



2024-2025 Stronger Connections Grant

Competitive Grant Application: Due 11:59 p.m. CT, July 18, 2023

NOGA ID

Application stamp-in date and time

TEA will only accept grant application documents by **email**, including competitive grant applications and amendments. Submit grant applications and amendments as follows:

Competitive grant applications and amendments to competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov.

The application **MUST** bear the signature of a person authorized to bind the applicant to a contractual agreement

Authorizing legislation: PL 117-159 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Title II School Improvement Programs, BSCA

Grant period: From 11/15/2023 to 09/30/2025

Pre-award costs: ARE NOT permitted for this grant

Required attachments: N/A

Amendment Number

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

1. Applicant Information

Name of organization

Campus name CDN Vendor ID ESC UEI

Address City ZIP Phone

Primary Contact Email Phone

Secondary Contact Email Phone

2. 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 grant application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the grant application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- Grant application, guidelines, and instructions
- General Provisions and Assurances
- Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- Lobbying Certification
- ESSA Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name Title Email

Phone Signature
Date

Grant Writer Name Signature
Date

Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization. Grant writer is not an employee of the applicant organization.

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Adjustments on this page have been confirmed with _____ by _____ of TEA by phone / fax / email on _____.

3. Shared Services Arrangements

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not permitted for this grant.

4. Identify/Address Needs

List up to three quantifiable needs, as identified in your needs assessment, that these program funds will address. Describe your plan for addressing each need.

Quantifiable Need	Plan for Addressing Need
Bullying	Review data including bullying, threats, and attendance to define supports needed, determine intervention activities to implement, implement activities, and conduct a survey soliciting information from parents, staff, and students to assess effectiveness of program interventions and monitoring effectiveness.
Threats	We recognize the importance of addressing the emotional and mental health needs of our students. Planned activities include hiring additional counselors and/or counseling programs that provide students with the necessary support to overcome attendance issues, bullying experiences, or threats.
Attendance	Implement an attendance rewards program that promotes and recognizes students with exemplary attendance records by utilizing certificates, trophies, and small rewards for initial success as well activities that promote sustained gains in order to motivate students to attend and be at school regularly.

5. SMART Goal

Describe the summative SMART goal you have identified for this program (a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely), either related to student outcome or consistent with the purpose of the grant.

*Increase parental involvement by creating an outreach program for parents to include regular meetings to discuss bullying prevention strategies, resources, and updates to ensure parents have access to the necessary resources and support for their children. *Create a system where parents, students, and staff are educated on what to look for in respect to threat assessments, threat assessment reporting, and providing resources for those affected.
 *Increase overall attendance to meet or surpass the district goal of 96% by implementing a comprehensive attendance system incorporating tracking, reporting, and consistent follow-up procedures for students and parents.

6. Measurable Progress

Identify the benchmarks that you will use at the end of the first three grant quarters to measure progress toward meeting the process and implementation goals defined for the grant.

First-Quarter Benchmark

The benchmarks used to measure progress and implementation for the goals defined will review our attendance, bullying, and threat data every 9 weeks. We will conduct a survey prior to the implementation of the program to see what needs exist and what prior knowledge is needed for staff and parents with follow-up surveys to be completed in order to review any modifications needed which will assist with any additional student activities needed as well as any student/parent services needed.

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6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)**Second-Quarter Benchmark**

The benchmarks used to measure progress and implementation for the goals defined will review our attendance, bullying, and threat data every 9 weeks. We will conduct additional surveys regarding the implementation of the program to monitor gains and areas of growth for staff and parents in order to review, revise, and/or develop any modifications needed for the plan to assist with any additional student activities, and staff needs, as well as any student/parent services needed.

Third-Quarter Benchmark

Review data for the latest progress and implementation of the goals defined for attendance, bullying, and threats. We will conduct a post program survey soliciting information from parents, staff, and students to assess effectiveness of program interventions and supports. With feedback from the survey, we will evaluate the components of the program and determine the implementation phases for the upcoming year with fidelity.

7. Project Evaluation and Modification

Describe how you will use project evaluation data to determine when and how to modify your program. If your benchmarks or summative SMART goals do not show progress, describe how you will use evaluation data to modify your program for sustainability.

Based on the data, if progress is not evident and sustainable, our Stronger Connection committee will meet and determine the areas of focus we need to modify. We will have meetings every 6 weeks to monitor the progress of the program and ensure the fidelity of implementation. Data will be composed of attendance, bullying, and threat reports provided by the district per campus. The committee will be composed of campus leadership, parents, district representatives, and community members including individuals with social and mental health support backgrounds.

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8. Statutory/Program Assurances

The following assurances apply to this grant program. In order to meet the requirements of the grant, the grantee 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 grant 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 Statutory Requirements, TEA Program Requirements, and Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024–2025 Stronger Connections Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide the Texas Education Agency, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the grant program.
4. The applicant will formally establish a Student Support Program at three district campuses (one elementary, one intermediate/middle school, one high school) to address school climate and establish a student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC. If the applicant has few than three campuses or does not have three of the listed types of campuses, the applicant will establish the Student Support Program and the student support team structure at all campuses, up to three, served in the district.
5. The applicant will allocate 6% of awarded funds for contracted services for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
6. The applicant will allocate 10% of awarded funds for professional and contracted services with a partner approved by the Texas Center for Student Support and TEA. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
7. The applicant will use the family engagement playbook developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to partner and build support with parents and families prior to a student support team assessment, and during the student support implementation process to facilitate a student support partnership with families.
8. The applicant will establish a parent, student, and staff advisory committee to provide input on the establishment of the Student Support Program.
9. The applicant will engage in Student Support Program planning activities from the beginning of the grant program through implementation at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
10. The applicant will establish and implement at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, the Student Support Program aligned to the content and training provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
11. The applicant will incorporate a case management system into the student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
12. The applicant will align the student support team structure with behavioral threat assessment team operation and outcomes to ensure that students are well supported and that the effectiveness of interventions are monitored.
13. The applicant will implement the data collection and reporting system developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy of the implementation of the Student Support Program, including student support team structure, quality of support leading to positive outcomes, and data related to increases in desired outcomes (e.g. increase in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increase in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increase in referrals for mental health services, reduction in removals from class, etc.).
14. The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures.

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9. Statutory/ TEA Program Requirements

1. Describe how the LEA will identify the campuses that will participate in the establishment of the Student Support Program described in the program description? Include the criteria or considerations that will influence the determination by the LEA.

The campuses identified for the establishment of the Student Support Program were selected based on data on attendance, bullying, and threats reported in the 2022/2023 school year.

The three schools are in a feeder pattern. Each campus has attendance concerns, falling significantly below our district goal of 96%. Lee High School had the lowest attendance percentages at 85.85% for our secondary campuses. Within the 2022/2023 school year they performed 15 threat assessments (harm to others) and 7 bullying investigations. Baytown Junior had an attendance percentage rates of 89.49%. Within the 2022/2023 school year they performed 16 threat assessments (harm to others) and 7 bullying investigations. Travis Elementary had an attendance percentage rates of 91.74%. Within the 2022/2023 school year they performed 4 threat assessments (harm to others) and 25 bullying investigations. Each identified campus has a high ED percentage and a substantial amount of at risk-students.

Incorporating support from Region 4 and the Texas Center for Student Supports will be a benefit as well to determine the program dynamics in order to plan, prepare, and provide a system that can be sustainable for three campuses as well as expand it to the entire district.

2. Describe how the LEA will ensure that campus leaders and staff are committed to the success of the Student Support Program.

Campus leaders and staff will be trained during a two-day leadership summit where they will immerse themselves in leadership training and learn how to best serve our students. We see value in building a positive campus culture that lends to cultivation of change and success for all. We will initiate a campus Student Support Program committee that will meet once a month where they will bring suggestions and concerns from the staff. Leaders and staff will play an active role in the program, thus having more buy in and want to ensure its success. As a district, we will make sure our campus staff has the resources and support needed. Our staff is committed to the success of our students and are excited to see this this program create a positive school climate while teaching students self-regulation with a growth mindset.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

3. Describe how the LEA will engage parents and families to solicit support for the program.

Parents will be an integral part of the success of this program. Parents will be invited to serve on the campus Student Support Program committee. We will host family nights that will be geared towards educating parents on bullying, threats, and campus concerns. These family nights will also educate families about positive supports the campus has to offer. Outside resources will be used as speakers at these events to help educate parents and promote community involvement. We will have a constant stream of communication with our families on our campus websites and newsletters. We are dedicated to promoting parent involvement in our students' education, as we understand that parent involvement is key to their child's success. The grant funding will help us organize parent engagement initiatives, including workshops, seminars, and support groups focused on attendance awareness, bullying prevention, and threat reporting, ultimately fostering a stronger partnership between parents and the school community.

4. Describe how the LEA will ensure that there is adequate staff to support the establishment and implementation of the Student Support Program.

As part of the grant, we will utilize funds for additional staff to support the implementation and fidelity of the programs initiated. Grant funds will be utilized to hire additional counselors or fund counseling programs that provide students with the necessary support to overcome attendance issues, bullying experiences, or threats. We will also equip our staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to address attendance, bullying, and threat-related issues effectively. Grant funding will be allocated for professional development opportunities such as workshops, conferences, and training sessions that enhance the capacity of our educators. Our staff will receive initial training at our leadership summit and will have ongoing professional development throughout the year.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

5. Describe how each of the campuses will be supported by the grant program, if awarded, currently conduct behavioral threat assessments and how the campus will incorporate current systems into the student support team structure.

Threat assessments are conducted once reported by students and or staff. The campus administrator investigates the alleged information. Based on the findings of the investigation, consequences and supports are put into place. Our current support simply consists of our school counselor.

While the schools have managed to assist students, the level of support is insufficient in providing the expert care needed since the certified staff are basic school counselors. There is a growing concern that we need individuals that are trained and equipped to provide expert care. The district has been in discussions for many years on how to facilitate the implementation of school-based mental health services including research on other school and health agency partnerships. We believe this grant would be an opportunity to get our district on track with providing school-based mental health services which would include early identification of mental health symptoms, drug use, and violence, as well as provide the appropriate direct individual or group counseling services. Most of the families are not able to drive 50 miles to see the nearest mental health specialist so the goal would be to have available space at the three sites for the healthcare professionals to facilitate an office and provide direct student and family services. The campus Student Support Team would be able to directly interact with the healthcare staff. Being able to provide school-based mental health services in partnership with mental health entity or health care entities would directly support the improvement of student physical and mental wellness which in turn promotes an overall improvement for the student, the school, the family, and the community.

6. Describe how the LEA currently identifies student support needs and how it identifies and establishes partnerships with external mental health and behavioral health providers to meet student needs.

Student identification for support is by teacher referral and or by parent/student request for support. Our current partnership with external mental/behavioral health providers is providing a resource list and outsourcing. This is a major area of need that would be directly evaluated and reconfigured with the funds and supports if awarded this grant. We as a district have identified this as an area of focus.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

7. Describe how the LEA currently partners with the regional ESC to support improvement in student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, physical health and wellbeing, and improving academic outcomes for students.

Our current partnership with our ESC, Region 4, is strong and consists of different areas of assistance including contracted services, technical services, and supplemental materials and supplies. All program and content areas are directly supported by Region 4 staff including Math, Science, ELA, Social Studies, Bilingual/ESL, PreK, Special Ed, CTE, School Safety, Student Wellness, Behavior Programs, Federal Programs, and Accountability and Assessment as well as specialized funding such as ESSER and TCLAS. Professional Development is attended by our district and campus staff as well as our participating PNP campuses.

8. Describe how the LEA will use this grant program to supplement current work to improve services and supports for the mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness of students.

Our campuses currently have a Student Support Team that consists of the counselor, administrator, Campus Student Success Specialist, Harris County Community Youth Services liaison, Communities in Schools liaison, nurse, and attendance clerk. The SST meets weekly to discuss attendance, grades, and behavior concerns for identified students and create an action plan for addressing needs. With the grant funds, we will acquire educational materials, conduct workshops, and provide training sessions for students, staff, and parents. These opportunities will raise awareness, foster empathy, and equip individuals with the skills to prevent and address bullying and threats. We will also create a calming space for students who need time to promote self-regulation. This safe space will foster student growth and processing of social emotional needs. These funds will also provide extra support staff to the campuses to better serve our students around mental health, behavioral health, emotional health and physical health and wellness.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment: 24,189

10. Enter the Regional Educational Service Center that serves the LEA: 4

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10. 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 grant.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this grant.
- 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"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

11. PNP Equitable Services

Are any private nonprofit schools located within the applicant's boundaries?

- Yes No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the grant?

- Yes No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

Assurances

- The LEA assures that it discussed all consultation requirements as listed in Section 1117(b)(1) and/or Section 8501(c)(1), as applicable, with all eligible private nonprofit schools located within the LEA's boundaries.
- The LEA assures the appropriate Affirmations of Consultation will be provided to TEA's PNP Ombudsman in the manner and time requested.

Equitable Services Calculation

1. LEA's student enrollment	<input type="text"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text"/>
4. Total current-year grant allocation	<input type="text"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the grant's defined limit	<input type="text"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text"/>
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	<input type="text"/>

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12. Request for Grant Funds

List all of the allowable grant-related activities for which you are requesting grant funds. Include the amounts budgeted for each activity. Group similar activities and costs together under the appropriate heading. During negotiation, you will be required to budget your planned expenditures on a separate attachment provided by TEA.

Payroll Costs

1.	Specialized Counselors (1 per site)	270000
2.	Program Facilitator (1 for program)	85000
3.	Stipends for Extra Support Hours	25000
4.		
5.		

Professional and Contracted Services

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	90000
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	150000
8.	Specialized Mental Providers (\$200,000 per site)	600000
9.	Specialized Services for Student Engagement Support Activities (\$25,000 per site)	75000
10.	Trainings for Staff/Parent/Community (\$10,000 per site)	50000

Supplies and Materials

11.	Student Affiliated Technology, Materials, and Supplies (Cost Share for district- \$55,000)	
12.	Staff Affiliated Technology, Materials, and Supplies (Cost Share by district- \$20,000)	
13.	Parent Affiliated Technology, Materials, and Supplies	25000

Other Operating Costs

15.	Student Affiliated Activities	60000
16.	Staff Affiliated Activities	25000
17.	Parent Affiliated Activities	25000

Debt Services

18.		0
19.		

Capital Outlay

20.		0
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Direct administrative costs:

Indirect administrative costs: 20000

TOTAL GRANT AWARD REQUESTED: 1,500,000

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Appendix I: Negotiation and Amendments

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 of the TEA website and may be mailed OR faxed (not both). **To fax:** one copy of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to either (512) 463-9811 or (512) 463-9564. **To mail:** three copies of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to the address on page 1. More detailed amendment instructions can be found on the last page of the budget template.

You may duplicate this page.

For amendments, choose the section you wish to amend from the drop down menu on the left. In the text box on the right, describe the changes you are making and the reason for them.

Always work with the most recent negotiated or amended application. If you are requesting a revised budget, please include the budget attachments with your amendment.

Section Being Negotiated or Amended Negotiated Change or Amendment

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