/plant scientists.
- Principles of Business, Marketing, and Finance - leads to careers in management, service managers, accountants and auditors, financial advisors, insurance underwriters, retail buyers, and marketing specialist.
- Introduction to Welding - leads to careers as welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers.
- Principles of Manufacturing/Applied Engineering - leads to careers as CNC operators and mechanical technicians.

Through a small group rotation, where students for one week each experience POS coursework, each participating student will obtain hands-on opportunities. This experience will provide a feel for each career pathway to help students make informed decisions about what pathway they would prefer to follow as they develop in their high school career. This is especially important because few of these types of businesses and careers are located or available immediately in the Lasara ISD area, so students do not have the opportunity to observe these types of careers on a regular basis.

The courses will be taught at the high school by highly qualified CTE staff. Lasara is providing these courses during this crucial transition time and believes this bridge will undoubtedly help these students to a quicker start in their high school careers with eventual benefits to complete coursework and obtain certifications by the time they graduate and be on a path toward an associates degree if they so choose.

**3. Focus Area 2:** Applicants must specify business and industry partners who will be involved in the program. Additionally, specify the work-based learning model(s) which will be utilized and the number of students who will be engaged and supported.

Lasara ISD will offer a paid internship program, which will provide valuable work-based learning opportunities for 12 students in grades 11 and 12. This program aims to equip students with the necessary skills and experiences to succeed in high-demand industries and increase their skills and knowledge in their chosen POS pathway. The internship program will run a total of 4 weeks, with students participating in work-based learning activities four days a week, for a total of 24 hours per week. Lasara ISD is limited in its business partnership capabilities, so efforts will focus on experiences within the school district (as the industry partner).

As part of the program, students will participate in paid internships, working in various facets and areas, using a work-based experience model. Among the partners to include, but not limit to (based on students interest):

1. Lasara ISD - maintenance department, business experience, and other hands-on real world experiences. This will incorporate the Introduction to Welding and most Agriculture/Fabrication courses offered.
2. Lasara Community Resource Center - business/office/professional experiences, customer service. This will assist students and connect with the Principles of Business, Marketing and Finance CTE. Computers used for digital marketing.
3. Velazquez Family Grocery Store - professional experiences, customer service, stocker, and cashier experience.

Through collaboration and input from these listed partners and potentially others, this program will offer students real world experience by working alongside professional and skilled business people. The district CTE director will be responsible for ensuring alignment with the work-based learning experiences and the student's knowledge and skill level. These internships will involve students learning both soft and hard skills to help them understand what it is like to have a professional job in an industry they are studying. These 12 students will learn valuable skills to make them more marketable for the workforce. Students are expected to strengthen skills such as communication, enthusiasm, attitude, teamwork, networking, problem-solving, critical thinking, and professionalism.

Appendix I: Amendment Description and Purpose

(leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding)

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the [Administering a Grant](#) page. The following are required to be submitted for an amendment: (1) Page 1 of the application with updated contact information and current authorized official's signature and date, (2) Appendix I with changes identified and described, (3) all updated sections of the application or budget affected by the changes identified below, and, if applicable, (4) Amended Budget Request. Amendment Instructions with more details can be found on the last tab of the budget template.

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Amended Section	Reason for Amendment