



2023-2025 Texas Center for Student Supports LOI
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, May 30, 2023

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

P.L. 117-59 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Title II, School Improvement Programs, BSCA

This LOI application may be submitted via email to competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov.

The LOI 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, May 30, 2023**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from

July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2025

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

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Attachment documentation as described on pages 1-2 in the Program Guidelines - limited to no more than **10 pages**

Amendment Number

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

N/A

Applicant Information

Organization **Region XIV Education Service Center** CDN **221-950** Campus **N/A** ESC **14** UEI **PX6SCA5K4L3**

Address **1850 Highway 351** City **Abilene** ZIP **79601** Vendor ID **1-751247833**

Primary Contact **Emilia Moreno** Email **emoreno@esc14.net** Phone **325-675-8674**

Secondary Contact **Emily Jeffrey** Email **ejeffrey@esc14.net** Phone **325-675-7003**

Certification and Incorporation

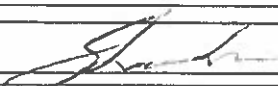
I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized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

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

- ☒ LOI application, guidelines, and instructions ☒ Debarment and Suspension Certification
☒ General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances ☒ Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name **Shane Fields** Title **Executive Director**

Email **sfields@esc14.net** Phone **325-675-7037**

Signature  Date **5-26-23**

RFA # **701-67-23** SAS # **701A-24**

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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.

- ☒ 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.
- ☒ 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.
- ☒ The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Center for Student Supports LOI Program Guidelines.
- ☒ The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Center for Student Supports LOI Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- ☒ The applicant will formally establish the Texas Center for Student Support (TCSS).
- ☒ The applicant will dedicate a full-time director level position or above with personnel approved by TEA to lead the planning, execution, and implementation of all TCSS functions.
- ☒ The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to develop a TEA aligned student support team framework that includes protocols for team operation, recommendations for team staffing, standardized forms, resources, and tools that LEAs will use to support their student support teams.
- ☒ The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to develop a parent and family engagement playbook with resources and tools that LEAs can use to partner and build support with parents and families prior to a student support team assessment, and during the student support implementation process, to facilitate a student support partnership with families.
- ☒ The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to establish and implement a campus leader, teacher, parent/family, and student advisory group and use subgroup focus groups to provide feedback and input on needs for services and support and on products developed for the Student Support Program.
- ☒ The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to develop and implement job-embedded professional learning, technical assistance, and coaching to support LEAs with establishing and implementing student support team structures.
- ☒ The applicant will contract with a technical assistance provider or set of providers to develop and implement a data reporting system to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy of the implementation of the Student Support Program, including student support team structure, quality of support leading to positive outcomes, and data related to increases in desired outcomes (e.g. increase in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increase in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increase in referrals for mental health services, reduction in removals from class, etc.).

Statutory/Program Assurances Cont'd

- ☒ The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures.
- ☒ The applicant will establish a collaborative partnership through contract procurement with the University of Texas at Austin Behavior Sciences and Policy Institute, and with the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health (TIEMH) at the University of Texas at Austin, to develop the Student Support Program.
- ☒ The applicant will develop a plan to sustain the TCSS to support ESCs and LEAs beyond the life of the grant cycle.

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.

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

Texas Student Support Director/Coordinator - Provide leadership in the implementation of the Texas Center for Student Support program

Master's Degree, Knowledge of Behavioral Threat Assessment process and practices, Strong program development and project management as an educator or counselor, Coordinates programs for Texas Center for Student Supports

Texas Student Support Consultant - Provide coaching, training, resources, technical assistance, and guidance with a focus on mental, emotional,

Master's Degree, School Counselor Certification required, Knowledge and skills appropriate for developing and implementing mental health guidance

Texas Student Support Consultant - Provide coaching, training, resources, technical assistance, and guidance with a focus on mental, emotional, and behavioral health

Master's Degree in Social Work, Psychology or related Human Service Field, Must be a currently licensed clinical social worker or licensed professional counselor

TEA Program Requirements

HISTORICAL SUCCESS: 1. Describe the success that the ESC has had in supporting LEAs with the following: **a.** electing and managing technical assistance providers to support LEAs and ESCs resulting in delivery of agreed upon deliverable and measurable outcomes; **b.** establishing and improving school culture resulting in strong relationships between staff and students, reductions in behavioral and disciplinary incidents, reductions in chronic absenteeism, reduction in incidents of bullying and harassment, and improved overall academic outcomes; **c.** implementing effective mental health training, support, and resources; and **d.** implementing effective student support team structures.

a. Through successful implementation of initiatives like the Title IV School Safety State Initiative and Head Start, ESC 14 has hired technical assistance providers. Fortunately, the service center employs a diverse staff with a multiplicity of skills which often allows for staff to pick up technical assistance roles without having to hire externally, a model that has proven effective because of the known quality of in-staff personnel versus relying on the unknown of an outside entity. b. This past academic year, ESC 14 staff concentrated on training and supporting Tier 1 interventions, including both academic and behavioral supports. As a result, the service center has certified six consultants as on-site coaches for LEA's under the Leader in Me program through Franklin Covey to help LEAs establish and improve school climate and culture.

TEA Program Requirements Cont'd

c. Successful implementation of a mental health liaison supported by HB19 funding has provided access to a mental health authority housed at the service center. Additionally, the HB 19 mental health liaison has frequently interfaced with LEAs to speak to parents and staff regarding mental health concerns. Feedback from school counselors throughout the region expressed a desire to learn more Tier 2 interventions this year. ESC 14 has utilized expertise from staff with both clinical and school counseling experience to create kits of supplies that can be used to support students by redirecting emotions or behavior that prevent learning. ESC 14 mental health consultants travel to campuses in the region and demonstrate behavior interventions using the supplies furnished by ESC 14, coaching school staff through modeling and role play. Unique to ESC 14, the service center has purchased technology from Rural Utility Service (RUS) grant funding to establish remote counseling in 18 districts for students who cannot afford counseling or because of distance to services. The RUS grant allows students from area universities to accrue hours toward licensure by providing counseling support. d. ESC 14 was awarded the contract to implement the Title IV School Safety Initiative. This initiative has successfully implemented the six areas of focus launched by the governor in response to the Uvalde school shooting through the Safe and Supportive School Program (SSSP) work. When the need arises for Tier 3 intervention, ESC 14 has implemented its own version of a Crisis Response Team, named the Care Team. The Care Team, composed of ESC 14 consultants and based on the latest trauma-informed care practices. The use of both clinical and school counselors allows team members to utilize expertise to best meet the needs of students. ESC 14 continues to broaden communication and mutual support between area clinical counselors and school counselors. ESC 14 has successfully implemented training in Behavioral Threat Assessment, Youth Mental Health First Aid, ASK Suicide Prevention Training, and 40 Developmental Assets. A support center will be created by capitalizing on our clinician and school counselor team coaching model to directly assist ESCs and LEAs in creating their own coaching teams to facilitate implementation of programs that best implement effective student support team structures.

CONTENT: 2. Describe how the ESC will serve as the statewide Student Support Program content, training, and resource center for all twenty ESCs and participating LEAs. Include a brief description of the Student Support team framework, parents and family engagement playbook, and case management system.

ESC 14 has successfully implemented one statewide Student Support Program (SSP) through the Title IV School Safety State Initiative. Best practices learned through the state initiative can be leveraged to launch the Texas Center for Student Supports (TxCSS) without having to start from ground zero. The ESC 14 SSP team's framework will focus on finding struggling students and providing early intervention practices that adults can effectively implement using the multi-tiered systems of support model. One strategy for an early intervention practice will be the parent and family engagement playbook. Possible playbook topics could include: 1) training for LEAs to use when teaching parents the basics of a student support team assessment, 2) one-page graphic organizers for LEAs to distribute to parents and students outlining the purpose of a student support team, 3) one-page graphic organizers for LEAs to use to explain the parent partnership role with the schools, 4) a manual on steps for LEAs to follow to set up a community resource fair geared toward resources for students, parents, family (ex. include ideas on where to find local resources and virtual/online resources), 5) a library of short videos addressing common student behaviors and mental health concerns with students, and 6) family training for how to handle grief from the death of a student/staff and/or death of a student by suicide. Another strategy that must be created by the TxCSS to put structures in place is to create a strong network of case managers across the state, including LEAs, community resources, parents and families, and ESCs. As students move through the MTSS system, case managers will track the needs of struggling students within the areas of academics, behavior, and social/emotional supports with targeted and intensive interventions when needed.

TEA Program Requirements Cont'd

STRUCTURE: 3. Describe the protocols that the ESC will develop to establish and strengthen a clear link between existing school district support systems and the student support team structure including but not limited to behavior threat assessment, mental health needs, suicide prevention, emotional and behavioral health needs, and other needs that create barriers to positive student outcomes. Describe how the ESC will support the management of technical assistance providers agreed upon deliverables.

An existing model at ESC 14 has employed both clinically trained and school counselors who work together and support each other by sharing expertise unique to their areas of training. What school counselors lack in clinical training, professional counselors provide expertise and offer support. Where clinical counselors miss nuances unique to counseling students in a school setting, school counselors can offer their perspective. This model is one that can be shared with ESCs through training and replicated across the state as needed to support the student support team structure. ESC 14 has accomplished much through the Title IV School Safety State Initiative, especially in support of hardscape safety issues including conducting effective behavioral threat assessment training to ensure staff is well prepared. TxCSS now provides an opportunity to address more softscape safety issues, including suicide prevention, mental health needs, bullying prevention, and the emotional and physical health of students. The TxCSS will work closely with TEA to identify potential partners to provide technical assistance to deliver programs that will support students, families, and staff. As implementation of the grant gets underway, clear and consistent communication with the technical assistance providers must be maintained. Continual checkpoints will be implemented on a monthly basis with each provider to ensure efficiency and fidelity of the tools used by TxCSS, ESCs, and LEAs.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: 4. Describe how the ESC will provide professional learning to the twenty ESCs and participating LEAs including content delivery, technical assistance, and resources to effectively implement the Student Support Program.

ESC 14 will utilize a Trainer of Trainers (TOT) model to train ESC consultants who will then train and support LEAs in their prospective regions. Content delivery, technical assistance, and resources will include statewide training at conferences, travel to individual ESCs, zoom training and support, establishment of a webpage, an ESC listserv, monthly ESC virtual meeting and newsletter. These resources include: school safety, mental health, behavioral support, absenteeism, bullying, academic and non-academic achievement, emotional support, and positive school climate and culture. Other suggested resources that will be provided to ESCs and LEAs to utilize include community involvement activities, such as a Mental Health Summit and a Community Resource Symposium. These types of activities will provide opportunities for outside agencies and school staff to interact and build alliances for future student support. Lessons learned by housing the Title IV State initiative and the ESC mental health team will guide the implementation of professional learning for the Texas Center for Student Supports. The Center will collaborate with the Title IV School Safety Initiative Team to align and incorporate work already being accomplished by the ESCs and LEAs to provide comprehensive support using existing systems and structures, such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Trauma Informed Care, and School Climate Surveys. ESC 14 will provide training that addresses Tier 1 issues that support school climate and culture to prevent escalation to higher tiers by utilizing the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework to create safe and supportive schools.

Statutory/Program Requirements Cont'd

DATA REPORTING: 5. Describe the system the Student Support Center will use to support participating LEAs with tracking referrals to the student support team and collecting data on supports provided to students and families to monitor effectiveness. Participating LEAs will be required to report this data to the Texas Education Agency.

1) Development of a Safe and Supportive School Program (SSSP) Tracker: Working with a technical assistance provider, the TxCSS would develop a data collection tool to assist SSP teams in tracking an incident and its response through the entire process, including the follow-up results. Anonymized data from participating districts would allow for incident-level reporting, automatically providing the data to help campuses with the current aggregated reporting survey. This would also allow participating districts the ability to report results based upon select groups, which is currently unavailable state-wide, yet also legally required. Incident-level data would be warehoused in a statewide database which could allow stakeholders the ability to analyze data for trends. 2) Development of an SSSP Training tracker: In addition to a district-level incident tracking tool, this training tracking tool will be developed with input from participating districts and ESCs and would assist SSSP teams in tracking staff training, when the training was taken, and who provided the training (ex. ESC, intra-district, or outside 3rd-party vendor). 3) Data from campus incident level tracking and training would be collected and results shared to assist partnering ESCs and TEA in tailoring the services provided by the TxCSS and also allow for data to assist in the development and implementation of best practices. 4) Partnering ESCs would be able to add training information to a training and support tracker while also having access to regional data in order to best support their schools. 5) District, Regional, and Statewide Data Dashboards would be available to those schools participating in the data tracking program. Through work with the technical assistance provider, a specialized Dashboard would be developed to allow TEA ready access to aggregated data and visualizations based around TEA, program benchmarks, and milestones. 6) Districts currently utilizing existing case/support tracking systems would be able to import information into the system. 7) Technical assistance providers, in partnership with the TxCSS, would be responsible for staffing a statewide technical support hotline to provide customer support for the tools.

CAPACITY: 6. Describe the ESC capacity and expertise to fulfill the program requirements.

Within the past three years, ESC 14 has grown the mental and behavioral support team from three to ten consultants based on the needs of our schools. The team is comprised of different mental and behavioral backgrounds, including clinical and school counselor experiences, which bring effective implementation for safe and supportive schools. The combined years of experience, over 250 years, from the ESC 14 mental health team and the areas from which that experience derives enables this team to successfully support the vast services needed to insure effective implementation. Additionally, the partnership that has developed between the ESC 14 mental health and Title IV State Initiative team will further promote a structure that will meet each student's overall well-being. Annually, ESC 14 conducts a needs assessment through the region-wide counselor consortium to assess staff and student mental and behavioral health needs. Based on the needs assessment results, training topics vary each year and have covered areas such as grief counseling, trauma-informed care, 40 Developmental Assets, suicide prevention, self-care, resiliency, play therapy, crisis team practices and resources, and how students can manage anxiety and stress. A second needs assessment is conducted through the ESC 14 Title IV Mental and Behavioral Health Training and Support Grant with a smaller group of LEAs to assess the climate, culture, and mental health of students. Feedback from school counselors participating in grants expressed a desire to learn more Tier 2 interventions this year. Two members of the ESC 14 mental health team with both clinical and school counseling experience created supply kits containing items such as books, fidgets, sand trays, sensory devices, and hands-on counseling materials used to support students by redirecting emotions or behavior that prevents learning. These consultants travel to campuses in the region and demonstrate behavior interventions using the supply kits, and coaching school staff through modeling and role play. These activities exemplify the capacity of ESC 14 teams working hand-in-hand to complement each other's efforts toward building a safe environment for all students and school staff.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**CAPACITY:** 7. How many TEA grants is the ESC currently administering? 51**CAPACITY:** 8. How many TEA grant applications does the ESC have in progress (not including this application)? 0**Budget Narrative**

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

\$750,000 - 3 FTEs at Region 14 to establish and operate the Texas Center for Student Support

1 director-level position

2 FTEs will be composed of individuals with clinical and/or school counselor background to support the program

Includes building use fee, for office space and network access fees to provide technology

\$1,181,518 - Establishing partnerships thru the University of Texas at Austin Behavior Sciences and Policy Institute and with the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health at the University of Texas at Austin to develop the Student Support Program. Working with all of the Education Service Centers across the state to provide trainings and develop teams at each ESC. Partner with specialized/expert individuals at the ESCs to create the framework.

\$500,000 - General supplies as needed. Includes items needed to create protocols, standardized forms, resources, and tools to support student support teams. To create a parent and family engagement playbook with resources and tools so that LEAs can partner and build support with parents and families. Tools and resources needed to develop and implement job-embedded professional learning, technical assistance, and coaching. To develop and implement a data reporting system to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy.

\$200,000 - Travel as needed across the state to the Education Service Centers to train appropriate staff to implement the Student Support Program. Possible travel to work with the University of Texas at Austin Behavior Sciences and Policy Institute and with the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health at the University of Texas at Austin

\$127,892 - 4.86% Indirect Cost Rate for the 23/24 school year approved by TEA

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	

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**