

## **IDEA B Discretionary Technical Assistance and Support Grant Opportunity for 2018-2019**

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is actively seeking Letters of Interest (LOI) from potential grantees to provide opportunities for specific work toward statewide Local Education Agency (LEA) assistance with ***Evaluation Capacity***. Interested Regional Education Service Centers (ESC), Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), and/or nonprofit organizations should submit an LOI in the template included in Attachments A and B to TEA **by September 14, 2018 at 5 pm CDT**. Potential grantees are encouraged to seek cooperative partnerships or collaborative agreements to successfully meet all goals and objectives of the grant. Funding is allocated from IDEA B Discretionary funds and scheduled for implementation in the 2018-2019 school year.

### **Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are limited to the 20 regional education service centers and all institutions of higher education located in Texas and all nonprofits – geographic limits do not apply. Other for-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply; however, they may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner (encouraged, as applicable).

### **1.1 Program Description**

The ***Evaluation Capacity*** grant is designed to research, identify, procure, and deploy resources and personnel to assist LEAs in securing appropriately certified and/or licensed evaluation staff for the purposes of completing evaluations for eligibility for special education services. This grant will provide LEAs with improved access to highly trained evaluation personnel. Resources and supports will be made available to help LEAs across the state quickly fill short-term needs for evaluation personnel.

### **1.2 Program Goal**

The primary goal of the ***Evaluation Capacity*** grant is to assist districts with evaluation personnel shortages in every LEA in the state. This grant will strengthen the state's ability to ensure all children with disabilities are located, evaluated, identified and that a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) is made available within the required timeframes.

### **1.3 Program Activities:**

Strong applications will demonstrate broad understanding of differences in evaluation personnel needs across the state, knowledge of professional organizations and potential partners, and skills in database creation and management to connect LEAs with potential evaluators. Resources and supports from this grant should be easily accessed and available to all LEAs in the state.

It is required that the proposed programs contain, at a **minimum**, the following:

- Creation and maintenance of an online database system to connect available, properly certified/licensed evaluation personnel with LEAs. This system must include:
  - Options to connect with a variety of different evaluation personnel including primary eligibility evaluators and related services evaluators
  - Checks for ensuring evaluation personnel have current/proper certifications or licensure
  - A mechanism for arranging travel reimbursement and payment
  - Negotiated pricing for evaluation services provided through the grant

- A web-facing mechanism for LEAs to request additional capacity
- A detailed system for prioritizing LEA requests based on verified need to include:
  - A detailed system by which the need for third party assistance is validated including a system for determining how the need is tied to a rise in the number of requests for evaluation as opposed to a previously existing shortfall in an individual LEA's capacity to provide evaluations within required timelines
  - A detailed explanation of how determinations will be made whether to provide evaluation capacity to LEAs
  - An appeals process for LEAs who are determined to not be candidates for the services provided through this grant
  - A plan describing how LEAs will be notified of approvals and how scheduling and logistical arrangements will be made
  - A detailed explanation of how LEA feedback will be solicited and incorporated into the above-described validation and determination process
- Mechanism for monthly reporting to TEA on data points requested by TEA and additional points of value
  - Other data points will include, at a minimum, LEA type and size, geographical location, and evaluation types
- Activities that will support increased access to available, appropriately certified/ licensed evaluation professionals statewide, including:
  - Resources, models, and options for in-person evaluations and tele-evaluations depending upon availability and LEA preference
  - Collaboration with professional organizations of evaluators to identify ways of improving access to evaluators across the state

**1.4 Program Budget:**

\$10,000,000

**1.5 Timeline:**

Lols must be submitted electronically to [sped@tea.texas.gov](mailto:sped@tea.texas.gov) by 5pm (CDT) on September 14, 2018 in order to be considered. Hard copy mailed or delivered Lols will not be accepted. Applicants should combine all attachments and documents into one PDF to include a cover sheet and table of contents. Grant awardees will be notified by October 1, 2018, with the grant period to begin October 15, 2018. This is a one-year grant that may be extended for additional years at TEA discretion.

**1.6 Closing and Next Steps:**

Strong applications with a likelihood of award will be innovative in nature, demonstrate clear planning toward stated goals and focus on producing desired outcomes rather than simply activity completion.

Questions regarding this request for Lol should be sent to [sped@tea.texas.gov](mailto:sped@tea.texas.gov) prior to August 31, 2018, and will be answered through an FAQ that will be posted to [www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED/](http://www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED/) and updated regularly as questions come in. When submitting questions, applicants should include the name

of this grant in the subject line. Applicants should refer to [www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED](http://www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED) for details and updates regarding this request for Lol.