



**2026-2027 Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) Cohort 6
Informal Discretionary Competition (IDC) Due November 7, 2025**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

This IDC application must be submitted via email to **competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov**.

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, November 7, 2025**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **March 31, 2026 - August 31, 2027**

Pre-award costs permitted from **Award Date**

Required Attachments

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

NOTE: Must use FileName Convention: NAME_Cohort6_Budget.xls

2. TRPN Regional Partnership Agreement

NOTE: Must use FileName Convention: NAME_Cohort6_Agreement.pdf

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization **Region One ESC** CDN **108950** Campus ESC **1** UEI **RLSVGNCNY125**

Address **1900 West Schunior** City **Edinburg** ZIP **78541** Vendor ID **17415881865**

Primary Contact **Melissa Lopez** Email **mlopez@esc1.net** Phone **956-984-6046**

Secondary Contact **Hector Gloria** Email **hgloria@esc1.net** Phone **956-984-6295**

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 IDC application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the IDC application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

☒ IDC application, guidelines, and instructions

☒ Debarment and Suspension Certification

☒ General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances

☒ Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name **Daniel P. King** Title **Executive Director**

Email **dking@esc1.net** Phone **956-984-6001**

Signature **[Signature]** Date **11/05/2025**

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 LOI 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 2026-2027 TRPN Cohort 6 Program Guidelines.
- ☒ 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2026-2027 TRPN Cohort 6 Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- ☒ 5. 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.
- ☒ 6. 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.
- ☒ 7. Applicants provide assurance that they will work closely with the identified pathways team facilitator throughout the project and support the pathways team facilitator with the necessary resources to be successful throughout the project. This includes coordination with the assigned coach and assurance that the grant administrator and pathways team facilitator will meet frequently with the assigned coach throughout the project. In addition, the grant administrator will coordinate with the pathways team facilitator on all performance reporting requirements. The grant administrator will meet with the assigned coach and identified pathways team facilitator within the first month of the grant project to align on roles and responsibilities.
- ☒ 8. The applicant provides assurance that they will coordinate with their pathways team facilitator to identify and plan a work-based learning opportunity for all students across partner districts within the first three months of the grant project.
- ☒ 9. The applicant provides assurance that they will coordinate with their pathways team facilitator to identify and plan an advising interventions opportunity for all students across partner districts within the first three months of the grant project.
- ☒ 10. The applicant provides assurance that they will coordinate with their pathways team facilitator to identify and plan postsecondary opportunities for all students across partner districts within the first three months of the grant project.
- ☒ 11. The applicant provides assurances that they will engage in a fiscal mapping exercise as part of their grant activities, resulting in a resource that provides an analysis of funds that are currently directed toward their pathways efforts and can be leveraged in the future to support sustainability of the program. The applicant provides assurances that they will work with their assigned coach throughout the grant project to gain support on the fiscal mapping efforts.

Summary of Program

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 of the organization. Also include the following: *a. Industry Target and Labor Market Justification* - Discuss the targeted industry, supported by regional labor market data such as wages, projected growth, and annual openings, highlighting why it qualifies as a targeted industry. *b. Career and Education Pathways* - Detail the career and education pathways, or specific programs of study, leading to the targeted industry that will be supported by the grant project. *c. Key Project Partners* - List and describe the key partners involved in the project, including the required partners: pathways team facilitator, grant administrator, a public institution of higher education, three LEAs, two employers, the regional education service center, and a workforce development board. *d. Grant Activity Overview* - Outline the grant-funded activities aimed at improving pathways from secondary to postsecondary education into the targeted industry. Highlight specific areas of focus such as work-based learning opportunities, advising interventions, dual credit participation and attainment, and middle school career awareness.

Region One Education Service Center (ESC) leads RIVER-6 (Resilience, Innovation, Voice, Effectiveness, and Research) Health Science Pathways Initiative, a priority program of study under the Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) Cohort 6. The initiative expands equitable access to career-aligned education in Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services and Nursing Science, directly supporting Region One ESC's mission to empower all learners toward educational excellence and regional transformation.

Across McAllen ISD, Edcouch-Elsa ISD, and IDEA Public Schools, 2,782 students are enrolled in Health Science pathways, yet fewer than 300 credentials are earned annually. RIVER-6 will generate 210 new credentials-120 dual-credit completions and 90 industry-based certifications (IBCs), at or below \$1,000 per credential. The Lower Rio region faces persistent workforce shortages, high simulation equipment costs, and limited dual-credit capacity, particularly in small and rural districts. Nearly 85 percent of students are economically disadvantaged and 98 percent attend Title I campuses (TEA TAPR 2023 - 24), underscoring the need for equitable and affordable health-science opportunities. RIVER-6 embodies Region One ESC's mission pillars, Resilience, Innovation, Voice, Effectiveness, and Research, and aligns with the Perkins Reserve TRPN purpose to expand high-quality, labor-market-aligned pathways through regional collaboration and measurable student outcomes.

a.) Industry Target and Labor Market Justification

The targeted industry is Health Science, focusing on Medical/Clinical Assistant (CIP 51.0801, SOC 31-9092) and Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians (SOC 29-3031), a priority career cluster. According to Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley (2024), approximately 2,670 medical assistants are employed region-wide with 13 percent projected growth (2022 - 2032) and a location quotient of 1.86, showing above-average demand. The median wage for medical assistants is \$15.36 per hour (approximately \$32,000 annually), and cardiovascular technologists earn \$47,357 annually with 10.7 percent projected growth (2025 - 2035). Both exceed the regional living wage of \$28,700 (MIT Living Wage Calculator, 2024). These data confirm that the Health Science career cluster meets TEA's high-growth, high-wage targeted-industry criteria and provides sustainable employment aligned with regional needs.

b.) Career and Education Pathways

Students begin with foundational Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses such as Principles of Health Science, Medical Terminology, and Foundations of Health Professions. They progress to dual-credit courses through South Texas College leading to a Certificate I or Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Medical Assisting. Embedded credentials include Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA), Certified Phlebotomy Technician (CPT), Certified EKG Technician (CET), and Basic Life Support (BLS). The pathway sequence begins in middle school with career exploration and TSI readiness, continues through high school with dual credit and clinical practicum experiences, and culminates in postsecondary certificates, associate degrees, or continued study in nursing programs. This design provides stackable, affordable routes from secondary to postsecondary education and into high-demand health-care careers.

c.) Key Project Partners

RIVER-6 fulfills TEA partnership requirements through a regional consortium coordinated by Region One ESC. The Pathways Team Facilitator, Vanessa Salazar, provides technical assistance and alignment; Grant Administrator Melissa Lopez manages fiscal compliance. Participating LEAs include McAllen ISO, Edcouch-Elsa ISO, and IDEA Pharr. Higher education partners include South Texas College (lead dual-credit provider), Rio Grande Valley College, and UT Health RGV. Employer partners include OHR Health, City of Pharr EMS, and UT Health RGV, which provide clinical placements, mentoring, and certification bootcamps. Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley offers labor-market validation and job-placement coordination. Region One ESC serves as fiscal agent and Tri-Agency Regional Convener. All partners have memoranda of understanding outlining data sharing, sustainability commitments, and quarterly coordination through the RIVER-6 Steering Committee.

d.) Grant-Funded Activity Overview

Grant funds strengthen the education-to-career continuum through measurable activities. Work-based learning will enable at least 100 students to complete 80 to 120 hours of supervised clinical experience. Dual credit expansion will allow 120 students to earn at least six college hours through South Texas College. Ninety students will achieve industry-based certifications, including CCMA, CPT, CET, or BLS, through exam vouchers and employer-led boot camps. Advising and transition supports will ensure efficient movement to postsecondary education or employment, while middle-school awareness programs, shadow days, and summer bridges will introduce students to health careers and TSI readiness. Region One ESC will maintain a regional dashboard to track dual credit, certification attainment, and employment outcomes for continuous improvement. Sustainability will be achieved through coordinated funding that blends Perkins V Reserve and Basic funds, dual-credit tuition waivers, and employer or philanthropic support, ensuring that shared simulation equipment and clinical partnerships remain available beyond the grant period.

Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel

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. Include the following in your response: *a. Identified Districts and Staff Commitment* - Identify the partner districts and the staff dedicated to this project on behalf of each district. Describe the process used to identify each partner district and demonstrate their commitment to the project. *b. Key Personnel and Their Qualifications* - Introduce the pathways team facilitator and grant administrator, including their organizations, qualifications, and relevant experiences related to this project. Indicate whether the position is existing or proposed. *c. Collaboration and Roles* - Describe how the pathways team facilitator and grant administrator will collaborate, outlining their clear roles and responsibilities to ensure the project's success and avoid duplication of effort. *d. Sustainability Strategy* - Explain how the grant administrator and pathways team facilitator will work with all key partners to develop a strategy for the project's sustainability beyond the grant period.

a.) Fiscal Agent and Grant Administration

Region One Education Service Center (ESC) will serve as the fiscal agent for the RIVER-6 initiative. Within Region One ESC, the Division of College, Career, and Life Readiness (CCLR) will lead implementation. The CCLR Executive Administrator, Melissa Lopez, will serve as Grant Administrator (GA), providing fiscal and technical leadership while coordinating with the Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) team facilitator and participating members. Ms. Lopez brings 27 years of experience in education, including 23 years managing state and federal grants funded by TEA, the U.S. Department of Education, and private foundations. She holds a master's degree in educational administration and certifications in mid-management, ESL, and principalship. Her expertise in fiscal compliance, program design, and inter-agency coordination ensures strong oversight of budgeting, reporting, and performance accountability.

To achieve the grant's objectives, Region One ESC will dedicate 1.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel. This includes a 0.5 FTE TRPN Pathways Facilitator/Coordinator (existing position) and a 1.0 FTE College and Career Education Specialist (new position).

(b) Key Personnel Roles and Qualifications

The Pathways Team Facilitator (PTF), Vanessa Salazar, brings more than 18 years of experience in Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway design, Perkins Innovation and Modernization implementation, and cross-sector collaboration. She holds a master's degree in instructional leadership and multiple certifications in CTE administration, work-based learning, and digital marketing. Her leadership in STEM, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing initiatives has yielded measurable gains in credential attainment and inter-district alignment. The College and Career Education Specialist (CTE Specialist) will focus on implementing high-quality career pathways aligned with regional labor-market demand and employer needs. The specialist will ensure curriculum alignment across Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), South Texas College, Rio Grande Valley College, and UT Health RGV, and provide direct support to districts in pathway implementation, advising, and credential tracking. Candidates will hold a bachelor's or master's degree in health science, CTE, or a related field. Together, the Pathways Facilitator and CTE Specialist will manage day-to-day operations of RIVER-6, monitor credential and certification progress, align activities with grant goals, and ensure compliance. They will serve as liaisons among districts, employers, and IHEs; coordinate work-based learning; support credential attainment; provide educator professional development; and collect and analyze data for continuous improvement and TEA accountability.

(c) Collaboration and Roles

Region One ESC, as the Tri-Agency Regional Convener, will lead program design, partnership facilitation, and cross-district integration of healthcare pathways. The GA and PTF will jointly ensure fiscal integrity, manage compliance, and oversee performance reporting. Weekly coordination meetings and quarterly reviews with district and workforce partners will guide implementation and track deliverables. Shared digital tools, such as budget trackers, dashboards, and progress logs, will enhance transparency and coordination. Escalation protocols within Region One ESC's governance framework ensure timely decision-making, continuous improvement, and clear communication among partners.

(d) Sustainability Strategy

RIVER-6 sustainability will result from integrated funding, institutionalized practices, and enduring partnerships. Funding will be braided across Perkins V, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and local workforce resources, complemented by philanthropic and employer contributions to sustain critical positions and activities. Districts will embed pathway coordination and advising duties into permanent roles, supported by standard operating procedures for credential tracking and employer engagement. Employer and workforce partners, including WS-LRGV and regional healthcare systems, will continue to provide clinical placements, sponsorships, and hiring pipelines established under the grant. Governance structures, anchored by MOUs and advisory councils, will sustain collaborative decision-making. Annual labor-market reviews and dashboard data will guide program adjustments, ensuring relevance to regional workforce needs and expanding student access to high-value credentials beyond the grant cycle.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives? Include the following in your response: *a. Workforce Development Region and Board Roles* - Identify the workforce development region where the project will be located and describe the regional workforce development board's role in the project. If the project spans multiple workforce development regions, name each region and explain the role of each board. *b. Regional Strategy and ESC Role* - Describe the regional strategy for leveraging programs and resources across multiple school districts, including the role the regional ESC will play. *c. Targeted Industry and Pathways* - Describe the targeted industry, including career and education pathways or programs of study that lead to meaningful employment within the industry. Justify with labor market data and local knowledge. *d. Employer Engagement Strategy* - Outline the strategy for engaging employers in the project.

GOAL 1 - Expand Access and Enrollment

By August 31, 2027, at least 150 students (40% rural or low-income) across Edcouch-Elsa ISD, McAllen ISD, and IDEA Public Schools - RGV will enroll in the Health Science Program of Study aligned to CIP 51.0801 Medical/Clinical Assistant (SOC 31-9092) and Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians (SOC 29-2031); 85% will persist to concentrator status.

Workforce Development Region and Board Role: The project operates in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Area, with Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley (WS-LRGV) verifying labor-market data, projecting job openings, and coordinating WIOA-funded supports for transportation, paid internships, and exam fees. WS-LRGV will co-fund at least 30 annual work-experience placements and report outcomes quarterly through Region One ESC's shared dashboard. Coordination with Workforce Solutions South Texas ensures consistency in employer pipelines and labor data.

--Regional Strategy and ESC Role: As the Tri-Agency Regional Convener, Region One ESC leads a unified regional plan connecting secondary, postsecondary, and workforce systems. The ESC coordinates recruitment, common course codes, professional development, and data dashboards across districts and colleges. A Regional Steering Committee, chaired by ESC, meets quarterly to review enrollment, credential, and employment data using a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle to evaluate fidelity and scale effective practices.

--Targeted Industry and Pathway: The Health Science industry employs about 2,670 medical assistants region-wide with 13% projected growth (2022 - 2032) and a location quotient of 1.86, showing high regional demand. The median wage (\$15.36/hour \$32,000) exceeds the regional living wage (\$28,700; MIT, 2024). Cardiovascular technologists earn \$47,357 annually with 10.7% growth (2025 - 2035). The pathway begins with secondary CTE courses and progresses to dual credit through South Texas College (STC) leading to Certificate I or AAS completion and transition to LVN or RN programs. Equity strategies prioritize bilingual, rural, and first-generation students.

--Employer Engagement Strategy: Employers - OHR Health, City of Pharr EMS, and UTRGV Health Professions, will host internships, clinical rotations, and job-shadowing aligned with the Tri-Agency Work-Based Learning Framework. Each partner commits to 120 clinical slots and quarterly advisory meetings to validate skill standards and review outcomes. MOUs extend three years beyond the grant term to preserve placements and hiring pipelines.

GOAL 2 - Increase Dual Credit and Credential Attainment

By May 2027, 120 students will earn 6 dual-credit hours through STC, and 90 students will obtain industry-based certifications (IBCs) such as CCMA, CPT, CET, and BLS. WS-LRGV confirms credential relevance and co-reports completion data. IHEs deliver articulated coursework tied to high-wage Health Science occupations and facilitate transcript articulation. Region One ESC coordinates instruction, professional development, and exam procurement. Employers co-host credential bootcamps and validate competencies.

GOAL 3 - Expand Work-Based Learning and Clinical Placements

By August 2027, 100 students will complete 80 - 120 hours of supervised work-based or clinical training. WS-LRGV underwrites eligible WIOA participants for paid on-the-job training. IHEs coordinate placements and assess student performance under accreditor standards. Region One ESC provides wraparound services and purchases employer-approved instructional equipment.

GOAL 4 - Strengthen Postsecondary Transition and Employment

Within six months of graduation, 60% of students will enroll in STC Certificate I/ AAS programs or secure healthcare employment. WS-LRGV verifies placements and facilitates continued training. IHEs maintain articulation and credit transfer; Region One ESC aggregates district, college, and workforce data for quarterly performance reviews. Employers co-host annual hiring events and report hires to WS-LRGV.

KEY OUTCOMES 150 new enrollments; 120 dual-credit earners; 90 IBC completions; 100 work-based placements; 60% postsecondary or employed within six months. Data from district SIS, STC transcripts, certification vendors, and WS-LRGV records will be integrated into ESC's dashboard for TEA TRPN reporting.

Performance and Evaluation Measures

Describe the performance measures identified for this program that are related to student outcomes and consistent with the program's purpose. Include tools and processes that will be used to ensure effectiveness, such as annual labor market needs assessments and tracking project outcomes. Include the following in your response: **a. Anticipated Project and Student Outcomes** - Outline the anticipated outcomes for each grant activity and the projected student outcomes. Include the projected number of students from each partner school district that will participate in the activities related to this grant activity. **b. Identified IHE Partners, Programs and Dual Credit Opportunities** - Identify the IHE partner(s) and the staff dedicated to this project on behalf of the IHE. Describe the programs offered at the IHE that align with the targeted industry, including dual credit opportunities available at the IHE that can be embedded into a district's program of study, projected number of students that will participate in dual credit, and anticipated outcomes. **c. Additional Grant Activities** - Briefly mention other grant activities and interventions to be implemented with grant funds, such as middle school career awareness, career-focused curriculum, middle school to secondary bridge programming, secondary to postsecondary bridge programming, and educator professional development.

The RIVER-6 initiative establishes a performance and evaluation framework that measures outcomes aligned with its purpose, advancing student achievement and workforce readiness in the Health Science career cluster. Evaluation focuses on enrollment, credential attainment, and employment outcomes consistent with regional labor-market demand. The targeted industry is Health Science, specifically CIP 51.0801 Medical/Clinical Assistant (SOC 31-9092) and Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians (SOC 29-2031). According to Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley (WS-LRGV), the region employs about 2,670 medical assistants, maintains a location quotient of 1.86, and is projected to grow 13 percent (2022-2032), confirming high regional demand and supporting this pathway's focus. Performance measures align with TEA's seven components for high-quality pathways: partnerships, labor-market alignment, advising, applied academics, credentials, work-based learning, and postsecondary transition. These ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

--Tools and Processes for Effectiveness.

RIVER-6 employs a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Dashboard, modeled after the Tri-Agency framework, to monitor progress and maintain alignment with workforce needs. WS-LRGV conducts annual labor-market reviews to guide enrollment targets, course sequencing, and credential offerings. Region One ESC integrates data from district information systems, higher-education institutions, and workforce records into a regional dashboard tracking enrollment, dual credit, credentials, and employment. Quarterly meetings with partners apply a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle to review progress and guide improvement actions.

a.) Anticipated Project and Student Outcomes: By August 31, 2027, at least 150 students will participate, 50 from Edcouch-Elsa ISD, 60 from McAllen ISD, and 40 from IDEA, with at least 40 percent from rural or low-income backgrounds. By May 2027, 120 students will earn six or more dual-credit hours through South Texas College (STC), and 90 will achieve industry-based credentials (IBCs) such as CCMA, CPT, CET, and BLS. Employers, DHR Health, City of Pharr EMS, and UT Health RGV, will co-host credential bootcamps, supervise assessments, and validate competencies. By August 2027, 100 students will complete at least 80 - 120 hours of supervised clinical or work-based learning (WBL). MOUs with DHR Health, Pharr EMS, RGV College, and Nuestra Clinica del Valle ensure 120 placements, with supervisors using state-aligned rubrics to evaluate performance. Within six months of graduation, 60 percent will enroll in STC's Certificate I/AAS programs or secure employment as medical assistants.

b.) IHE Partners and Dual Credit Opportunities:

STC (lead) delivers dual-credit instruction and clinical coordination aligned to its Certificate I and AAS in Medical Assisting. RGV College supports credential preparation, while UTRGV provides advising and transition planning for advanced study. All partners submit quarterly reports to Region One ESC for TEA compliance.

c.) Additional Activities and Continuous Improvement:

Career exploration, bridge programs, and credential preparation introduce students to health-science careers and strengthen readiness for dual credit and certification. Region One ESC provides professional development in curriculum alignment, data analysis, and work-based learning supervision. Data from district SIS, IHE transcripts, certification vendors, and WS-LRGV records are reviewed quarterly to identify gaps and guide program adjustments. This continuous-improvement cycle ensures RIVER-6 remains aligned with TEA performance measures and evolving regional workforce needs.

Budget Narrative

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the program's needs and goals, including staffing, project design, and resources needed to support the grant's implementation. Include the following in your response: *a. Funding Allocations and Justification* - Provide justification for the specific funding allocations in the proposed budget and describe how each item will support the team's needs beyond any one specific district partner. *b. Partner Support and FTE Allocation* - Detail the minimum 0.10 FTE dedicated as pass-through to each district partner involved in the grant project. Identify the partner districts and the staff dedicated to this project on behalf of each district. Describe the process used to identify each partner district and demonstrate their commitment to the project. *c. Coordinated Funding Strategies* - Outline the coordinated funding strategies the team will utilize to incorporate other funding sources to support the implementation of this project and future work. *d. Sustainability and Cost-Effectiveness* - Briefly explain how the budget supports long-term sustainability and efficient use of funds. Include strategies for maintaining key components beyond the grant period and leveraging shared resources or existing infrastructure.

The RIVER-6 project's proposed \$350,000 budget strategically supports the program's goals to strengthen regional collaboration, expand workforce-aligned pathways, and ensure long-term sustainability. Funding prioritizes staffing, equipment, instructional materials, and partner coordination to implement a high-quality Health Science Career Cluster with a program of study in Nursing Science, emphasizing Medical/Clinical Assistant (CIP 51.0801) and Cardiovascular Technologist and Technician (SOC 29-2031) pathways across three district partners and three higher-education institutions.

a.) Funding Allocations and Justification: Funds are allocated to maximize program impact across all partners rather than any single district.

--Payroll (6100): \$156,508 in personnel costs supports two key positions-(1) the TRPN Project Coordinator/Team Facilitator (0.5 FTE), who oversees implementation, budgeting, and compliance, and (2) the College and Career Education Specialist (1.0 FTE), a new role aligning curriculum, supporting district implementation, and monitoring performance metrics. Additional costs associated with salaries are the fringe benefits (\$19,404) that include: FICA, workers' compensation, retirement, and insurance, consistent with Region One ESC pay scales.

--Professional and Contracted Services (6200): \$118,000 secures instructional and coordination services from higher education and K - 12 partners. Allocations include Rio Grande College (\$22,000), South Texas College (\$22,000), and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (\$20,000) for dual-credit instruction and IBC certification delivery. Partner LEAs-McAllen ISD, Edcouch-Elsa ISD, and IDEA Public Schools-will each receive a \$10,000 coordination stipend (0.10 FTE equivalent) to ensure equitable engagement and data reporting. Additional funds (\$24,00) include engaging cross-sector partners, including Doctors Hospital Renaissance and the City of Pharr, to provide mentorship and work-based learning opportunities.

--Supplies and Materials (6300): \$45,000 supports instructional materials (\$15,000) and immersive training technology supplies (\$30,000) for Virtual Reality Nursing Assistant (VRNA EMS) headsets and CNA simulation software that enhance hands-on learning and safety in lab environments.

--Other Operating Costs (6400): \$12,992 covers travel for in-person coordination, regional site visits, and TRPN convenings. All travel complies with Region One ESC and TEA-approved GSA rates. The total budget allows for the approved administrative and indirect costs at no more than 5% of the total award (\$17,500) to support administrative oversight without detracting from direct program services.

b.) Partner Support and FTE Allocation

Each district partner receives a 0.10 FTE stipend to fund local CTE Coordinators serving as RIVER-6 liaisons. Partners were selected through a labor-market and readiness analysis confirming alignment with regional demand in health science occupations. Formal agreements define staff commitments for recruitment, advising, and data reporting. Region One ESC monitors fidelity via shared dashboards and quarterly reviews.

c.) Coordinated Funding Strategies

RIVER-6 applies a braided funding model integrating state, local, and industry contributions. WSST provides WIOA funds for on-the-job training, transportation, and job-readiness services. Perkins V and local CTE funds cover certification exams and professional development. Laredo College contributes in-kind tuition waivers and faculty time, while DHR, the City of Pharr, and UTRGV Health supply consumables and mentorship hours.

d.) Sustainability and Cost-Effectiveness The project builds regional capacity for long-term continuity. Curriculum alignment, credential tracking, and work-based learning coordination will be institutionalized at Region One ESC. Dual-credit agreements remain active post-grant, sustaining access to transferable credits. Shared materials, standardized tools, and cross-sector coordination minimize duplication and ensure cost-efficient, high-impact outcomes across all partners.

Equitable Access and Participation

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this program.

- ☒ The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this program.
- ☐ Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	
Group		Barrier	

PNP Equitable Services

Are any private nonprofit schools located within the applicant's boundaries?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

5A: Assurances

- ☐ The LEA assures that it discussed all consultation requirements as listed in Section 1117(b)(1) and/or Section 8501(c)(1), as applicable, with all eligible private nonprofit schools located within the LEA's boundaries.
- ☐ The LEA assures the appropriate Affirmations of Consultation will be provided to TEA's PNP Ombudsman in the manner and time requested.

5B: Equitable Services Calculation

1. LEA's student enrollment	
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	
4. Total current-year program allocation	
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the program's defined limit	
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	

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.

You may duplicate this page

Amended Section	Reason for Amendment