

PROGRAM GUIDELINES: 2021–2023 SCHOOL ACTION FUND - IMPLEMENTATION

APPLICATION DUE DATE

11:59 p.m. Central Time, May 13, 2021

PROGRAM AUTHORITY

Public Law (P.L.) 114-95, Section 1003 [20 U.S.C. 6303] School Improvement

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Introduction to the Program Guidelines

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities³ such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees⁴. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

This part of the request for application (RFA). Program Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and the specific program instructions. The Adobe Acrobat Standard Application System (SAS) consists of all forms to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding.

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

Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs. Throughout the Program Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#). **It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) when preparing your application.**

¹ Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

² Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term "grantee" does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

³ Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

⁴ Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

U.S. Department of Education and/or State Appropriations

The following is provided in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education Appropriations Act:

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project	\$3,750,000
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	\$3,750,000
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	\$0

Grant Timeline

All of these dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Date	Event
March 26, 2021	RFA available; notice of the RFA published in the <i>Texas Register</i>
April 6, 2021	Last date to submit questions to be addressed in the applicant's Conference/Webinar See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Applicants' Conference/Webinar
April 8, 2021	Applicants' Conference/Webinar, registration at https://tinyurl.com/55eyu6p2
April 13, 2021	Last date to submit FAQs to TEA contact person See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Frequently Asked Questions
April 16, 2021	FAQs posted to TEA Grant Opportunities page
April 29, 2021	Due date for the Notice of Intent to Apply; Notice of Intent to Apply
April 29, 2021	Due date for Reviewer Information Form; Reviewer Information Form
May 13, 2021	Due date for the application in the TEA Document Control Center, 11:59 p.m., Central Time See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Competitive Application Due Date and Time
May 14, 2021 – June 20, 2021	Competitive review period See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Competitive Review Process
June 21, 2021 – July 2, 2021	Grantee interview period
August 12, 2021	Beginning date of grant See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Grant Period
May 2, 2023	Final date to submit an amendment
July 31, 2023	Ending date of grant See General and Fiscal Guidelines , Grant Period

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

Grant at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

Authorizing Legislation

This grant program is authorized by the Public Law (P.L.) 114-95, Section 1003 [20 U.S.C. 6303] School Improvement

Where to Submit the Application

See the Where to Submit the Competitive Application section of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#).

Submission Requirements

See the Submission Requirements for Competitive Grants section of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#).

Note: TEA requires all applications to be emailed. Multiple applications per applicant must be submitted in separate emails.

Purpose of Program

This grant program aims to increase the number of students in great schools by providing customized implementation support to districts committed to bold action to transform low-performing schools and create better options for students. There are four school action models that applicants can select from:

1. Restart a struggling school as a partner-managed campus
2. Restart a struggling school as a district-managed ACE campus
3. Create a new school as a partner-managed campus
4. Redesign a rural school with a P-20 system model

School Actions are a comprehensive and bold approach by ISDs to increase the number of students in top-rated schools and reduce the number of students in low-rated schools. By providing grant funds and technical assistance to support school actions for individual campuses, TEA also supports school districts in adopting a broader continuous improvement strategy that annually evaluates school quality, parent demand, and neighborhood needs to take strategic actions that both improve schools and provide parents with the schools and programs they desire.

The grant includes support for matched technical assistance from the TEA. To learn more about school actions, please visit <https://www.centerforschoolactions.org/>

Eligible Applicants

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Eligibility To Apply for Competitive Grants.

Eligible applicants are ISDs with 2018–2019 Comprehensive schools or Targeted schools with a D or F rating (2019 ratings). A campus may not receive funding concurrently from Texas Title I Priority School (TTIPS) Cycle 5 grant funds, a School Redesign grant, a School Transformation Fund grant, or a School Action Fund Grant.

Eligibility Requirements for “Restart a struggling school as a partner-managed campus”

To be eligible for grant funding, districts must have authorized a partnership agreement that meets eligibility requirements for SB1882 turnaround partnership. School year 2021-2022 must be the first year of operation of the partnership.

Eligibility Requirements for “Restart a struggling school as a district-managed ACE Campus”

To be eligible for grant funding, districts must have completed the ACE model planning process with support from a third-party technical assistance organization with demonstrated expertise with ACE model planning and implementation. The district must demonstrate commitment to implement with fidelity all five core components of the ACE model and be prepared to open or have already opened the school as an ACE campus in Fall 2021.

Eligibility Requirements for “Create a new school as a partner-managed campus”

To be eligible for grant funding, districts must have authorized a partnership agreement that meets eligibility requirements for SB1882 partnership with an organization that has a track record of success. School year 2021-2022 must be the first year of operation of the partnership.

Eligibility Requirements for “Redesign a rural school with a P-20 system model”

To be eligible for grant funding, districts must have completed a planning process with support from a third-party technical assistance organization with demonstrated expertise with a P-20 school system model and district redesign. The district must demonstrate commitment to implement all core components of the rural redesign model and be prepared to open or have already opened the school as a rural redesigned campus in Fall 2021.

Eligibility List

An eligibility list is posted on the [TEA Grant Opportunities page](#), with all documents pertaining to the RFA.

Shared Services Arrangement

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

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) **are not** allowed for this grant program.

More Than One Application

Eligible applicants **may** apply for the grant on behalf of more than one campus. A separate application **must** be submitted for each campus.

Application Funding

See the following sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

- Grant Funding
- Continuation Funding
- Fund Management
- Use of Funds

It is anticipated that up to 5 grants will be awarded from \$500,000 up to \$1,000,000 per grant. Grant award amounts for each school action are listed below:

Restart a struggling school as a partner-managed campus - \$1,000,000

Restart a struggling school as a district-managed ACE-campus - \$750,000

Create a new school as a partner-managed campus - \$1,000,000

Redesign a rural school with a P-20 system model - \$500,000

Selection of Applicants for Funding

Applicants will be selected in the following order:

- 1) **First**, the highest ranked applicant for each of the four school action models will be funded.
- 2) **Then**, contingent on remaining available funds, applicants that selected redesign a rural school with a P-20 system model and met threshold requirements for sequestered review and oral interviews will be funded in rank order.

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Cost Share/Match Requirement.

There is no cost share or matching requirement for this grant program.

Limitation of Administrative Funds

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Administrative Costs.

Direct Administrative Costs

The authorizing statute permits applicants to budget reasonable and necessary administrative costs for this grant program.

Indirect Administrative Costs

The grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to their current approved restricted indirect cost rate for this grant program.

Pre-Award Costs

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Pre-Award Costs.

Pre-award costs **are not** permitted for this grant.

Applicant Assistance

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

Contact for Clarifying Information

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), TEA Contacts.

The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions about the RFA, the grant program, or for assistance with the applicants' webinar:

Marian Schutte, Director
Division of System Support and Innovation
dssi@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-9612

Frequently Asked Questions

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Frequently Asked Questions.

The FAQs for this grant program will be posted to the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) site no later than the date listed on the Grant Timeline. Applicants may email their questions to the TEA staff member listed in the Contact for Clarifying Information section.

Applicants' Conference/Webinar

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) Applicants' Conference/Webinar.

Questions that applicants wish to have addressed during the applicants' webinar must be submitted no later than the date given in the grant timeline. The webinar will be recorded.

Date of Webinar	Time	Registration Link	Type
April 8, 2021	11:00AM	https://tinyurl.com/55eyu6p2	Live

Errata Notices

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

GovDelivery Email Bulletins

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

Program Elements

This section provides detailed information about the grant program.

Program Description

This grant program seeks to assist and support districts in the implementation of a school action in Title I, Part A Comprehensive schools and Targeted schools with a D or F rating, providing an opportunity for districts to create new and improved learning environments that substantially increase student achievement.

School Action Models are a bold approach by districts to increase the number of students in highly rated schools through supported implementation of a school action in Comprehensive and Targeted schools. (see below for detailed descriptions of the *School Action Models*).

The TEA will provide up to five implementation awards at amounts from \$500,000 up to \$1,000,000 to support ISDs with the implementation of their school action plan. The grants will fund applicants during the implementation phase of a school action for a two-year grant period ending on July 31, 2023.

Applicants will present a strong plan to execute a school action supported by a TEA designated and matched school action technical assistance provider. School action technical assistance providers are rigorously vetted and selected by the TEA and demonstrate a strong track record of developing and implementing school actions. The applicant must describe how it will use grant funds in its eligible campus(es) to implement the school action, identifying one of the following school actions:

- 1) **Restart a struggling school as a partner-managed campus:** An ISD authorizes a turnaround partnership as a subchapter C charter school that qualifies for Texas Partnership benefits under TEC §11.174 and opens as a partnership school for the 2021-22 school year and beyond.
- 2) **Restart a struggling school as a district-managed ACE campus:** An ISD implements the Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) model with fidelity as a traditional, district-managed school for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond
- 3) **Create a new school as a partner-managed campus:** An ISD authorizes a partnership as a subchapter C charter school that qualifies for Texas Partnership benefits under TEC §11.174 and opens as a partnership school for the 2021-22 school year and beyond.
- 4) **Redesign a rural school with a P-20 system model:** An ISD implements a P-20 system model with fidelity as a traditional, district-managed school or as a subchapter C charter school for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond including but not limited to dual credit opportunities, P-TECH programming, college and career coaching, and work-based learning opportunities

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division's [Administering a Grant](#) page.

The supplement not supplant provision **applies** to this grant program.

SMART Goal

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

Measurable Progress

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

Application Requirements and Assurances

This section describes the two types of requirements that applicants must address in the application (such as with a narrative description, an activity timeline, or a checklist) to be eligible to be considered for funding:

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)
- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

Program-Specific Assurances

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

- The ISD will work in good faith with the TEA vetted and matched school action technical assistance provider and agency-provided technical assistance.
- Applicant will budget 15% of the total award as “Matched School Action Technical Assistance Provider” on schedule 6200. This amount will be subtracted from the total grant award and used by TEA and ESC-13 to establish a contract with the matched provider.
- The ISD must identify a project manager. The ISD may use other funds for this position.
- ISDs pursuing a partnership-managed model must perform a financial spending analysis in accordance with TEA requirements.
- ISDs must complete fidelity of implementation revisions with the matched school action technical assistance provider on or before October 15, 2021.
- The ISD will provide access for on-site visits to the ISD and campus by TEA and its contractors.
- The ISD will attend and participate in grant orientation meetings, technical assistance meetings, other periodic meetings of grantees, and sharing of best practices through the TEA program office.
- The ISD board must commit to Lone Star Governance (LSG) training and coaching.
- The applicant assures partners operating campuses under the partner-managed option must commit to TEA-identified board training.
- Enrollment at a new school must prioritize students attending or zoned to a 2018–2019 Comprehensive and/or Targeted School (2019 ratings).

Statutory Requirements

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

Per TEC §22.0834, 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.

1. Describe how the ISD will carry out its school support and improvement activities, including how the ISD will develop a school improvement plan for the eligible campuses identified as a 2018–2019 Comprehensive or D- and F-rated Targeted School (2019 ratings).
2. Describe how the ISD will monitor schools receiving Title I - Part A funds, including how the ISD will:
 - a. Monitor school improvement plans upon submission and implementation, and
 - b. Implement additional action following unsuccessful implementation of such plan after a number of years determined by the district.
3. Describe how the ISD will use a rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external organizations with whom the ISD will work with to support the Comprehensive or Targeted school.
4. Describe how the ISD will align other Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with funds received under this subsection.
5. Describe how the ISD will modify, as appropriate, practices and policies to provide operational flexibility that enables full and effective implementation of the school action.
6. Describe how the selected school action model will incorporate one or more evidence-based strategies during the implementation phase.

TEA Program Requirements

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

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

1. ISDs must select one of the eligible grant models,
2. ISDs must describe:
 - a. The evaluation process and criteria utilized for selecting the school action model for the specific campus to be supported with this grant.
 - b. How the school action aligns with the ISD's overall strategy for support and intervention in low-performing schools and/or the ISD's strategy for expanding high-quality school choices for students and families.
 - c. How were senior district leaders involved in the decision to select the school action for the Comprehensive or Targeted school, and to apply for this School Action Fund Implementation Grant.
 - d. How the district has worked or will work with members of the school community (staff, families, community leaders) to communicate plans and solicit community input into the school action implementation process.

- e. What specific technical assistance support from outside provider organizations does the ISD expect to need in order to effectively implement the selected school action.
- f. The identified ISD staff member to manage the implementation grant and the qualifications of the identified staff member.

Activities and Use of Funds

See the [Administering a Grant](#) page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

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

Out-of-State Travel

Out-of-state travel costs may be funded under this grant program. Out-of-state travel costs should be minimal. Travel costs are allowable as long as the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items are only incurred by employees on official business of the grantee and follow the grantee’s regular business operations and written travel policy. Out-of-State Travel will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Out-of-State Travel Justification form, refer to the [Administering a Grant page](#).

Travel Costs for Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

Travel costs for officials such as the executive director, superintendent, or board members may be funded under the grant program. Only the following travel costs are allowable for these positions:

- Site visits during the grant period as outlined in the application
- Travel to and from TEA required events

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

Grant applicants should establish grant budgets that align with the following required use of funds. Budget guidance is specific to the selected school action. Grant applicants should set aside 15% of grant funds for their matched technical assistance provide on Schedule 6200. Other required budget line items include “up to” amounts for the budget item. Districts must budget for these costs in their grant application but have flexibility to determine the amount of funds up to the amounts listed below.

Restart a Struggling School as Partner-Managed Campus		
Required Expenses	Target Grant Amount	Notes
Technical Assistance Matched Provider	\$150,000	TEA will directly contract for TA provider support on behalf of the district grantee. Contract amount will be subtracted from the NOGA amount.
District Administrator / Innovation Officer Position	Up to \$150,000	Up to 15% of grant funds can be directed toward personnel expense for a district administrator to manage the grant program; for instance, to cover a portion of district Innovation Officer position.

Partner Organization Funding	\$500,000+	At least \$500,000 should be set aside for the partner organization to support implementation of the partner model.
School Quality Reviews	Up to \$30,000	Costs for third-party organization to conduct rigorous ESF-aligned assessment of school practices and priority setting with leadership team.
Communications planning and support	Up to \$20,000	Districts may allocate some portion of grant funds to support the planning and execution of a strategic communication plan.
School community engagement events	Up to \$10,000	Expenses associated with school community events to solicit input and communicate plans related to the school action.
Travel	Up to \$10,000	Travel expenses for TEA required events and district-directed trips to support partnership implementation.
Other materials/supplies for grant activities	Up to \$20,000	

Restart a Struggling School as a District-Managed ACE Campus		
Required Expenses	Target Grant Amount	Notes
Technical Assistance Matched Provider	\$150,000	TEA will directly contract for TA provider support on behalf of the district grantee. Contract amount will be subtracted from the NOGA amount.
District Administrator / Innovation Officer Position	Up to \$100,000	Up to 10% of grant funds can be directed toward personnel expense for a district administrator to manage the grant program; for instance, to cover a portion of district Innovation Officer position.
Staff Stipends	Up to \$500,000	
Extended Day expenses	Up to \$250,000	May include extra duty pay for teachers, transportation, after-school enrichment programming.
Professional development	Up to \$200,000	May include contracted services and/or extra duty pay for teachers to participate in summer PD training.
Travel	Up to \$20,000	Travel expenses for TEA required events, ACE convenings hosted by TA provider organization, and district-directed trips to visit ACE campuses or other activities to support ACE implementation.
Supplies / Materials for school culture/branding	Up to \$50,000	
Instructional materials	Up to \$50,000	Instructional materials purchased with grant funds for new school start-up must meet TEA criteria for high-quality instructional materials aligned to TEKS and rigor of state assessments
Communications planning and support	Up to \$10,000	Districts may allocate some portion of grant funds to support the planning and execution of a strategic communication plan.
School community engagement events	Up to \$10,000	Expenses associated with school community events to solicit input and communicate plans related to the school action.
Other materials/supplies for grant activities	Up to \$10,000	

Create a New School as Partner-Managed Campus		
Required Expenses	Target Grant Amount	Notes
Technical Assistance Matched Provider	\$150,000	TEA will directly contract for TA provider support on behalf of the district grantee. Contract amount will be subtracted from the NOGA amount.
District Administrator / Innovation Officer Position	Up to \$150,000	Up to 15% of grant funds can be directed toward personnel expense for a district administrator to manage the grant program; for instance, to cover a portion of district Innovation Officer position.
Partner Organization Funding	\$500,000+	At least \$500,000 should be set aside for the partner organization to support implementation of the partner model.
School Quality Reviews	Up to \$30,000	Costs for third-party organization to conduct rigorous ESF-aligned assessment of school practices and priority setting with leadership team.
Communications planning and support	Up to \$20,000	Districts may allocate some portion of grant funds to support the planning and execution of a strategic communication plan.
School community engagement events	Up to \$10,000	Expenses associated with school community events to solicit input and communicate plans related to the school action.
Travel	Up to \$10,000	Travel expenses for TEA required events and district-directed trips to support partnership implementation.
Other materials/supplies for grant activities	Up to \$20,000	

Redesign a Rural School with a P-20 System Model		
Required Expenses	Target Amount	Notes
Technical Assistance Matched Provider	\$150,000	TEA will directly contract for TA matched provider support on behalf of the district grantee. Contract amount will be subtracted from the NOGA amount.
School Quality Reviews	Up to \$30,000	Costs for third-party organization to conduct rigorous ESF-aligned assessment of school practices and priority setting with leadership team.
District Administrator / Innovation Officer Position	Up to \$150,000	Up to 15% of grant funds can be directed toward personnel expense for a district administrator to manage the grant program; for instance, to cover a portion of district Innovation Officer position.
School instructional leader position(s)	Up to \$250,000	Ongoing funding for principal or other school leader position (e.g., instructional coach) during the first two years of school start-up.
Instructional materials	Up to \$200,000	Instructional materials purchased with grant funds for new school start-up must meet TEA criteria for high-quality instructional materials aligned to TEKS and rigor of state assessments.
Classroom technology	Up to \$200,000	

Professional development	Up to \$150,000	Expenses can include personnel costs for participation in professional development, contracted services for training, and other costs directly associated with staff professional development.
Supplies / Materials for school culture/branding	Up to \$50,000	
Travel expenses	Up to \$10,000	Travel expenses for TEA required events and district-directed trips to visit model schools or other activities to support school action implementation.
School community engagement events	Up to \$10,000	Expenses associated with school community events to solicit input and communicate plans related to the school action.
Other supplies and materials	Up to \$10,000	

General Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

In general, refer to the Budgeting Cost Guidance Handbook on the [Administering a Grant](#) page for unallowable costs.

- Advisory Councils
- Field trips
- Cost of Membership in Any Civic or Community Organization
- Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences
- Debt service (lease-purchase)

Project Evaluation and Modification

By submitting this application, the applicant agrees to comply with any evaluation requirements that may be established by TEA and agrees to submit the required evaluation reports in the format and time requested by TEA. TEA will collect and analyze relevant data from PEIMS if it is available.

Specific critical success factors and milestones will be developed in a manner determined appropriate by TEA.

Performance Measures

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

Completion of the Fidelity of Implementation Tool to include ongoing progress monitoring of the goals and goal progress measures. Upon grant award, TEA Division of System Support and Innovation will provide awardees with this tool by September 1, 2021. ISDs must complete fidelity of implementation revisions with matched school action technical assistance provider on or before October 15, 2021. Progress will be monitored by the agency on a monthly basis.

Limits on Contracted Evaluators

When a grantee chooses, or is required under a grant, to hire a contracted evaluator, TEA believes that the evaluator must have the capability to remain independent and objective in carrying out the evaluation. “Independent and objective” implies that there is no influence or

control, real or perceived, exerted on the evaluator by any person who is involved in the provision of program services. Therefore, the only way in which a contracted evaluator can be truly independent and objective is not to be involved in any manner with the provision of program services or activities. Otherwise, the evaluator is, at least in part, evaluating its own services.

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

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

Federal Grant Requirements

Equitable Access and Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Equitable Access and Participation.

This requirement **does** apply to this federally funded grant program.

Private Nonprofit School Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Private Nonprofit School Participation.

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

Maintenance of Effort

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

This requirement **does** apply to this federally funded grant program.

Application Elements

This section describes the requirements and attachments that must be addressed in and included with the application.

Notice of Intent to Apply

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

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

Reviewer Information Form

For every application submitted for a competitive grant, the applicant is required to submit the names of three individuals to serve as reviewers in the competitive review process for the grant program. For ISDs submitting multiple campus grant applications, the ISD must submit a minimum of three reviewers per campus application or a total of ten reviewers, whichever is less.

Individuals who are hired to prepare grant applications may not serve as reviewers, and their names should not be submitted. Applicants must notify the people whose names they submit that they may be asked by TEA to serve as reviewers.

Once reviewers are selected, they will receive detailed information about the review process. The competitive review for the grant program will take place during the time period given in the Grant Timeline.

The Reviewer Information Form is published along with the RFA on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. All applicants are required to complete the form and to submit it online on or before the date given in the Grant Timeline.

Required Attachments

See the following section of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

- Required Program-Related Attachments

Required Program-Related Attachments

The applicant must submit with the application the TEA-supplied attachment that corresponds to their selected school action listed below. (Only one attachment per application).

1. Restart a struggling school as a partner-managed campus
2. Restart a struggling school as a district-managed ACE campus
3. Create a new school as a partner-managed campus
4. Redesign a rural school with a P-20 system model

Scoring and Review

This section provides information on the scoring and review of applications for competitive grants. Applicants that receive a minimum of 70% of the points available through the peer review of standard and specific review criteria will be invited to attend an oral interview which will be conducted virtually, from June 21, 2021 through July 2, 2021. Applicants must then receive a minimum of 70% of oral interview points to be considered for priority points. Priority points will be added to scores from the peer review and oral interviews. Applicants will be eligible to receive a grant award based on their total point ranking **AND** must meet the 70% threshold from both the peer review and oral interviews to be eligible to receive a grant award.

Standard Review Criteria

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Standard Review Criteria. **(60 points)**

Specific Review Criteria

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Specific Review Criteria. **(20 points)**

Quality of Responses to Required Program-Related Attachments

1. Restart a struggling school as a partner-managed campus
2. Restart a struggling school as a district-managed ACE campus
3. Create a new school as a partner-managed campus
4. Redesign a rural school with a P-20 system model

Points will be assigned on the basis that attachment responses are of sufficient quality and depth.

Oral Interviews for Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Oral Interviews for Funding. **(40 points)**.

ISDs should include the following individuals in the oral interview process:

- Superintendent, or cabinet-level leadership team member that is a direct report to the Superintendent
- Proposed grant project manager
- Senior district leader directly responsible for overseeing the selected campus
- Campus-level leader for school action implementation

During the oral interviews applicants will have the opportunity to elaborate and be evaluated on the following topics. Both applicant and evaluator may reference any RFA documents, including the program guidelines, the FAQs, and the Attachments (including responses to specific criteria for the selected school action).

1. School Action Selection (20 points)
 - a. Evaluation process and criteria for selecting the school action
 - b. Alignment of school action with overall district strategy for school improvement
 - c. Support from district leadership and school board
2. Readiness to Implement (20 points)
 - a. Understanding of school action requirements
 - b. Awareness of school action implementation challenges and mitigation strategies
 - c. Plans for engaging technical assistance organizations
 - d. Presence of existing practices and policies to support school action implementation

Priorities for Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Priorities for Funding **(up to 40 points)**.

Applicants must submit the optional TEA-provided attachment to receive Priority Points.

1. **Evidence of Innovation Office (10 points):** ISD must have hired a school transformation or innovation officer to support the school action implementation process. The applicant may

attach either a copy or a hyperlink (URL) to the ISD’s organization chart highlighting the eligible position(s).

2. **Adoption of Model Authorizing Policy (10 points):** The applicant must certify the ISD’s adoption of the Model Authorizing Policy EL(LOCAL) or ELA (LOCAL) board policy and include a hyperlink to the ISD’s authorizing policy. The policy must match the TEA model policy. The model policy can be found [here](#).
3. **Evidence of a Call for Quality Schools (10 points):** the applicant must attach a hyperlink (URL) to an in-district charter application which has been approved under TEC §12.0522, TEC §12.0521, or TEC §12.0521
4. **High Need Campus (10 points).** The campus identified is designated “Comprehensive” (any letter grade from 2019 ratings), or “Targeted” (with F letter grade from 2019 accountability ratings)

Summary of Application Scoring and Selection

