# Attachment 1: Request for Letters of Interest for GEAR UP Technical Assistance Grants

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August 10, 2018

# 1. Purpose and Structure of the GEAR UP Technical Assistance Grants

## **Vision**

### Overview of GEAR UP Pilot Campuses and Technical Assistance (TA) Grantees

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federal discretionary grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

The subject of this request for Letters of Interest (LOIs) is to identify technical assistance providers to support GEAR UP campuses in Texas.

Through a separate LOI process, the TEA will award 6-10 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with grants to launch college and career readiness strategies at select campuses. LEA Grantees are expected to start GU activities in the fall of 2018. The entities selected for this Technical Assistance LOI will support the 6 – 10 LEA Grantees referenced above.

This request for Letters of Interest (LOIs) will result in the selection of ESCs, IHEs, or non-profit Technical Assistance Grantees who will build instructional and performance management competencies at LEA grantee sites.

## 1.2 Technical Assistance Grantee Eligibility

Eligible applicants include education entities such as regional Education Service Centers, Institutions of Higher Education, and non-profits. All grantees should have in place strong project management and contracting structures, processes, and tools in accordance with all requirements stated herein.

## 1.3 Scope of the Technical Assistance Grantees

TA grantees will build capabilities at GU campuses to support excellence in instructional rigor, vertical alignment, and program performance management. TEA will seek grantees to support GU campuses by awarding two types of TA grants:

* Professional Development TA Grant

This grant will be awarded to one applicant to train and support GU LEA grantees to develop rigorous instruction methods and vertical instructional planning competencies through professional development offerings and coaching

* Performance Management TA Grant

This grant will be awarded to one applicant to set up and train GU LEA grantees on tools and processes to collect information and apply data-driven program management

The TEA may choose to award one applicant with both grants, or two applicants with different grants. Award amounts are shown below:

| **Grant Type** | **Technical Assistance Areas** | **Yr. 1 Budget** | **Yr. 2+ Budget** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Professional Development | Instructional Rigor Vertically Aligned Instructional Planning | $250,000 | $200,000 |
| Performance Management | Information Collection Performance Reporting | $350,000 | $200,000 |

Grant award funds may be used to pay for any expensesrelated to the fulfillment of Fidelity of Implementation requirements. Only 15% of awarded funds may be used for payroll, unless otherwise agreed to by TEA.

## 1.4 Grant Duration and Renewals

Grants awarded as part of this request for Letters of Interest process will cover budgets extending up to August 31, 2020. After the first grant term, ending on August 31, 2020, grants may be renewed yearly subject to satisfactory Fidelity of Implementation performance.

## 1.5 Use of Contractors

Prospective awardees may submit applications with proposals to meet program objectives through contracted services.

If applicants plan to contract services to meet program objectives, they will be subject to contracting controls including, but not limited to:

* Approval by TEA to Source Goods and Services  
  Grantees must detail in their applications whether they will meet objectives by sourcing services or goods from contractors. Grantees who are selected for Technical Assistance grants will have permission to source the services that were listed in their grant applications. Sourcing of other goods and services that exceed the scope presented in the awardee’s application by $10,000 per year or more will need to be approved by TEA. The $10,000 per year in excess figure applies to the aggregate cost of all contracted services and goods.
* Involvement of TEA in the Awardee’s Contracting Process  
  TEA may work with the awardees to set standards and scope through the contracting process including, but not limited to:
  + - Establishing set of criteria by which contractor proposals will be judged
    - Approving contract reviewers, which may include staff from TEA GEAR UP’s office
    - Establishing the scope of goods and services being tendered, as well as the terms and conditions of contracted services
    - Proposing and approving templates that will be included in any solicitations, included activity and budget plans to be filled out by vendors
    - Approving the vendor selected by the review process
* Involvement of TEA in Contract Management  
  TEA may request involvement in the management of services contracted to meet grant objectives in the following ways:
  + - Reporting of contractor costs in formats and frequencies to be determined by TEA and the awardee
    - Determining the performance measures by which contractors are evaluated
    - Involvement and inputs into contractor performance management processes
* Compliance with EDGAR

All contractors must abide by Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), as applicable to the administration of GEAR UP grants.

* Contracting Timelines  
  Applicants must ensure that their contracting processes and timelines are able to meet the timelines specified in Section 4. Application and Award .

# 2. The Professional Development TA Grant

## 2.1 Professional Development Technical Assistance Grant

Selected applicants will work with TEA, LEA grantees, and contractors. To be considered, applicants must be able to either meet required outcomes independently or through contracts with service providers. Applicants who choose to contract with service providers to meet program objectives will need to follow the requirements outlined in Section 1.5 Use of Contractors.

## 2.2 Professional Development TA Activities

The successful applicant will work with GU campuses to provide planning support and professional development offerings that improve the ability of educators to teach rigorously through competency development and tools by methods that could include training on differentiated instruction, project-based learning, advanced instruction, and classroom management. The successful applicant will also work to support and build competencies in vertically aligning instruction for LEA grantees and local or feeder institutions of higher education. Instructional alignment considerations may include changes to curriculum, professional development offerings, and other areas as identified by the grantee. The selected grantee will be responsible for:

1. Conducting a PD Needs Assessment  
   Conducting one common needs assessment for GU LEA grantees to identify (1) educator, staff, and administrator competency gaps, (2) professional development offerings gaps, (3) coaching and performance management process gaps that could form barriers to achieving GEAR UP goals;
2. Conducting a Vertical Planning Needs Assessment  
   Assisting GU districts, campuses, and institutions of higher learning (to be selected in collaboration with the TEA) plan five days of vertical alignment and planning with teams of educators and administrators to develop plans to address program, curriculum, and other gaps;
3. Developing a PD Plan and Supporting FOI Metrics  
   Collaborating with grantees to design professional development interventions, programs, and vertical teaming sessions that address the competency gaps identified in A and B, and determining and quantitatively defining goals and objectives for proposed PD programs and interventions;
4. Executing Professional Development Plan  
   Supporting GU campuses to stand up the PD programs and interventions designed in C; and,
5. Reporting on Implementation Fidelity  
   Supporting grantees in the measurement and reporting of proposed PD to be implemented, and working with the Performance Management TA grantee to implement quantitative performance management tools.

## 2.3 Professional Development FOI Requirements

### Federal Government PD FOI Metrics

The grantee will be responsible for meeting federally-tracked metrics. The successful PD TA grant applicant will be required to ensure that GEAR UP campuses abide by the following, federally-tracked compliance metrics.

* Each year, **≥50%** of high school core content teachers will participate in professional development that supports a rigorous curriculum (project-based learning, advanced instructional strategies, teacher externships, student engagement, etc.)
* Each year, **≥20%** of high school primary cohort core content teachers will participate in at least three individualized educator coaching and/or mentoring sessions.
* Each year, teams of educators and administrators (middle school, high school and institutions of higher education) will complete at least five days of vertical teaming to align curriculum and reduce the need for remediation at the postsecondary level.

More information on priority and primary cohorts is available in Attachment 4 – Overview of GEAR UP Grants.

### Other PD FOI Requirements

In addition to federally-tracked metrics, the PD TA grantee will be responsible for meeting TEA-defined metrics, including:

* Additional PD FOI Metrics  
  The grantee will work with TEA and the LEA grantees to determine additional FOI metrics following the completion of needs assessments and the development of PD plans. Additional metrics could include, but may not be limited to, measurements of program participation and plan completion by LEA staff.
* Submission of Work Products  
  After completing the activities outlined in Section 2.2 Professional Development TA Activities for the grant’s first year, TA grantees will be responsible for submitting work products per the schedule below.

| Date | Work Products |
| --- | --- |
| November 2018 | LEA PD Needs Assessment  Vertical Teaming Needs Assessment |
| December 2018 | Professional Development Plan  Professional Development FOI Metrics |
| January – May 2019 | Professional Development Implementation  Ongoing FOI Progress Reports |
| July 2019 | End-of-year FOI Reports |

The TA and LEA grantees will work with TEA to define quality and other requirements for each work product, and to determine the schedule of work products for the second year and any other renewal years.

# 3. The Performance Management TA Grant

## 3.1 Performance Management Technical Assistance Grant

Selected applicants will work with TEA, LEA grantees, and contractors. To be considered, applicants must be able to either meet required outcomes independently or through contracts with service providers. Applicants who choose to contract with service providers to meet program objectives will need to follow the requirements outlined in Section 1.5 Use of Contractors.

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## 3.2 Performance Management TA Activities

The successful applicant awarded with this activity will work with LEA grantees to assess and build competencies in data-driven grant performance management. The Performance Management Technical Assistance grantee will support LEA grantees in standing up adequate information collection tools, trainings, and processes necessary to manage the participation and performance of their grants. The selected grantee will be responsible for:

1. Developing Fidelity of Implementation Metrics  
   Working with the TEA and with LEA grantees to define grant goals and objectives, understand federally-tracked compliance metrics, and to develop Fidelity of Implementation metrics that will be closely monitored throughout the execution of the grant to determine performance at the campus, district, and state level;
2. Developing Information Collection Methods and Tools  
   Supporting grantees to identify the information collection tools and processes needed to (1) monitor the implementation and execution of grant activities at each of the Texas GU grantee campuses based on established Fidelity of Implementation metrics; (2) produce GEAR UP Annual Performance Reports to the federal government, and (3) conduct a technical evaluation of all grant activities – tool and processes should be standardized across GU LEA grantees;
3. Deploying Reporting Methods and Tools  
   Developing and deploying standardized grant information collection and reporting tools and processes – report development and deployment should consider the (1) number and types of required reports, (2) distribution schedules for reports, (3) content and layout of each report, (4) the audiences for each report, (5) method of distribution for each report, and (6) training and documentation required to build the proficiency of tool users;
4. Ongoing Grant Reporting  
   Supporting LEA grantees and GU campuses to produce standardized monthly, quarterly, and annual reports documenting and summarizing grant performance against the metrics established through activity A.

## 3.3 Performance Management FOI Requirements

### Performance Management FOI Metrics

In addition to supporting the overall grant FOI metrics reporting process, the selected Performance Management TA grantee will be responsible for meeting their own FOI metrics in categories that include but are not limited to: (1) on-time reporting of all grant FOI metrics, (2) quality of collected information, (3) effectiveness and participation of tool trainings, (4) quality of FOI reports. The grantee will work with TEA and the LEA grantees to determine additional FOI metrics during the first activity of the grant.

### Submission of Work Products

After completing the activities outlined in Section 3.2 Performance Management TA Activities for the grant’s first year, TA grantees will be responsible for submitting work products per the schedule below.

| Date | Work Products |
| --- | --- |
| November 2018 | Grant FOI/Performance Management Metrics Defined |
| January 2019 | Information Collection Methods and Tools  Performance Reporting Methods and Tools |
| January – May 2019 | Ongoing Grant FOI Progress Reports  Ongoing Technical Support |
| March 2019 | GEAR UP Annual Performance Report |
| July 2019 | End-of-year Grant FOI Reports |

The TA and LEA grantees will work with TEA to define quality and other requirements for each work product, and to determine the schedule of work products for the second year and any other renewal years.

# 4. Application and Award Logistics

## 4.1 Application and Award Timeline

Following the award of grantees, TA grantee activities should begin by September of 2018:

|  | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | July | Aug |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Request for LOIs Distributed/Open** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **LOI Applications Reviewed** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Grantees Awarded** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Grantee Activities Begin** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Winter FOI Checkpoint** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Federal FOI Submissions** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **End of Year Checkpoint** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Second Year Grant Planning** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Applicants should be aware of important dates tabulated below.

| Date | Deadline |
| --- | --- |
| Wednesday, August 22nd | Submit questions regarding LOI |
| Friday, August 24th | Responses to questions posted to Beyond Grad website |
| Friday, August 31st | Submit Notice of Intent to Submit LOI *(optional)* |
| Friday, September 7th | Submit Letter of Interest Response forms |
| Mid-September | Selection of TA grantee(s) |

## 4.2 Evaluation Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated based on the rubric categories tabulated below. More information can be found in attachment 2. Each TA grant will be awarded to the applicant who obtains the highest score in that particular section. Applicants should only complete the forms relevant to the grant type they are applying for.

| **GEAR UP Technical Assistance Scoring Rubric** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Technical Assistance for Professional Development Application *Total Points: 24*** | | |
| **1.1** | **Resources to Meet Objectives** | 4 |
| **1.2** | **Instructional Excellence PD Experience** | 4 |

| **1.3** | **Vertical Teaming Experience** | 4 |
| --- | --- | --- |

| **1.4** | **Quality of Activity and Budget Plan** | 8 |
| --- | --- | --- |

| **1.5** | **Fidelity of Implementation Metrics** | 4 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1.6** | **Other Comments** | N/A |

| **2. Technical Assistance for Performance Management Application *Total Points: 31*** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2.1** | **Resources to Meet Objectives** | 4 |
| **2.2** | **Data-driven Performance Management Experience** | 4 |

| **2.3** | **Information Collection Experience and Tools** | 11 |
| --- | --- | --- |

| **2.4** | **Quality of Activity and Budget Plan** | 8 |
| --- | --- | --- |

| **2.5** | **Fidelity of Implementation Metrics** | 4 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2.6** | **Other Comments** | N/A |

More information on rubrics are available in Attachment 5.

## 4.3 Closing and Next Steps

Please review and complete Attachments 2 and 3, which serves as the Letter of Interest for GEAR UP Technical Assistance Grants. Upon completion, submit to [specialprojects@tea.texas.gov](mailto:specialprojects@tea.texas.gov) by August 31, 2018 at 5PM CDT.

The subject line should read as follows: *<INSERT APPLICANT NAME> - GU TA Grant Application;*

*Ex. ESC 50 – GU TA Grant Application*

Successful proposers will be contacted regarding timeline, decision points, and next steps.

If any assistance is needed, please contact Alexis Bauserman, Director of Beyond Grad at [Alexis.Bauserman@tea.texas.gov](mailto:Alexis.Bauserman@tea.texas.gov).

Thank you,

Alexis Bauserman

Director, College and Career Readiness

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