



**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**.

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**

- Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
- 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  CDN  Campus  ESC  DUNS

Address  City  ZIP  Vendor ID

Primary Contact  Email  Phone

Secondary Contact  Email  Phone

**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  Title

Email  Phone

Signature  Date

**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.

In Del Valle ISD, we value growing from within. Our data shows us that a large percentage of our paraprofessional staff are members of our community and graduates of Del Valle ISD schools. Many of these individuals do not have the advantages of generational wealth or family histories of college graduates. Grow Your Own has provided our district with the opportunity to develop talented paraprofessionals into teachers that understand the unique needs of our students and community.

All employees meeting the minimum requirements of the grant criteria will be eligible to apply for the program. The district will offer an informational meeting for all interested employees upon notification of grant award to solicit applications. We will focus our efforts on working with campus administration on recruiting candidates that reflect the diversity of the student and community population.

We are specifically in need of a pipeline for Special Education and Bilingual-certified educators. According to our 2020-21 TAPR Report, 46.1% of our students are Emergent Bilingual, more than twice the amount of the state average. 15.7% of our students are receiving Special Education services compared to the 11.3% statewide average. Our Grow Your Own program will be specifically focused on recruiting and developing a pipeline for these high needs areas impacted by the teacher shortage.

**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

Lindsey Gonzalez, Director of Human Resources: Lindsey will serve as the program manager on the Grow Your Own Project and is responsible for the recruitment of Grow Your Own candidates, oversee the application and selection process, and will monitor progress of Grow Your Own candidates.

Laura Carlin-Gonzalez, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction: Laura will assist with our Austin Community College partnership and provide oversight of the curriculum team that will observe and develop our pre-service teachers through the teacher induction process.

Abby Turner, Director of Curriculum and Instruction: Abby will support the pre-service teachers through their student teaching process in collaboration with ACC Field Supervisors. She will use these teachers needs as a focus group to further develop and improve our New Teacher Support System framework which supports new teachers for their first 2 years in the classroom.

Alison Fears, Director of Federal Programs and Grants: Alison will serve as the grant manager for the program. She will oversee the budget, EPP payment, course payment, and materials purchase. She will lead the quarterly grant program review meetings to ensure compliance and progress monitoring of grant goal attainment.



**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.

- 1. Recruit a diverse teaching population that reflects the diversity of our district and community.
  - Implement culturally-responsive questions into our hiring practices and Grow Your Own candidate applications to ensure we are recruiting a group of individuals with self-awareness and belief all students can succeed.
  - Work with campus administration to encourage individuals to work towards this teacher career pathway.
  - Analyze data on number of teacher openings expected by grade levels content areas and use a recruitment calendar, online marketing, and building of pipelines around referrals and an internal pipeline through the Grow Your Own program.
  
- 2. Ensure we have qualified staff to support our Emergent Bilingual students and our students receiving Special Education services.
  - Target individuals already in positions as Special Education paraprofessionals, bilingual paraprofessional positions, or substitute positions support Special Education and Dual Language classrooms.
  - Utilize application data to identify those with Spanish proficiency and/or experience working with students receiving Special Education services.
  
- 3. Retain a culturally-responsive teaching staff trained in pedagogy to meet the needs of our diverse student population.
  - Provide ongoing, job embedded training through professional learning communities, peer observations, and action research.
  - Develop pathways for teacher leadership, growth, and development to support teacher retention.

**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 district will use Austin Community College's (ACC) Texas Teacher Certification Program for the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) partnership. We will utilize ACC's team evaluation information, class data, and campus mentor observations to determine how candidates are progressing in the EPP certification program. In addition, an ACC trained field specialist will complete eight classroom visits to provide feedback on teacher candidate instructional delivery skills. Campuses will collect data on classroom walk-throughs, teacher absences, and student progress through district benchmark assessments. The district will conduct a summative review of Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) data of the candidates to further identify professional development needs and future Grow Your Own programming.

Del Valle ISD has a robust teacher support network with campus instructional coaches, trained campus-level mentors, and district-level curriculum fidelity coordinators. We will coordinate this team to engage candidates in an ongoing process of inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous improvement. Time-lines and checklists will be implemented to track milestones and allow for quarterly reviews of the grant project. We will meet quarterly to gather feedback and progress on teacher candidates. End of program surveys completed by teacher candidates will be analyzed for program effectiveness.

**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.

Del Valle ISD will be utilizing funds to cover tuition costs for individuals in need of bachelor's degree completion with Western Governors University (WGU) and Educator Preparation Costs through Austin Community College. WGU is a lower cost alternative as some Del Valle Professional Development hours can be used towards degree credits.

Our proposed total budget is \$114,000. We are proposing seven candidates in need of bachelor's degree completion and Educator Preparation courses costs for a total expenditure of \$73,500. Five additional candidates with bachelor's degrees will have Educator Preparation Program costs covered at a total cost of \$17,500. \$15,200 will be used for supplies including books and student college materials. We have included \$3,000 for the Grow Your Own Summer Institute costs.



## 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.

In our recruitment process, we will have identified all paraprofessionals and substitutes with significant college hours or a college degree. This will assist the district in continuing to develop a pipeline of individuals. We will use this information gathered to continue information sessions on the Grow Your Own program in DVISD. We will work with campus administrators to recruit at the campus level and bring candidates to our district information sessions on teacher preparation opportunities. We will continue to offer promotions such as the Del Valle ISD "Come Home" stipend which adds a sign-on bonus for Del Valle ISD graduates that sign teacher contracts, and a referral program which provides existing staff members with an incentive to refer individuals to sign teacher contracts with the district.

We will apply for grants with the City of Austin to address the teacher shortage and needs of our community and student population. Austin Community College has been a priority for local funding and promotion of continuing education opportunities for the Austin community population. Choosing this program as our Educator Preparation Program of choice increases the sustainability and funding potential of Del Valle ISD's Grow Your Own program. The Grow Your Own program will be integrated into Del Valle ISD's New Teacher Support System (NTSS). NTSS supports 1st and 2nd year teachers through knowledge building, relationship building, and mentorship. Teacher leaders are trained each year through the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching as part of their mentor training. All candidates in the Grow Your Own program will be supported through their first two years of teaching through the NTSS program. The NTSS program utilizes annual survey data to plan and adapt the program components to meet the changing needs of novice educators.

## 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).

Our plan to recruit candidates is to inform our campus administrators about this opportunity and have them identify individuals that will be good candidates for the Grow Your Own Program. We will send out a district-wide Broadcast with information about the opportunities for completing a degree and getting certified through the Grow Your Own Program. In this Broadcast we will advertise an information session that employees can attend to get more information about the application process for the Grow Your Own program. As part of the information meeting, we will have previous years' Grow Your Own candidates share about their experience with the program and how it helped them reach their career goals.

Once the paraprofessionals and substitutes have been identified from the pool of eligible candidates, the district will rank the candidates based on experience and proficiency utilizing a rubric. The experience of each candidate will be based on years in education and community and extracurricular involvement.

After the preliminary process is complete, the candidates will participate in a final interview to ensure that the district selects the appropriate individual to take part in the program. We will utilize the developed candidate rubric to document the results of the interview. The interview will assess the desire and commitment to teach long term in Del Valle ISD and include any evaluation data or recommendation letters from the candidate's years in our district. If the candidate cannot commit once selected, the district will continue the aforementioned process to choose another qualified individual.



**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.

As a condition for participation in the grant program and for receiving the associated stipend, candidates will be required to sign a memorandum of understanding which commits them to remain in Del Valle ISD for a period of two school years. The stipend will pay for EPP and certification fees. The district will commit to hiring/retaining each participant that completes the program and demonstrates effective job performance.

Del Valle ISD currently has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Austin Community College and a partnership using their Educator Preparation Program. The program is familiar with the needs of the districts and assists in preparing future educators for our schools. The program has added specific pathways for Bilingual and Special Education certification.



**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**