



**2023-2025 Grow Your Own Grant Program, Cycle 6**  
**Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, October 13, 2022**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

**General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 40, 87th Texas Legislature**

This LOI application must be submitted via email to [competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto: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, October 13, 2022**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from

**February 9, 2023 to April 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 1: Pathway Selection and Participation

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization Palestine ISD CDN 001907 Campus 001907 ESC 7 DUNS 095444048

Address 1007 E. Park Avenue City Palestine ZIP 75801 Vendor ID 1756002185

Primary Contact Chris Kiser Email ckiser@palestineschools.org Phone 903-513-9039

Secondary Contact Sahron Reed Email sreed@palestineschools.org Phone 903-731-8000

**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
- General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name Chris Kiser Title Assistant Superintendent

Email ckiser@palestineschools.org Phone 903-513-9039

Signature *Chris Kiser* Date 11/10/2022

**Shared Services Arrangements**

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. Check the box below if applying as a 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 upon request.

**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 2023-2025 Grow Your Own Grant Program, Cycle 6 Program Guidelines.
4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Grow Your Own, Cycle 6 Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

**PATHWAY 1:**

5. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for Education & Training teachers that receive a stipend through the Grow Your Own Grant by May 31, 2023. These participating teachers must commit with the MOU to, at minimum, teach the Education and Training courses and, if applicable, establish and/or grow a chapter of a Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) as a condition of receiving the stipend.
6. The MOUs for Education and Training teachers must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 11 of the Program Guidelines.
7. If implementing dual credit Education and Training courses, the LEA must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for the partnering IHE by May 31, 2023. This MOU should include, at minimum, content outlined on page 11 of the Program Guidelines.
8. The LEA will retain documentation locally of each letter of commitment or MOU and submit to TEA upon request.
9. The LEA assures that each high school campus within the participating LEA will implement at least the Instructional Practices and/or Practicum courses in the Education and Training course sequence in 2023-2024, and at least both stated courses in 2024-2025, with the teachers receiving the stipend as teachers of record for both courses or either course. \*Please see example on page 9 of the Program Guidelines.
10. To receive a stipend for teaching dual credit, the LEA assures the Education and Training teacher holds a master's degree in an education-related field and be the teacher of record for at least one dual credit course section in 2023-2024 and two dual credit course sections in 2024-2025 within the Education and Training course sequence.
11. All LEA high schools must establish and/or grow a chapter of a CTSO that supports the Education and Training career cluster through either the Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE) or Family, Career and Community Leads of America (FCCLA) and participate in at least one competitive event per year.
12. The LEA assures that all LEA high schools will participate in an initial TEA-led Teacher Institute in Summer 2023. Education and Training teacher stipend recipients are required to attend the entirety of the Institute. Principals, counselors, and LEA grant managers are only required to attend the first day. Participants who attended any previous Grow Your Own Summer Institute must still attend. IHE/EPP partners and student ambassador attendance is optional but recommended.
13. The LEA assures that each Education and Training teacher stipend recipient will pilot the TEA Education and Training curriculum if they are not currently using a high-quality Education and Training curriculum.
14. The LEA assures that each Education and Training teacher stipend recipient will receive TEA implementation supports and coaching by participating in online collaborative communities to be scheduled by TEA, not to exceed 6 hours per semester.
15. The LEA assures that Education and Training teacher stipend recipients will participate in surveys and, if requested, focus groups not to exceed 1 hour per semester and administered by TEA to receive input on the Education and Training programming.

**Statutory/Program Assurances Cont'd**

- 16. LEA grant managers shall support Practicum in Education and Training implementation, including but not limited to student scheduling, identifying field sites and field site teachers, and coordinating student transportation to field sites.
- 17. LEAs shall develop a marketing and recruitment plan to grow enrollment in high school Education and Training courses. Upon request by TEA, all LEA high schools will submit their plan for marketing and student recruitment.
- 18. LEAs must, upon request, submit reports on progress towards performance measures to TEA. If requested, LEAs must participate in focus groups and surveys to give input on the Education and Training programming.
- 19. All grant-funded teachers must be identified and submitted to TEA by May 31, 2023.

**PATHWAY 2:**

- 20. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU for each candidate that receives a stipend through the Grow Your Own Grant by May 31, 2023. All candidate stipend recipients must commit with a MOU, at minimum, to remain at the LEA for an agreed upon length of time in a full-time teaching role as a condition of receiving the stipend.
- 21. The MOUs for candidates must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 13 of the Program Guidelines.
- 22. LEAs must have a signed letter of commitment or MOU from each accredited EPP (see Eligible Applicants section of the Program Guidelines) that will partner with the LEA to award teacher certifications to all candidates (those earning a bachelor's degree and teacher certification and certification-only candidates) by May 31, 2023.
- 23. The MOUs for EPPs must include, at minimum, content outlined on page 13 of the Program Guidelines.
- 24. The LEA will retain all MOU documentation locally and submit to TEA upon request.
- 25. LEAs must allow reasonable paid release time and schedule flexibility, as determined by the LEA, for candidates to complete their degree and certification course requirements while engaged in the grant program.
- 26. All certification-only candidates within a LEA will be certified by the same partner EPP as a cohort managed collaboratively by the LEA and EPP.
- 27. The LEA assures that candidate stipend recipients participate in surveys and, if requested, focus groups not to exceed 1 hour per semester and administered by TEA to receive input on the grant programming.
- 28. If positions are available that can be appropriately filled in alignment with candidates' certification area(s), LEAs must commit to hiring/retaining candidates upon successful completion of their teacher certification to serve as a teacher of record in the LEA by the start of the 2025-2026 school year.
- 29. LEAs must, upon request, submit reports on progress towards performance measures to TEA.
- 30. The names of all grant-funded teachers and/or candidates must be identified and submitted to TEA by May 31, 2023.

**ALL PATHWAYS:**

- 31. If a teacher or candidate is unable to continue with the grant program, the LEA must file an application amendment and provide TEA with an update of the new amount and type of stipend recipient(s) within 30 days of notification.
- 32. LEAs must file application amendments within seven days of a request from TEA.

**Program Description**

Describe how the Grow Your Own program will be implemented with grant funds and how the grant will address the LEA's teacher pipeline needs.

PISD has interviewed a group of candidates who are interested in becoming part of the GYO Program. The group includes students who are graduating in 2023, highly sought-after paraprofessionals who are currently assigned to an instructional setting, and long term substitute teachers who are currently working towards a bachelor's degree with teacher certification. If awarded the grant each individual will be allotted \$18,000 to help pay for costs associated with earning a bachelor's degree and teacher certification. Each candidate has signed an MOU stating they will remain with PISD for 4 years after completing degree and teacher certification.

A. The grant will address 3 areas of concern for PISD: A: Teacher Diversity-The Diversity of our teaching staff should better reflect the Diversity of our students. Student demographics-44% (H), 28% (W), 28% (AA). The demographics of our teaching staff: 12% (H), 11% (AA), 77% (W)

B. The teacher turnover rate is 20% annually which is significantly higher than the state average. It is imperative that we Grow Our Own teachers as they already live in our community and have a great understanding of the diversity of our students.

C. Teacher shortages-PISD started the school year with 25 unfilled positions. Palestine ISD is 82% economically disadvantaged, a rural community, and the starting pay for teachers is \$5000-\$7000 less schools in our surrounding area (Athens/Tyler). In order to survive we must Grow Our Own!!

**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel**

Outline the required qualifications and experience for key personnel to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include each of the following individuals (when applicable) and a description of each role: 1. The LEA's grant manager; 2. LEA leaders involved in program implementation; 3. The campus principals for participating Education and Training high schools; 4. the college/career counselors for participating Education and Training high schools; 5. Education and Training teachers; 6. Education and Training field site teachers for Instructional Practices and/or Practicum courses; 7. Any other personnel responsible for implementing the grant.

Title and Responsibilities of Position

Grant manager-Chris Kiser, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction. 28 years in Education, 10 as a teacher/coach and 18 as an administrator. Served as an Assistant Principal, HS Principal, Director of College and Career Readiness, and Asst. Superintendent

Suzanne Eiben-Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources. 44 years in education, 19 as a teacher and 25 as an administrator. Served as Assistant principal, principal, and the last 15 years as assistant Superintendent for HR.

Dr. William Stewart-HS Principal. 29 years in Education, 16 years as a teacher/coach, 13 as an administrator. Served as Assistant Principal, Principal, and Central Office Administrator

College and Career Counselor involved in the GYO Program. A. Sarah Johnson, 29 years in education. Sarah served in the classroom for 16 years and has been in the role of College and Career counselor for the past 13 years.

Brian Howie-Director of College and Career Readiness. Brian has served in many roles to include Teacher/coach, Assistant Principal/Principal, Superintendent, and Director of College and Career Readiness

Amy McGuire-Education and Training Teacher Dual Credit Teacher. Amy is also the supervisor for the students getting practicum experience across the district

## Goals and Objectives

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed Grow Your Own program. Describe the talent management strategy, (including the LEA's approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified teachers) related to those goals/objectives.

### Goals and Objectives

A.-A. The grant will address 3 areas of concern for PISD: A: Teacher Diversity-The Diversity of our teaching staff should better reflect the Diversity of our students. Student demographics-44% (H), 28% (W), 28% (AA). The demographics of our teaching staff: 12% (H), 11% (AA), 77% (W) We have identified, interviewed, and selected GYO candidates that match the student demographics of our district. Each candidate will have a mentor from Central Office and a mentor from SFA-our higher education partner

B. The teacher turnover rate is 20% annually which is significantly higher than the state average. It is imperative that we Grow Our Own teachers as they already live in our community and have a great understanding of the diversity of our students. The GYO program is our approach to recruiting qualified personnel. We have identified a group of quality GYO candidates for the next 4 years. We have explained the GYO program and candidate expectations.

C. Teacher shortages-PISD started the school year with 25 unfilled positions. Palestine ISD is 82% economically disadvantaged, a rural community, and the starting pay for teachers is \$5000-\$7000 less schools in our surrounding area (Athens/Tyler). In order to survive we must Grow Our Own!! Teacher shortages is a tremendous issue with no end in sight. We started the GYO program in 2017 and have seen tremendous success. We have grown 5 teachers who are now in the classroom and have 10 paras working on their bachelor's degree with teacher certification.

## Progress Monitoring and Evaluation Measures

Describe how the performance measures identified for this program are consistent with the purpose of the program and related to teacher pipeline needs. Include the tools and processes used to measure performance and the extent to which the major goals and objectives of the grant are met.

The purpose of the program is to intentionally build strong, stable, and diverse teacher pipelines from within our own communities based on LEA teacher workforce needs. The purpose of the PISD GYO Program goes hand in hand with the goals of our district. Palestine ISD Goals-A) Address teacher diversity. B) Reduce Teacher turnover. C) Address teacher shortages

Performance measure by quarter

First quarter benchmark is to recruit and select 7 high quality/diverse candidates to participate in Pathway 1 and 2. This will be addressed by using the following measures: A. Placement of DC Education and Training teachers on the JH/HS campuses to ensure the expansion of the Education and Training program throughout the district. B. Match the demographics of teacher participants to the demographics of the student population. C. Select quality candidates and match them with hard to fill areas across the district.

Second quarter benchmark-PISD will identify and recruit students to enroll in the Education and Training Department. The schedule will include DC classes and students must begin taking their TSI test as a prerequisite to entering the education cluster. We are reviewing the following performance measures: (A) Partner with SFA to develop DC schedules for all GYO candidates (b) Mentors will be assigned to all GYO candidates and will be allowed time during the school to meet with mentee (C) SFA faculty will make 2 site visits to work with GYO candidates (D) GYO candidates successfully complete a total of 16 hours toward bachelor degree

Third quarter benchmark is to assess the progress made in both the Education and Training program as well as with paraprofessional participants using the following measure:

A. Attendance and grades from coursework completed by paraprofessional participants to ensure all participants are on track to complete graduation within the GYO window.

B. Candidates will use each Friday to meet(lecture hall) to review college coursework for the week.

c. Each candidate completes 9 additional hours of coursework during the quarter

**Budget Narrative**

Referencing the applicant's budget workbook and the Application Funding section of the Program Guidelines, outline the proposed budget and amounts for allowable uses of grant program funding. This should also match the Pathway Selection and Participation section of this application.

6100-Stipend for DC Education and Training Teacher=\$11,000  
6300-Supplies/Advertisement for Teaching and Learning Program=\$7000,00  
6400-Travel to Summer Institute=\$3000.00  
6400-Student transportation to field sites=\$2000.00  
6200-Grow Your Own Candidates=\$19,000x6=\$114,000.00  
Grant total= \$137,000

**Sustainability Plan**

Describe the sustainability plan for the Grow Your Own Program beyond the timeline of grant funding. The plan should address how a high-quality program will be maintained, including clear action steps beginning in the first year of grant funding and a demonstrated ability to leverage and coordinate resources to increase the LEA's capacity to strengthen the local educator pipeline and make progress on sustainability. This may include the use of other local, state, and/or federal resources. Consider also how the Grow Your Own program may be integrated into, be supported by, and provide support for existing LEA or EPP initiatives and/or priorities.

PISD has started a local GYO Program. We have many paraprofessionals who have started college but had to suspend the college dream because of many different situations called life. PISD has held several meetings over the past year to create our version of the TEA Grow Your Own Plan. We currently have 10 Instructional Paraprofessionals enrolled in college classes being held at Palestine HS. They have been given permission to leave work to attend classes and return to their instructional assignment when the class/classes are finished. The plan has been great so far as all candidates are passing their classes and are beginning to enroll in classes for next semester. The district currently pays for books, tuition, and all fees associated with each class. The district will also support TEA Grow Your Own candidates if they do not have enough money to complete their bachelor degree and teacher certification. The Board of Trustees realize the importance of the GYO Program as they understand the shortage of teachers across the State of Texas. The Board of Trustees has been involved in our GYO Program and has committed to providing financial resources to sustain the program.

TEA GYO Grant-We have a list of candidates names who meet the 75-college hour requirement. We have candidates of the district that we are applying for the GYO grant and will send out notification if we are awarded the grant. If awarded the application, evaluation, and interview process will begin. We have established guidelines for the number of hours each candidate will take during the semester, established mentors (PISD and SFA) for each candidate, allotted time out of the day for candidates to take classes on the HS campus, and established a designated time for candidates to study/complete assignments.

**Stipend Recipient Recruitment**

Describe the plan to recruit Education and Training teachers within Pathway 1 and/or candidates within Pathway 2 who are interested and eligible in participating in the program and receiving stipends. The plan must include strategies to equitably recruit diverse individuals and identify individuals with potential criteria including: **A. Pathway 1:** For Education and Training teachers, a demonstrated track record of success and/or achievement, involvement in student organizations and/or school activities, strong evaluation ratings (if applicable), and strong relationships with students (if applicable). **B. Pathway 2:** For candidates, a desire and commitment to teach long term in the LEA and/or region, strong evaluation ratings (if applicable), and strong relationships with students (if applicable).

Education and Training within Pathway 1: We are pleased to say that we have a great teacher for our Education and Training courses. Our Teacher, Amy McGuire, is teaching the DC classes for students pursuing an interest in the teaching profession. The stipend has played a key role in Mrs. McGuire staying in the classroom as she has been pursued for an admin job on the high school campus. She is great for our program and for our kids, great for our community, and a great person to recruit students for the teaching profession. The Education and Training pathway is on the rise as students are registering for her classes and expressed serious interest in the teaching profession. Mrs. McGuire and her students are actively involved in TAFE and Skills USA events/competitions.

Pathway2: We have methodically selected a group of candidates who meet requirements established by the district. We are looking to satisfy the following as we select each candidate: Diversity-we certainly want to do our best to match our student demographics. Turnover-most of our paraprofessionals are deeply rooted within our community and have been leaders in our classrooms for many years. The paras selected must be highly recommended by the campus principal and must have been employed by the district for a minimum of three years. The paras must also be involved in school/community/activities and have positive relationships with students, parents, and the community.

**Stipend Recipient Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)**

Referencing the Program-Specific Assurances in the Program Guidelines, describe the MOUs in which: **A. Pathway 1:** Education and Training teacher stipend recipients agree to meet grant requirements and any other terms set by the LEA; **B. Pathway 1:** IHE that will partner with the LEA(s) to implement dual credit Education and Training courses and commit to supporting the Education and Training teachers and course implementation (if applicable); **C. Pathway 2:** Candidate stipend recipients commit to remain in the LEA for an agreed upon length of time as a condition of receiving the stipend and if a position is available, the LEA commits to hiring/retaining candidates with satisfactory program completion/job performance; **D. Pathway 2:** Accredited EPPs that will partner with the LEA(s) to award teacher certifications to candidates and commit to supporting candidates with completion of their teacher certification and supporting LEA(s) with implementation of the grant program.

Pathway 1: MOU Components/Requirements: Education and Training Course implementation  
Teacher must have a master's degree in education to receive a dual credit teaching stipend.  
PISD has created a MOU with SFA to teach Education 1301 and Education 2301  
The stipend will be \$11,000 paid out over a 2-year period beginning in May 2024 and May 2025.  
The teacher, Amy McGuire will be committed to Palestine ISD for 4 years.  
PISD will grow a chapter of a CTSO, and will participate/compete in at least one event per year.(TAFE)  
PISD will attend the TEA-led Teacher Institute in Summer 2023. Education and Training teacher will satisfy all TEA implementation supports and coaching by participating in online collaborative communities not to exceed 6 hours per semester. The teacher will also participate in all surveys and focus groups administered by TEA to receive input on the Education and Training program. The grant manager will support the Practicum in Education and Training Implementation, including but not limited to student scheduling, identifying field site teachers, and coordinating

Pathway 2: MOU Components/Requirements: Transition of Candidates  
Candidates receiving a stipend must work for Palestine ISD for 4 years upon completing graduation and teacher certification. if job openings do not match content areas the district will do its best to place the candidate in the most appropriate job setting.  
The candidate will earn a bachelor's degree and teacher certification no later than May, 2025  
Candidate stipend is \$19,000  
Stipend payments up to \$19,000 will be made by PISD for the candidate's tuition, fees, and living expenses incurred within the grant period.  
Palestine has an MOU in place with Stephen F. Austin University for the Educator Prep Program. The MOU is updated every summer

We are a P-TECH district with a focus on identifying students who may not believe they are college bound. It is our hope to give all students an opportunity to enroll in a college class while in high school and provide all students with a strong support system. Every child deserves this opportunity and the PTECH blueprint provides a pathway for student success.



**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**