



2023-2025 Title I, 1003 ESF-Focused Support Grant
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 21, 2023

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), P.L. 114-95, Section 1003, School Improvement

This LOI application must be submitted via email to 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 21, 2023**.Grant period from **July 3, 2023-September 30, 2025**Pre-award costs permitted from **Award Date**

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Pathway 1: Pathway 1 Supplemental Attachment
3. Pathway 2: Pathway 2 Supplemental Attachment
4. Memo of Discussion

NOTE: All applicants MUST submit an appropriate Supplemental Pathway Attachment for EACH CAMPUS on behalf of which the applicant is applying.

Amendment Number

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

N/A

Applicant Information

Organization CDN Campus 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.

Number of Campuses Included in this Application

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Pathway 1 | <input type="text" value="0"/> |
| Pathway 2 | <input type="text" value="1"/> |

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 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines.
- 4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Title I, ESF-Focused Support Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
- 5. The applicant provides assurance that they accept and will comply with the requirements of [Every Student Succeeds Act Provisions and Assurances](#).
- 6. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.
- 7. Title I served Federally Identified campuses awarded this grant will engage in the Effective Schools Framework (ESF) continuous improvement process and create a plan to be submitted to TEA that addresses the selected pathway aligned to the Essential Actions (EA) from the ESF.
- 8. The applicant ensures it will notify the Vetted Improvement Program provider of intent to apply and, if awarded, will work in good faith with the Vetted Improvement Program.
- 9. The applicant will identify a campus leader, on each awarded campus, who will be responsible for managing the grant project.

Statutory/Program Assurances, cont'd.

- 10. The applicant will provide access to TEA and its Vetted Improvement Partners for on-site visits to the district and campus(es) as appropriate.
- 11. The applicant provides assurance it will participate in all grant requirements including but not limited to an ESF Self-Assessment and ESF Diagnostic, developing a Targeted Improvement Plan, and submission of funding and pathway progress reports.
- 12. The applicant provides assurance it will provide awarded campuses access to grant funding and funding information in a timely manner, so that funding can be used to meet the needs and action steps of the campus during the grant period.

Summary of Program

1. Describe how the LEA will support campus(es) in carrying out school improvement activities, including how the LEA will help develop a Targeted Improvement Plan for the eligible campus(es) selected for this grant.

Natalia Independent School District is seeking Title I 1003 Grant funds for a campus labeled as requiring Targeted Support (5 points each) due to its academic struggles. The campus, Natalia Elementary, also suffers from economic hardships, with a 72.1% economic disadvantage rate (5 points), and is classified as a rural campus by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (15 points), both of which create additional adversity when trying to improve student outcomes. To try to address these concerns, the district conducted an Effective School Framework (ESF)-Diagnostic that reviewed student performance, campus leadership, course curriculum, classroom routines, attendance, staff retention, training completion, etc. Based on this assessment, the district selected a Vetted and Approved External Improvement Program found on the Effective Schools Framework website. The district will use this program and DEVELOP AN ESF-ALIGNED TARGETED IMPROVEMENT PLAN (TIP) to improve the academic rating of the Natalia Elementary campus. As part of this TIP, the district will conduct the following activities to support the campus in CARRYING OUT ITS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: 1) Identify a campus leader, District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI), and a Principal's supervisor who will be part of a Campus Intervention Team (CIT). The district will provide data on the qualifications/experience of these individuals plus future team members, as per TEA's request. 2) We will have the newly established CIT meet with campus personnel to: explicitly detail school-wide behavioral expectations, cultural routines, and work with instructional staff at the campus to set high expectations and implement rigorous instruction; 3) Create an aligned vision, mission, goal, and value that focuses on a safe environment; 4) We will recruit, select, assign, induct, and retain a full staff of highly qualified educators. These educators' capacity will be built through frequent administrative observations and feedback provided by the CIT. 5) Based on campus leader feedback, the administration will purchase High-Quality Instructional Materials that can be incorporated into daily student instruction; 6) Our CIT will contract and also provide development that incorporates data-driven instruction to promote teaching effectiveness; 7) We commit to shifting resources, update service processes, and implement new practices in order to provide campus personnel with the flexibility needed to implement ESF strategies; 8) By providing trainings that are aligned with the ESF Essential Actions our campus/district leaders will have the ability to build the capacity of the campus educators; 9) Our campus instructional leaders will develop clear roles and responsibilities for staff; and 10) Campus staff will participate in the three pillars of support to include face-to-face professional development, implementation support, and one-on-one coaching, etc. With the implementation of these extensive activities, the district will be able to create and implement a TIP that: helps the campus grow concrete instructional leadership skills in the areas of observation and feedback; incorporate an improved student culture; and gain insight that enables data-driven instruction to be provided.

2. Describe how the LEA will monitor schools receiving the ESF-Focused Support Grant, including how the LEA will: (a) Monitor Targeted Improvement Plans upon submission and during implementation, and (b) Implement additional actions as needed to meet barriers and challenges, after the first year of the grant cycle.

Natalia ISD will create a Campus Intervention Team that will review the TARGETED IMPROVEMENT PLANS UPON SUBMISSION and DURING GRANT IMPLEMENTATION. These reviews will be conducted monthly and will provide feedback to campus leaders and the approved external vetted provider, National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET). Items that will be reviewed will be in accordance with the TEA performance measures. Measures that will be tracked include but are not limited to: 1. Track participation in an ESF-Diagnostic, which may include an ESF Lever 4 Instructional Materials Audit and Visit (Natalia ISD conducted an ESF Diagnostic in Spring 2022). 2. Track participation in on-going feedback, coaching, and implementation support from the Division of School Improvement and selected NIET (External Vetted Improvement Program). 3. Track participation in grant spending, coaching, and training. 4. Track the amount of one-on-one coaching that occurred with participants. 5. Track overall implementation of principal and/or principal manager action steps laid out in the program. 6. Track the outcomes and completion rate of staff perception surveys provided by the External Vetted Improvement Program. 7. Track the number and percent of instructional leaders and/or teacher leaders that completed all training dates for the program. 8. Track timelines for processes and steps created in the Targeted Improvement Plan (living document). 9. Track strategic teacher placement based on student need and teacher strengths. 10. Track targeted and personalized strategies implemented in the TIP. 11. Track CIT meetings focused on student progress and formative data as stated in the TIP. IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL ACTIONS AS NEEDED TO MEET BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES AFTER THE FIRST YEAR OF THE GRANT CYCLE: The Campus Intervention Team (CIT) will analyze data to identify gaps in the program/ TIP and decide on the best course of action needs to be taken. If the program fails to show progress, the CIT will meet to come up with strategies to improve outcomes. These strategies may involve IMPLEMENTING ADDITIONAL ACTIONS, such as improving communication with National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (external VIP), having more frequent meetings between the CIT and campus personnel, and incentivizing the attendance of trainings with staff stipends. The district may also seek guidance from TEA or other schools with similar programs to address issues appropriately. If an amendment is required for the action to occur, the district will create and send in the amendment for TEA approval.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies, Performance and Evaluation

1. Describe how the LEA will modify, as appropriate, practices and policies to provide operational flexibility to the awarded campus, that enables full and effective implementation of the Effective Schools Framework Essential Actions and aligned Targeted Improvement Plan.

The district will take several steps to MODIFY ITS PRACTICES AND POLICIES to provide OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY to the grant-funded campus. To determine which practices and policies need to be modified, a needs assessment will need to be conducted by the appointed Campus Intervention Team (CIT). Based on this assessment, the following actions can/will be taken:

- The district will provide flexibility in budgeting, staffing, and curriculum in order to align with the Effective Schools Framework Essential Actions.
- The district will allow flexibility in class scheduling, teacher conference periods, and other campus events. This can include offering more block schedules and/or mentoring student classes, as well as allowing faculty and staff to attend more one-to-one coaching sessions, professional development trainings, and teacher mentorship programs.
- The district will update policies to offer teachers Extra Duty Pay to opt out of conference periods to provide small group or one-to-one interventions/tutoring sessions.
- The district will update practices to provide additional stipends to mentoring teachers. With the implementation of this mentoring teacher program, the campus will be able to create a system to improve leaders that includes observation, feedback, and performance expectations.
- The district will update practices to hold monthly assessment and accountability meetings with faculty and stakeholders.
- The district will update practices to recruit and retain preferred substitutes. This will free up staff’s time for training attendance.
- The district will update practices to offer stipends to teachers who participate in the Distributed Learning Model.
- The district will adopt a flexible organizational structure. This new organizational structure will allow for quick decision-making and responsiveness to changing circumstances. This may include creating cross-functional teams, adopting agile project management methodologies, and decentralizing decision-making.

With the increase in operational flexibility and modification of policies/practices, the district will be to fully implement EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK ESSENTIAL ACTIONS THAT ARE ALIGNED TO THE TARGETED IMPROVEMENT PLAN.

Budget Narrative

1. Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

When designing the grant budget, the district took into consideration the TEA-provided budget guide. Based on this guidance, the district created a budget that will MEET THE NEEDS AND GOALS of the program, including STAFFING, SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS, CONTRACTS, AND TRAVEL. The proposed budget is as follows:

- 1. External Vetted Improvement Program provided by the NIET (whom we have already reached out to as per TEA requirements) – Funds have been budgeted to cover the cost of The TAP System. The TAP System will be used to support powerful teaching and learning, as well as, improve administrators’ ability to foster continuous improvement by growing concrete instructional leadership skills in observations and feedback, enhancing student culture, and implementing data-driven instruction. In addition to the training, the campus will work with the provider in each phase of the improvement process to include: conducting a data analysis; creating a needs assessment; and developing, implementing, and monitoring the plan for improvement. (\$44,000)
- 2. Instructional Materials – Funds have been budgeted to purchase high-quality instructional materials that are TEKS aligned and meet the rigor of state assessments. (\$14,000)
- 3. Summer Professional Development – Funds have been budgeted to improve teacher effectiveness through summer professional development. (\$8,300)
- 4. Teacher stipends/extra duty pay – Funds have been budgeted to retain, recruit, select, assign, and induct highly qualified educators. (\$25,000)
- 5. Travel- Funds have been budgeted to attend TEA-required events, VIP-required events, and district-directed trips to support the Effective Schools Framework. (\$3,000)
- 6. Other materials/supplies – Funds have been budgeted for other materials/supplies directly associated with grant activities (i.e., printing paper, pens, folders, binders, etc.). (\$2,000)
- 7. Indirect – To cover overhead costs associated with implementing the grant program. This includes facility costs, utilities, business office personnel, etc. (\$3,700)

ADJUSTMENTS TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS: After working with the External Vetted Improvement Program provider to receive training, the district will use the Distributed Learning Model for future staff development. To ensure instructional materials and supplies can continue to be purchased, the district will seek additional grant funding, and/or ADJUST current allocations from funding streams such as Title I, Title II, Title IV, and Title V to meet these needs. By implementing these various strategies, the district will be able to sustain the program long after the grant funding term has concluded.

Budget Narrative, cont'd.

2. Describe how the LEA will ensure campus leaders have direct access to grant funding to ensure alignment to the Targeted Improvement Plan.

To ensure campus leaders assure TEA that they will have access to all necessary resources, including the grant budget. The district will implement a series of activities to ensure DIRECT ACCESS TO GRANT FUNDING, WHILE ENSURING ALIGNMENT WITH THE TARGETED IMPROVEMENT PLAN (TIP). These activities include:

- Providing campus leadership with the submitted grant budget, to include the funds allocated in each line item and the assigned campus budget code;
- Working closely with district leaders to identify any additional purchasing requirements based on the TIP;
- Having Campus Leadership approve and verify all purchases prior to order submission and payment;
- Establishing clear channels of communication between the campus principal and the business office to promote an expedited purchasing process;
- Having Business Office personnel provide training to the campus leaders regarding procurement processes;
- Having Grant Program personnel conduct frequent site visits to the campus to review purchasing documents and ensure grant compliance; and
- Establishing clear accountability measures set by TEA reporting requirements.

By providing this DIRECT ACCESS to grant funding, campus leaders will have the resources necessary to improve its campus' academic performance in accordance with the TIP.

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 | <input type="text"/> | Barrier | <input type="text"/> |
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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