



**2023 -2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program  
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 24, 2023**

NOGA ID [REDACTED]

Authorizing legislation

**GAA, Article III, Rider 40, 87th Texas Legislature**

This LOI application must be submitted via email to [loiapplications@tea.texas.gov](mailto:loiapplications@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, April 24, 2023**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from

**August 1, 2023-April 30, 2025**

Pre-award costs permitted from

the award announcement date to the grant start date

**Required Attachments**

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Signed Letter of Commitment or MOU
3. Letter from EPP Partner(s)

**Please the program guidelines for further details on the required attachments.**

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN  ESC  UEI   
 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 not permitted for this grant.

**Statutory/Program Assurances**

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

- 1. The applicant provides assurance that 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.
- 2. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program Requirements and Program-Specific Assurances as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program Program Guidelines.
- 3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

**Program Priority Requirement**

For districts/charters that are or have engaged in an ESF diagnostic process during or before the 2022-2023 school year, please provide the year the district went through the diagnostic and the priority focus area in the space below.

**Summary of Program**

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

Round Rock ISD's (RRISD) requests funding to participate in strategic staffing support, and to design and implement a paid, year-long teacher residency program. Texas State University (Texas State) will serve as the Education Preparation Program (EPP) partner. The attached Letter of Agreement from Texas State ensures their commitment to all of the strategic staffing and partnership responsibilities outlined in the grant assurances. RRISD has successfully partnered with Texas State on other work that helped to expand the pipeline of talented teachers.

The overall mission of this grant request is to recruit, support and retain high-quality, diverse teachers through the development of a sustainable teacher residency program. This mission is responsive to RRISD's need to positively impact teacher recruitment and retention. Last year, the teacher turnover rate at RRISD was 15.9%, compared with 11.6% the year before. Turnover has increased in the region, across Texas and across the country. Fortunately, RRISD's strategic efforts to retain teachers have resulted in a retention rate that outperforms the rate for Region 13 and the rest of the state. However, the year-over-year increase in turnover underscores the need to advance a pipeline of skilled and diverse teachers and to ensure they are motivated to stay with the district. The Strategic Staffing and Teacher Residency will have a powerful impact on retention: During the implementation year, residents will become comfortable and invested with their eventual home campuses. Furthermore, they will be guided and onboarded through the mentorship of a veteran teacher—promoting a smooth transition when they begin their first year of teaching.

The project will also respond to RRISD's need to narrow achievement gaps and improve student outcomes. Resident teachers will be paired with mentors who are among the strongest teachers on their campuses—preparing them with expert, firsthand guidance and knowledge on how to be effective as a teacher. Research indicates that novice teachers are more likely (than more experienced teachers) to teach in high-poverty schools and to achieve lower educational outcomes with students.[1] An analysis of RRISD data in August 2022 determined there is a “strong correlation” between students’ socioeconomic status and achievement. As the rate of disadvantaged socioeconomic status at the campus level increases in RRISD, student achievement (i.e., STAAR Domain I) decreases. Strategic staffing and teacher residency will help respond to both of these needs. Students and teachers from these campus communities will benefit from additional teacher development, which will ultimately advance improved outcomes.

[1] Paul Bruno, Sarah Rabovsky, Katharine O. Strunk (2019). Taking their First Steps: The Distribution of New Teachers into School and Classroom Contexts and Implications for Teacher Effectiveness and Growth. CALDER Working Paper No. 212-0119-1

**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
Assistant Director of Pathways (proposed); will serve as the lead for the Implementation Year	Knowledge of State and Federal; Human Resources; Campus Administration; Bachelors’ Degree; At least three years of experience
Director, Talent Acquisition and Secondary Staffing (existing); serve as initial co-lead during Planning; provide support to proposed Assistant Director	Experience in leading staffing, new employee onboarding and strategic partnerships
Director, Elementary Staffing and Employee Experience (existing); serve as initial co-lead during Planning; support toroposed Assistant Director	Experience in leading staffing, new employee onboarding and partnerships

**Goals, Objectives, and Strategies**

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

RRISD and Texas State are committed to working with the technical assistance provider during the Planning Year to formalize goals and objectives that fit the needs assessment and staffing model. At this preliminary stage, the overarching goal of the proposed project is to strengthen the recruitment, support and retention of high-quality, diverse teachers in RRISD. To that end, RRISD will pursue the following goals and objective:

GOAL 1: Create and implement a sustainable strategic staffing and teacher residency program.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: RRISD and Texas State will enter into a collaboration with Texas State to plan and implement a teacher residency program.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: RRISD will hire an Assistant Director of Pathways with support from the TEA grant.

OBJECTIVE 1.3: RRISD and Texas State will collaboratively participate in the Planning Year process with the technical assistance provider.

OBJECTIVE 1.3: RRISD and Texas State will staff 5-10 teacher resident positions during the Implementation Year.

OBJECTIVE 1.4: RRISD and Texas State will staff at least 5-10 teacher resident positions in the year following the Implementation Year.

ACTIVITY/STRATEGY: If funded, RRISD and Texas State will formalize their collaboration through an MOU. During the Planning Year, the collaborators will actively participate in the technical assistance process (meeting all milestones and requirements described in the RFA) in order to implement a staffing model that is responsive to the needs of both organizations and results in high-quality teachers leading RRISD classrooms.

**Performance and Evaluation Measures**

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

The primary performance areas for the project are Student Outcomes and Staffing Outcomes. Both have a direct impact on each other; however, they will be measured using separate strategies. The following describes how RRISD and Texas State will measure performance in these areas, and in the program overall.

STUDENT OUTCOMES: RRISD will be able to use standard student data to track the effectiveness of resident teachers during the Implementation Year. For example, the team will access beginning of the year student performance data, mid-year performance data and end of the year data. Performance on STAAR testing, benchmarks, and ongoing formative summative and assessments will provide ample performance data. During the Implementation Year, the project team will review performance data periodically to ensure that teacher residents are transitioning successfully into their roles. At the completion of the Implementation, RRISD and Texas State will consider comparing teacher resident performance data with comparable data from first-year teachers in comparable settings who are not part of the residency program. While there are many variables that drive student performance, the teacher residency will ideally result in a positive impact on student outcomes.

STAFFING OUTCOMES: RRISD and Texas State are planning to implement the Residents as Substitutes staffing model. This would provide immediate relief to RRISD’s needs for substitutes. This impact could be measured through campus substitute needs and fill rates at the residents’ campuses. RRISD and Texas State are committed to this becoming a long-term, sustainable program. Therefore, RRISD will track its teacher residents while they are employed as teachers within the district to determine the impact on retention. This is critical because first-year teachers are at an increased risk of leaving the profession. According to the 2021 Texas Teacher Workforce Report, nearly half of teachers in Texas in 2019-2020 left the job after their first year in the profession. RRISD will compare the turnover rate with first-year teachers throughout the rest of the district. As the Teacher Residency program becomes firmly established over the years and more individuals become teacher residents, RRISD and Texas State will be able to compare the turnover rate of resident teachers to the district overall to determine the impact on retention.

**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.

RRISD’s proposed budget includes the following items:

PAYROLL 6100: RRISD requests \$86,000 to support the time and effort of the Assistant Director of Pathways—the new position created through this grant that will implement the proposed program. The Assistant Director of Pathways is projected to have a salary that ranges \$69,246.40 - \$97,613.92. This is based on the rate for Assistant Director-level positions stated in RRISD’s 2022-2023 Compensation Plan. An estimated \$66,000 will support the position’s salary and \$14,000 will support benefits. RRISD is committed to funding any portion of the salary that is not covered by the grant.

RRISD is confident that this budget will meet the needs of the program. There are two existing members on the Human Resources staff who lead the work at the outset of the project. The Director of Talent Acquisition and Secondary Staffing and the Director of Elementary Staffing and Employee Experience will be the key figures participating in the Planning Year. They have the full support of the Chief Human Resources Officer. The Department is committed to providing all supplies, technology and administrative costs associated with creating and staffing this position.

Following the Implementation Year and the completion of the grant, RRISD plans to absorb this position into the operating budget of the Human Resources Department. The impact described in the grant outcomes will create a compelling economic justification for the position to be sustained. As the teacher residency program grows and more residents transition to teaching in RRISD, it will have a positive financial impact on the district through improved staffing, reduced teacher turnover and strengthened student outcomes.

**Statutory/Program Requirements**

**1. Description of partnership foundations:** Applicants may have one or more EPP partners on the 2022 Vetted Teacher Residency Program List (link located on TEA Grant Opportunities page). Please list your partner(s) and the following partnership foundations information:

- o How many years have you been engaged in a residency partnership?
- o How many residents have you placed each year of that partnership?
- o Describe your practices for shared governance, or the review of residency program data to inform shared decision-making about teacher candidate and mentor teacher supports. How often do you meet with your partners to review this data? As a partnership, how do you manage follow-up and response to data?
- o Please describe any other key features of your partnership's progress toward building a residency program.

Although the proposed initiative will be a new venture, RRISD and Texas State have a history of successful partnership in promoting pathways for aspiring teachers. For many years, RRISD has hosted student teachers on its campuses as they pursue certification. Masters-level fellows from Texas State also serve as teachers in RRISD schools. The proposed project will build on these foundations and expand the pathways for developing high-quality, diverse teachers.

During the Planning Year, RRISD and Texas State will formalize a shared governance structure. It is expected that this governance structure will include RRISD Human Resources staff, RRISD Professional Development staff, principals from participating campuses, leadership from the College of Education at Texas State, and eventually the RRISD staff member who will be hired through the grant funds. At the outset of the Planning Year, the partners will agree upon a process for shared decision-making. The partners will benefit from the guidance that the technical assistance provider can offer with regard to shared-governance in Strategic Staffing models. The partners envision the grant period with a shared governance model in place that can be sustained beyond the grant’s lifecycle and not require the support of the technical assistance provider.

During the Planning Year, RRISD and Texas State will work with the technical assistance provider to identify the data points that will be useful for tracking the progress of the Strategic Staffing model. RRISD expects that it will meet with Texas State periodically to review program data and pursue continuous quality improvement; however, it will follow the recommendation of the technical assistance provider on the frequency of the meetings. RRISD is interested in learning which campuses are performing the most successfully, and understanding how their strategies can be incorporated at other campuses.

As previously mentioned, RRISD and Texas State have a successful collaborative history that lays the groundwork for the Strategic Staffing and Teacher Residency program. Another key feature indicating progress toward this work is the unique relationship that RRISD and Texas State have that benefits both institutions and their students. In 2005, Texas State opened its Round Rock Campus (RRC). This satellite campus, which sits in the boundaries of RRISD, offers bachelors and masters degrees in education. RRISD faces a need for recruiting diverse, high-quality teachers and Texas State has a need to provide effective classroom experience for its teachers in-training. Mentorship under some of the most skilled teachers in RRISD will prepare the Texas State residents to excel after they graduate and become teachers. Providing this training and mentorship to Texas State residents will ultimately result in RRISD having first-year teachers who are comfortable, knowledgeable and experienced in using best practices in the classroom. Furthermore, they will enter into their first years of teaching with investment and ownership in the community they will serve.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**2. Description of goals for paid teacher residencies and strategic staffing models:** After reviewing the Program Elements section beginning on page 7, describe you and your EPP partner's existing or proposed shared goal for teacher resident placement. How will paid teacher residencies support your broader talent strategy as a component of your overall strategic plan and goals?

Texas State has the goal of providing meaningful, clinical experiences to its students in the College of Education who are pursuing careers in teaching. The college wants to ensure that students on the pathway to teaching have significant opportunities to gain experience and develop effective teaching skills before graduating and entering the profession. This overlaps with RRISD’s goal to increase the number of high-quality, diverse individuals who become first-year teachers in the district. RRISD has the goal of welcoming teachers who have the skills to advance positive student outcomes early in their career. These respective goals are both achieved if RRISD and Texas State are selected to participate in the Strategic Staffing and Teacher Residency Program.

The partners consider the Planning Year and the support of the technical assistance provider to be the foundation of the project’s success. The partners look forward to laying the groundwork during the planning year by: assessing staffing needs; selecting the most appropriate staffing model based on needs and assets; setting realistic and impactful goals; determining resident wages; and designing a framework for effective shared communication and governance. The partners see the value in having an expert technical assistance provider to guide this process through best practices and proven strategies—ensuring a smooth launch in the Implementation Year and sustainability in the years that follows.

The Strategic Staffing and Teacher Residency Program has clear alignment with RRISD’s strategic plan. Goal #4 in RRISD’s Improvement Plan states, “We will identify, develop, support and retain a talented team of teachers, administrators, and staff who are equipped to meet the needs of every student.” This project will directly respond by: identifying (Texas State will identify candidates for the residency program); developing (through in-class experience and one-on-one mentoring with a master teacher); supporting (through personalized mentorship); and retaining (by setting up teachers for a successful first year) talented teachers.

Under Goal #4 in RRISD’ District Improvement Plan, Objective #3 states, “Increase the consistency of foundational professional learning experiences that are cohesive across the district.” In the spirit of this objective, it is RRISD’s vision to grow this teacher residency program into a larger program through its partnership with Texas State. The Implementation Year will have a relatively conservative, focused reach and target campuses facing the greatest challenges for staffing. As the program matures, RRISD will be able to expand the number of residents and the number of campuses participating. A successful residency becomes a marketing tool in itself; those residents who are happy with their experiences will become ambassadors for the program and will help fuel growth for more residents, more mentors and more participating campuses.

Providing excellent, relevant and impactful professional development opportunities is one of RRISD’s greatest strengths as a district. The Strategic Staffing and Teacher Staffing Program will enable RRISD to advance that organizational characteristic even further. By continuing to offer high-quality professional development (i.e., a teacher residency program with mentorship from a master teacher), RRISD will advance positive students outcomes and promote teacher retention.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**3. Commitment of local resources:** Please review the Program Elements section on page 7 of the program guidelines. How will you, alongside your partner EPP, commit resources and time to 1) the year-long design process and 2) the implementation supports year? Be sure to provide information about the designation of a strategic staffing design lead, whose role will be co-funded by this grant opportunity. Provide a description of your plan to track and maintain evidence of that staff member's time and effort toward strategic staffing project management.

RRISD is fully committed to providing the necessary local resources to meet all grant requirements and ultimately create a new, sustainable pipeline for teachers. If awarded the grant by TEA, this will be reasonable and within RRISD's capacity to achieve. RRISD's Chief Human Resources Officer is currently leading the development of collaborative effort between RRISD and Texas State. During the Planning Year, the two Directors described in the staffing section will be responsible for leading the collaborative and programmatic efforts. The two Directors will coordinate with key district personnel throughout the design and implementation years. If selected, RRISD and Texas State will enter into an MOU formalizing their partnership.

RRISD also has other resources to commit toward the project's success. The RRISD Professional Development will be available to provide support to the project team. For example, the Professional Development Department can provide best practice resources and training on co-teaching and/or mentoring best practices. The RRISD Evaluation Department can help design data collection strategies and tools based on the Goals and Objectives that are solidified in the Planning Year.

If awarded the grant, RRISD will create the new Assistant Director of Pathways using a combination of the TEA grant funds and RRISD funds. This person will serve as the project lead following onboarding. The majority of this position's time and effort will be spent on Strategic Staffing and Teacher Residency-related work. RRISD projects this time and effort to be at roughly 90% in the planning and implementation years. RRISD will track time and effort by tailoring systems that are already utilized by other district departments. The Federal Programs and Title I departments extensively track the work of their teams in order to comply with federal guidelines. They have documentation systems that can be easily tailored to meet the specific guidelines and requirements of this grant the position it will create. RRISD, overall, has an exceptional record of tracking and reporting grant requirements. For the past 18 out of 19 years, the district has achieved a Superior Rating on the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas. Round Rock ISD also has maintained a AAA rating from Moody's for the past 12 years. Earlier this year, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded the District the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. RRISD will apply this level of care and precision in reporting on the Strategic Staffing and Teacher Residency Program.



**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**4. Commitment to shared communication:** Describe how you will maintain strong communication throughout the design and implementation of the sustainable teacher residency program with your EPP partners and your technical assistance provider. How will you demonstrate evidence of communication and ongoing engagement with your partner and provider? For example: evidence of communication logs, shared meeting agendas, etc.

RRISD and Texas State have successfully utilized shared communication in its collaborations on student teaching and teaching fellows. This project will represent a new collaborative effort—the partners will ensure that the commitment to shared communication meets the rigor defined in the grant guidelines while also promoting the best possible outcomes for the strategic staffing and teacher residency program. RRISD and Texas will formalize a shared communication strategy during the early part of the planning year. At a minimum, the collaborators plan to use maintain shared communication through the following methods from the outset of the project:

RRISD will create agendas for each meeting and digitally share them with Texas State and the technical assistance provider before each meeting.

RRISD will create attendance sheets for each meeting that include the date, time, location (or specifying if virtual), subject matter and length of meeting. Each invitee and attendee will be documented on the attendance sheets.

RRISD will take notes at each meeting and gather the key points discussed.

RRISD will maintain a communication log that tracks key communication milestones with Texas State and the technical assistance provider.

All of these documents will be stored on RRISD’s Google Drive and made available to Texas State and the technical assistance provider. RRISD will also make them available to TEA upon request.

**5. Strategic staffing technical assistance:** The program elements describe how teacher residencies will be made sustainable through strategic staffing models where residents support other instructional needs in the district, such as, for example, substitute teaching or para-professional responsibilities. How do you see the design and implementation of strategic staffing models with teacher residents as a way to support immediate instructional needs in your LEA? Additionally, please describe the rationale you share with your partner(s) for seeking technical assistance for the purpose of designing and implementing strategic staffing models.

RRISD expects to pursue the Residents as Substitutes staffing model in order to respond to the immediate needs of the district. From a strategic staffing standpoint, placing substitutes on a day-to-day basis has been significantly challenging for RRISD in recent years. The proposed model will create the opportunity to have one dedicated substitute day per week per resident—providing immediate staffing relief to the district. This will be funded through dollars that the district already has allocated to cover substitutes. Residents will otherwise work in the classroom alongside their mentors and be available as the need for a substitute arises.

RRISD also expects that this model will focus on staffing, particularly in subjects related to math and science. The subjects are becoming more challenging to staff at the secondary level. Additionally, other districts in the region are offering teacher residency opportunities, but at the elementary level. Providing residency opportunities in secondary settings will be responsive to RRISD needs and it will have less direct competition with other districts. RRISD recognizes these immediate needs (i.e, substitute staffing and secondary staffing) and the Residents as Substitutes model represents a strong potential fit. However, the partners will embrace the Planning Year and, with support from the technical assistance provider, determine if these needs and this model are the best suited for this funding opportunity. This is at the heart of RRISD and Texas State’s shared rationale for seeking assistance. The collaboration of the two institutions will provide the understanding and experience to hire, train and develop early-career teachers. However, working with the technical assistance provider will help ensure that RRISD and Texas State are incorporating the best practices and strategies with regard to the strategic staffing model. This includes but is not limited to developing communications plans, systems for tracking performance data, and how to maximize the staffing and financial impact of this approach for the district.

**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**