



**2025-2026 Effective Advising Framework District Planning Grant
Informal Discretionary Grant (IDC) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, June 17, 2023**

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, June 17, 2025**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026**

Pre-award costs permitted from **Pre-Award Costs Are Not Permitted**

Required Attachments (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)

Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules

Attachment 1: 2025-2026 Effective Advising Framework District Planning Grant Program Agreement

Amendment Number

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

Applicant Information

Organization Willis ISD CDN 170904 Campus ESC 6 UEI

Address 612 N Thompson City Willis ZIP 77378 Vendor ID

Primary Contact Meghan Ballard Email mballard@willisisd.org Phone 9368903884

Secondary Contact Sarah Ballew Email sballew@willisisd.org Phone 9368903884

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 Meghan Ballard Title Director of Grants

Email mballard@willisisd.org Phone 9368903884

Signature  Date 6/17/25

Shared Services Arrangements☐ Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are NOT permitted for this grant. .**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 2025-2026 Effective Advising Framework District Planning Grant Program Guidelines.
- ☒ 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2025-2026 Effective Advising Framework District Planning Grant 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.

Summary of Program

What is the district's vision for the student experience of the individual student planning system? What is the current state of advising practices and what improvements does the district want to make through this grant process? How will this program foster innovation in CTE programming and/or promote careers pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage careers or industries?

Willis ISD is committed to empowering every student to take ownership of their future through informed planning, goal-setting, personal growth, and exploration of diverse academic and career pathways. The district envisions a student experience where each learner is actively engaged in shaping their educational, career, personal, and social development through a personalized and meaningful planning process. By providing opportunities to explore and understand a wide range of career options, students are equipped to make inspired and informed decisions about their futures.

Currently, students begin career assessments in 6th grade and update them annually. Counselors provide guidance during course selection, often relying on departmental recommendations, which may at times conflict. Students begin developing a High School Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) in 8th grade and refine it each subsequent year.

Through this grant, Willis ISD aims to:

Develop a comprehensive, district-wide K-12 career development framework.

Strengthen the individual student planning process to better support goal-setting and long-term success.

Create a more cohesive and aligned course planning system that reflects the district's mission and vision.

This initiative will enhance the district's advising framework to ensure students have access to career pathways aligned with high-skill, high-wage industries. By working closely with community partners and industry leaders, Willis ISD will provide students with authentic exposure to career options, including those beyond traditional fields. The district will align CTE programming with students' interests and workforce demands, offering industry-recognized certifications and hands-on experiences that prepare students to thrive in the labor market—both after graduation and, in some cases, even before.

Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel

1. Who is the identified EAF Project Lead and what are their qualifications? What experience do they have leading and managing change at the district level? What percentage of their time is allocated to this project? How will the district ensure the EAF Project Lead has the appropriate time and capacity to lead this project? How will the district ensure the EAF Project Lead has the appropriate authority to convene a steering committee across the district? 2. Who are the steering committee members and how do they meet the required criteria outlines in the Program Elements below? How will the district ensure the steering committee provides the necessary support to the EAF Project Lead? Include the stipend amounts allocated for the EAF Project Lead and each steering committee member. (Total stipend amounts for the EAF Project Lead and steering committee members are not to exceed 75% of the total grant budget.)

The EAF Project Lead for Willis ISD is Noah Hollander, Executive Director of Secondary Education and CTE. He brings experience leading district-level change, including transitioning a high school to a Ford Next Generation Learning Career Academy, supporting Effective Schools Framework implementation, and developing counselor evaluations aligned with the Texas Model. He will dedicate 10% of his time to this project, which aligns with the district's priority to improve College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR). As a cabinet-level leader, Mr. Hollander has the authority to lead the project and convene a cross-functional steering committee.

The steering committee includes representatives across grade levels and departments: district counseling, administration, elementary, middle, and high school counseling, CTE, and special programs. Members include Kelly Locke, Susan Clardy, Tanis Price, Brian Kennedy, Lauren Posey, Amanda Cheatham, Lisa Long, Alicia Clark, and potentially Brittany Wheaton. The committee will support implementation through regular collaboration and oversight. Stipends are allocated as follows: \$5,000 for the Project Lead and \$2,500 per committee member, totaling \$27,500—within the 75% cap of the grant budget.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

1. Describe the district's commitment to improving the individual student planning system. 2. Reference the District Commitments in the Effective Advising Framework. Provide evidence for how district administrators and campus administrators will fulfill the District Commitments in Lever 1: Strong Program Leadership and Planning, Lever 2: Effective, Well-Supported School Counselors and Advisors, Lever 3: Internal School Culture of Advising, Lever 4: Effective External Partnerships, and Lever 5: High Quality Advising Materials and Assessments. 3. How does the district encourage students to own their individual career and academic planning? How does the district engage families/caregivers in students' postsecondary planning?

District Commitment to Improving Individual Student Planning

Willis ISD has identified individual student planning as a priority for improvement during the 2024 – 2025 school year and has already begun implementing changes. The district is developing a K – 12 career development framework and a comprehensive course planning guide to better equip counselors in aligning student schedules with academic goals, interests, and future career pathways. These efforts aim to ensure every student has access to a personalized and purposeful planning experience.

Alignment with the Effective Advising Framework (EAF)

Willis ISD is actively engaged in the Effective Schools Framework and collaborates with Contigo Ed and Lamar to guide its advising practices. The district is making progress in each of the five levers of the Effective Advising Framework:

Lever 1: Strong Program Leadership and Planning

The district has established CCMR goals and is currently building a districtwide career development framework.

Lever 2: Effective, Well-Supported School Counselors and Advisors

Counselors participate in monthly professional development and have received career-focused training. In 2023 – 2024, the district adopted a customized version of the Texas Evaluation Model for Professional School Counselors (TEMPSC) to support continuous improvement.

Lever 3: Internal School Culture of Advising

WISD is working to strengthen administrator understanding of effective counseling programs and to promote shared responsibility for advising. The district will conduct a master schedule audit to integrate advising-related courses and interventions that align with student needs.

Lever 4: Effective External Partnerships

The district partners with Contigo Ed, the local Chamber of Commerce, and Tri-County to analyze labor market and college enrollment data. These partnerships help inform course offerings and enhance advising support.

Lever 5: High-Quality Advising Materials and Assessments

WISD utilizes Major Clarity's Holland code-aligned assessments and the Pathways dashboard to track student progress toward graduation and CCMR indicators.

Student and Family Engagement

To promote student ownership of academic and career planning, Willis ISD administers interest and personality inventories annually beginning in 6th grade, integrates career development lessons into SEL calendars, conducts individual PGP reviews with counselors, and hosts middle school career expos. While family engagement remains an area for growth, the district offers CTE expos, parent information nights, and provides annual opportunities for families to review and sign student PGPs.

Performance and Evaluation Measures

How does the district currently monitor progress on the individual student planning system? What are the current performance measures and data collection tools used by the district to track progress toward academic and career planning?

Willis ISD encourages students to take ownership of their academic and career planning through a variety of intentional practices. Beginning in 6th grade, students complete annual personality and interest inventories to guide their exploration of career pathways. Career development lessons are embedded in the district’s emotional intelligence curriculum, and students participate in annual Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) reviews with their counselors. Middle school students also attend career expos that provide early exposure to potential career opportunities.

Family engagement in postsecondary planning is an area the district is working to strengthen. Current efforts include CTE expos, parent information nights, and opportunities for parents to review and sign their child’s PGP each year of high school. The district recognizes the need for more consistent and meaningful involvement of families in the planning process.

Willis ISD currently monitors progress in the individual student planning system primarily through completion of career assessments for students in grades 6 – 12 and through career-focused lessons in the SEL curriculum. While progress tracking is largely task-based at present, the district is working to shift toward measuring student growth over time. Data is collected and managed using tools such as Major Clarity, the Pathways counselor dashboard, and internal tracking systems (e.g., Google Docs) to monitor student progress and advising activities.

Budget Justification

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the proposed program. Include justification for the specific funding allocations in the proposed budget and provide detail on stipends and hours expected for services rendered.

The proposed \$50,000 grant budget is thoughtfully allocated to meet the goals of strengthening Willis ISD's individual student planning system and advancing the priorities outlined in the Effective Advising Framework. A total of \$27,500 is designated for stipends to support leadership and implementation efforts. The EAF Project Lead will receive a \$5,000 stipend for dedicating approximately 10% of their time to the project. Nine steering committee members will each receive a \$2,500 stipend, recognizing the time and effort required to support districtwide advising improvements, including planning, collaboration, and oversight responsibilities.

The remaining \$22,500 will support program implementation and capacity-building efforts across the district. Approximately \$10,000 will be allocated for consulting and professional development services from external partners such as Contigo Ed, which will help train staff in effective advising practices and support activities like master schedule audits. An additional \$6,000 will be used to develop high-quality advising materials and digital tools to strengthen course planning and counselor resources. To engage students meaningfully in career exploration, \$4,500 is set aside for organizing career expos and administering interest inventories across grade levels. Finally, \$2,000 will be dedicated to improving family engagement through the creation of accessible planning materials, parent night resources, and translation services.

This budget ensures a strategic balance of funding for leadership, professional learning, student experiences, and family involvement—all aligned to the district's vision for a comprehensive, student-centered advising system.

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	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

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	<input type="text" value="9334"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text" value="0"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text" value="9334"/>
4. Total current-year program allocation	<input type="text" value="50000"/>
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LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	<input type="text" value="0"/>

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
<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	
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Budget Justification

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This budget ensures a strategic balance of funding for leadership, professional learning, student experiences, and family involvement—all aligned to the district's vision for a comprehensive, student-centered advising system.

Equitable Access and Participation

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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

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- ☒ 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	9334
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	0
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	9334
4. Total current-year program allocation	50000
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the program's defined limit	0
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	50000
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	5.4
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	0

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
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