# PROGRAM GUIDELINES: 2021–2023 EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL (ECHS) PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

**APPLICATION DUE DATE**

11:59 p.m. Central Time, November 10, 2020

**PROGRAM AUTHORITY**

Authorized by General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 49, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2019, and Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.908(b) and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §102.1091

# Contents

## Introduction to the Program Guidelines

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), as the pass-through entity[1], is the grantee[2] from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities[3] such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees[4]. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

This part of the request for application (RFA). Program Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the General and Fiscal Guidelines and the specific program instructions. The Adobe Acrobat Standard Application System (SAS) consists of all forms to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding.

For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

### Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The General and Fiscal Guidelines provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs.. Throughout the Program Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines. **It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines when preparing your application.**

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[1] Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

[2] Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term "grantee" does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

[3] Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

[4] Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

**U.S. Department of Education and/or State Appropriations**

The following is provided in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education Appropriations Act:

| Category | Amount |
|---|---|
| Total funds available for this project | $910,000 |
| Percentage to be financed with federal funds | 0% |
| Amount of federal funds | $0 |
| Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources | 100% |
| Amount of nonfederal funds | $910,000 |

**Due to current conditions, the amount available to award may change in response to budget reductions that the State is experiencing.**

**Your Notice of Grant Awards may need to be adjusted to reflect this reduction.**

## Grant Timeline

**All of these dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly and are subject to change. Due to COVID-19 TEA may require adjustments to the calendar and the timelines.**

| Date | Event |
|---|---|
| September 11, 2020 | RFA available; notice of the RFA published in the *Texas Register* |
| September 22, 2020 | Last date to submit questions to be addressed in the applicant's Conference/Webinar<br>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Applicants' Conference/Webinar |
| September 24, 2020 | Applicants' Webinar 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., Central Time<br>(registration at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6269652106069544462) |
| October 01, 2020 | Last date to submit FAQs to TEA contact person<br>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions |
| October 09, 2020 | Due date for the Notice of Intent to Apply |
| October 09, 2020 | Due date for Reviewer Information Form Reviewer Information Form |
| October 09, 2020 | FAQs posted to TEA Grant Opportunities page |
| November 10, 2020 | Due date for the application in the TEA Document Control Center, 11:59 p.m., Central Time. TEA will only accept applications by email to competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov.<br>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Competitive Application Due Date and Time |
| November 20, 2020–December 15, 2020 | Competitive review period<br>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Competitive Review Process |

| Date | Event |
|------|-------|
| February 15, 2021 | Beginning date of grant<br>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Grant Period |
| November 2021 | Grantees are required to apply for designation to begin serving students in 2022-23. |
| March 17, 2023 | Final date to submit an amendment |
| June 15, 2023 | Ending date of grant<br>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Grant Period |

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the TEA Grant Opportunities page. If a report due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report will be due the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

## Grant at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

### Authorizing Legislation

This grant program is authorized by the General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 49, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2019, and Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.908(b) and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §102.1091.

### Where to Submit the Application

See the Where to Submit the Competitive Application section of the General and Fiscal Guidelines.

### Submission Requirements
See the Submission Requirements for Competitive Grants section of the General and Fiscal Guidelines.

Note: TEA requires applications to be emailed.

### Purpose of Program

The purpose of the Early College High Schools (ECHS) model is to allow students least likely to attend college an opportunity receive both a high school diploma and either an associate degree or at least 60 credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. The ECHS provides dual credit at no cost to historically underserved students, targeting those who are at-risk and/or economically disadvantaged. The ECHS offers rigorous instruction and accelerated courses and provides academic and social support services to help students succeed in college level coursework. The ECHS provides students with highly personalized attention which promotes improvement in college readiness.

ECHS campuses partner with Texas institutions of higher education (IHEs) to reduce barriers to college access. The IHE partner(s) serve on the ECHS Leadership Team to provide support and guidance to the ECHS in curriculum development, resource acquisition, and student/community outreach. Together, the ECHS and IHE develop course equivalency crosswalks which lead to Level 1 and Level 2 certificates, associate degrees, and completion of the Texas Core Curriculum to provide stackable credentials as students advance on the academic pipeline.

ECHS schools are public schools established under the Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.908(b) that enable students in Grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 who are at-risk of dropping out, as defined by the TEC, §29.081, or who wish to accelerate completion of high school to combine high school courses and college-level courses. ECHS schools provide a course of study leading to an associate or 60 college credits at no cost to students, per Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §102.1091.

## Eligible Applicants

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Eligibility To Apply for Competitive Grants.

LEAs that:

• Serve students in Grades 9–12; or

• Will begin serving students in Grade 9 or students in Grades 9 and 10 in the first year of implementation (2022–2023) and will progressively scale up by adding at least one grade level per year.

Recipients of the 2018–2019 P-TECH and ICIA Planning Grant, 2019-2020 P-TECH and ICIA Planning Grant, 2018–2020 P-TECH and ICIA Success Grant, the 2019-2021 P-TECH and ICIA Success Grant, the 2020-2022 P-TECH and ICIA Planning and Implementation Grant, or the 2020-2022 P-TECH Success Grant are not eligible for the 2021–2023 ECHS Planning and Implementation Grant.

Recipients of the Lone Star STEM Grant are not eligible for the 2021-2023 ECHS Planning and Implementation Grant.

2020-2021 Planning, Provisional and Designated ECHS, P-TECH, and T-STEM campuses are not eligible for this grant.

## Eligibility List

An eligibility list **is not** posted on the TEA Grant Opportunities page.

## Shared Services Arrangement

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) **are not** allowed for this grant program.

## More Than One Application

Eligible applicants **may not** apply for the grant on behalf of more than one campus.

**Application Funding**

See the following sections of the General and Fiscal Guidelines:

- Grant Funding
- Continuation Funding
- Fund Management
- Use of Funds

It is anticipated that approximately 6 will be awarded ranging in amounts up to $150,000.

**Selection of Applicants for Funding**

Applicants will be selected in rank order.

**Cost Share or Matching Requirement**

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Cost Share/Match Requirement.

TEA  requires a 20% cost match for this grant program.

**Limitation of Administrative Funds**

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Administrative Costs.

*Direct Administrative Costs*

TEA limits the amount of direct administrative costs for this grant program to no more than 10% of the total grant award.

*Indirect Administrative Costs*

The grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to **the lesser** of their current, approved restricted indirect cost rate or 15%.

To calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant, complete the Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet, posted on the Administering a Grant page, under the Handbooks and Other Guidance section.

**Pre-Award Costs**

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Pre-Award Costs.

Pre-award costs **are not** permitted for this grant.

# Applicant Assistance

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

**Contact for Clarifying Information**

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](), TEA Contacts.

The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions about the RFA, the grant program, or for assistance with the applicants' webinar:

> Christine Bailie, Assistant Director of Postsecondary Preparation Programs
> Division of College, Career, and Military Preparation
> Christine.bailie@tea.texas.gov
> Phone: (512) 463-9326

**Frequently Asked Questions**

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](), Frequently Asked Questions.

The FAQs for this grant program will be posted to the [TEA Grant Opportunities]() site no later than the date listed on the Grant Timeline. Applicants may email their questions to the TEA staff member listed in the Contact for Clarifying Information section.

**Applicants' Conference/Webinar**

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines]() Applicants' Conference/Webinar.

Questions that applicants wish to have addressed during the applicants' webinar must be submitted no later than the date given in the grant timeline.

| Date of Webinar | Time | Registration Link | Type |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thursday, September 24,2020 | 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., Central Time | Registration Link: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6269652106069544462) | Live and webinar recorded for viewing after webinar |

**Errata Notices**

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](), Errata Notices.

**GovDelivery Email Bulletins**

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](), GovDelivery Email Bulletins.

# Program Elements

This section provides detailed information about the grant program.

## Program Description

Three-fourths of jobs in 2020 require a postsecondary credential. Young adults without a postsecondary credential have a 12% chance of earning a living wage. Texas is responding to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead by expanding innovative high school models that provide wrap around services to support students in accelerated instruction through mentoring, articulation of credits from high school to college, flexibility in scheduling, college and career advising, and the individualization of instructional planning.

In Texas, thousands of students' lives are being changed by the opportunity to follow a seamless and clear path from high school  into postsecondary education through the Early College High School (ECHS) model. The ECHS model provides an exciting and transformative approach to high school that leverages strong partnerships with colleges and universities to enhance alignment of educational systems to immerses students in rigorous educational opportunities that are proven effective. For the ECHS Class of 2019, 34% of graduates earned a postsecondary credential. Moreover, 57% of graduates earned 15 or more college credits while in high school, enabling students achieve an important milestone associated with degree completion, setting ECHS students up for success as they continue their journey.

The purpose of the 2021–2023 ECHS Planning and Implementation Grant is to solicit grant applications from eligible applicants who, upon receipt of the grant, will engage in 29 months (February 15, 2021 to July 8, 2023) of ECHS model planning and implementation with support from the TEA selected technical assistance provider, to establish the foundational components of the ECHS program, as outlined in Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.908(b) and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §102.1091. Grantees who receive the 2021-2023 ECHS Planning and Implementation Grant will use the first 18 months (March 2021 to August 2022) planning to implement the design elements and requirements aligned to the 2020-21 ECHS Blueprint, and serve students in the 2022-2023 school year.

The ECHS program may be established as a whole-campus model, a small standalone campus, a school-within-a-school model, or other models as chosen by the campus and approved by TEA. Planning grant funds will be utilized to support campus needs for establishing the foundational implementation elements of the ECHS Program as codified in the 2020-21 ECHS Blueprint. Each grantee, with the support of the TEA technical assistance provider, will develop the following ECHS program components:

- implement ECHS school design and professional development to support successful expansion of dual credit opportunities

- demonstrate student recruitment of at-risk and economically disadvantaged students

- establish partnership agreements with colleges and universities,

- create an articulation agreement with a 4-year institution detailing how the associate degree and accrued credits could lead to a baccalaureate degree,

- create programs which provide a rigorous course of study with appropriate social and emotion support services, and a personalized learning environment, and

- develop appropriate opportunities to demonstrate college readiness for participating students at all grade levels.

Grantees are required to begin serving students in the ECHS school beginning in the 2022–2023 school year and to meet ECHS Blueprint design elements and outcome-based measures detailed in the 2020-21 ECHS Blueprint.

Grantees are also required to apply for ECHS designation in November 2021 when the designation application window opens to begin serving students in the 2022–2023 school year, as required by this grant. TEA will fund a limited number of each model for this grant (see the "Eligible Applicants" section).

More information on the ECHS model can be found at the TEA website for Early College High School.

Activities or initiatives by grantees in the remaining 11 months of the grant may include, but are not limited to: continue aligning practices to the 2020-21 ECHS Blueprint, continuation of collaborative cross-sector Leadership Teams to develop strategic priorities for the ECHS program, establishing systems for formal data review as well as the creation of data response plans for student interventions, strengthening student recruiting systems, increasing opportunities for students to master basic skills and prepare for more rigorous academic classes, reviewing scope and sequences of courses, building the program's capacity to offer college level courses, supporting students in enrollment and success in college classes that result in the student's earning an associate degree, an articulated agreement with a 4–year institution detailing how the associate degree and accrued credits could lead to a baccalaureate degree.

In addition, grantees will review current MOU agreements with college partners to ensure the following items are included (curriculum alignment, instructional materials, instructional calendar, courses of study, student enrollment and attendance, grading periods and policies, administration of statewide assessments), and to identify additional items that should be included in order to promote student success (e.g., joint professional development opportunities, sharing of cost of programs, data sharing agreements).

## Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division's Administering a Grant page.

The supplement, not supplant provision **applies** to this grant program.

## SMART Goal

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, SMART Goals, Additional SMART Goal Guidance from TEA, and Measurable Goals and Progress.

The SMART Goal identified for this grant should be consistent with the purpose of planning and development of design elements of an ECHS that will be implemented for the 2021-22 school year.

## Measurable Progress

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, SMART Goals, Additional SMART Goal Guidance from TEA, and Measurable Goals and Progress.

Benchmarks identified for Measurable Progress should align to the SMART goal and should pull directly from the "Benchmark Milestone" included in the Program Description that are specific to the ECHS  model. Applicant responses should indicate which quarter the Benchmark Milestones will be completed.

## Application Requirements and Assurances

This section describes the two types of requirements that applicants must address in the application (such as with a narrative description, an activity timeline, or a checklist) to be eligible to be considered for funding:

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)

- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

### Program-Specific Assurances

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Provisions and Assurances.

1. Required by statute: The ECHS campus will provide participating students with flexibility in class scheduling and academic mentoring.

2. Required by statute: The ECHS campus will be open enrollment. Enrollment decisions will not be based on state assessment scores, discipline, history, teacher recommendations, minimum grade point average (GPA) or any other criteria that create barriers for student enrollment.

3. Required by statute: The ECHS campus will allow participating students to complete high school and, on or before the fifth anniversary of the date of the student's first day of high school: receive both a high school diploma and either an associate degree or at least 60 credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree.

4. Required by statute: ECHS programming will be provided at no cost to participating students. The school district or charter shall pay tuition, fees, and required textbooks, to the extent those charges are not waived by the instititon of higher education.

5. Programmatic-Specific Assurance: The ECHS campus will implement the design elements included within the 6 benchmarks of the model's 2020-21 ECHS Blueprint and strive to fullfill the state standard for student success as measured by the outcomes-based measures.

### Statutory Requirements

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Statutory Requirements.

Per TEC §22.0834, any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding grant funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Fingerprinting Requirement.

1. The ECHS campus must establish recruitment and enrollment processes and requirements that will not exclude or discourage the enrollment of any of the subpopulations of at-risk students, including, but not limited to, students who are of limited English proficiency or who have failed a state administered assessment. **Describe the recruitment and enrollment plan. Include a general timeline and describe the specific activities planned to serve the target population.**

2. The ECHS campus must provide a course of student that enables participation students in grades 9-12 to earn a high school diploma, earn and associate degree or up to 60 college credit hours. **Describe the course of study/crosswalk that the school is planning to offer and how it expands upon current offerings. Include how the course of study will enable a student to combine high school courses and postsecondary courses and identify degrees/certificate/certifications to be earned. Describe how the postsecondary credentials earned meet local economic needs.**

3. The ECHS campus must enter into an articulation agreement with IHEs that are accredited by a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.25. The articulation agreement must provide a participating student access to postsecondary opportunities at the IHE and must address all items below: **Name the IHE and describe how the proposed program will meet the requirements for the ECHS partnership with the IHE.** a)Curriculum Alignment, b) Instructional Materials, c) Instructional Calendar, d) Courses of Study, e) Student Enrollment and Attendance, f) Grading Periods and Policies, and g) Administration of Statewide Assessment Instruments

**TEA Program Requirements**

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Program Requirements.

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

1. The ECHS campus must establish a Leadership Design Team to guide the campus to begin serving students in the ECHS and provide leadership for the campus regarding ECHS. Leadership Design team members are outlined in the ECHS Blueprint. **Describe those who will participate on the ECHS Leadership Team. Include a list of the individuals and their titles, along with how often the ECHS Leadership Team will meet, the dates of meetings that have already been held, any upcoming meetings, and agenda topics.**

2. The ECHS campus must develop wrap-around strategies and services involving multiple stakeholders (parents, teachers, counselors, community members, etc.) to strengthen both the academic and social/emotional skills necessary for high school and college readiness and to be successful in rigorous academic and work- based educational experiences. **Describe the current wrap-around strategies and services the campus is offering, as well as the additional strategies and services that are planned to support the ECHS.**

## Activities and Use of Funds

See the Administering a Grant page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

### Field Trips

Field trips may be funded under the grant program during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Field Trips will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Field Trips Justification form, refer to the Administering a Grant page.

### General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- Reasonable and necessary items for accomplishing the objectives of the ECHS program

- Materials and supplies for ECHS program

- Curriculum planning and development

- Teacher/faculty professional development

- Teacher credentialing specifically relating to identified dual credit courses that lead to the completion of an associate degree or up to 60 hours toward a baccalaureate degree

- Salary for a dedicated ECHS program director/administrator

- Salary for a counselor/college advisor

- Salaries for instructional staff

- Stipends for duties outside of the instructional day

- Stipends for duties outside of the academic year contract

- Costs associated with becoming a TSIA testing site

- Equipment necessary for implementation of identified credential(s) offered through ECHS program

- Day field trips for ECHS students to partner institutions of higher education

- Limited travel for Leadership Team to visit exemplary and best practice ECHS schools

- Convening of ECHS Leadership Team, including travel

- Supplies and materials for ECHS Leadership Team (excluding food, beverage, snacks)

### General Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

In general, refer to the Budgeting Cost Guidance Handbook on the Administering a Grant page for unallowable costs.

In addition, unallowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

- Out-of-state travel

- Travel costs for officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

- Hosting or sponsoring of conferences

- Cost of membership in any civic or community organization

- Tuition and course fees for students

- Instructional materials for students

- Overnight field trips for students

- Food, beverages, snacks

- Debt service (lease-purchase)

- Audit services for state-funded grants

- Advisory Council

## Project Evaluation and Modification

By submitting this application, the applicant agrees to comply with any evaluation requirements that may be established by TEA and agrees to submit the required evaluation reports in the format and time requested by TEA. TEA will collect and analyze relevant data from PEIMS if it is available.

Specific critical success factors and milestones will be developed in a manner determined appropriate by TEA.

## Performance Measures

The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance measures:

1. Data Report of projected student enrollment into the ECHS with percentage of demographics: students who are at- risk as defined by PEIMS (TEC 29.081), race/ethnicity, first-generation college students, English Learners, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.

2. Leadership Team members, meeting dates, and agendas (including attendance) posted on the school's website.

3. Enrollment Guidelines that follow the enrollment requirements outlined in the statutory requirements of this grant. Enrollment Guidelines should clearly document enrollment policies and practices to include admissions policies of performance-blind, open access systems that encourage and considers applications from all students or a weighted lottery that factors students who are at-risk as defined by the PEIMS (TEC §29.081) or who are part of the targeted subpopulations for ECHS.

4. Recruitment Plan that includes: marketing materials (in English/Spanish) and timelines.

5. Stakeholder Input methods used to obtain input about the implementation of the program from students, parents, community, postsecondary partners, with regular activities to educate students, parents, counselors, community, district staff and school board members.

6. Academic year signed and dated memorandum of understanding (MOU) and course articulation agreement with one or more college partners that fulfills the statutory requirements of this grant. The agreement must address:

- Curriculum alignment

- Instructional materials

- Instructional calendar

- Courses of study that lead to an associate degree or up to 60 hours of college credit toward a baccalaureate degree

- Student enrollment and attendance

- Grading periods and policies

- Administration of statewide assessments

- Data-sharing policies and procedures

7. Plan of wrap-around strategies and services to provide academic and social/emotional support for student success to include:

- Plan for academic mentoring of faculty and student supports for intervention and acceleration.

- Counseling, guidance and student advisory services for academic and social/emotional support.

- Social/emotional supports such as parent outreach, connections to social services when needed, and peer mentoring.

## Limits on Contracted Evaluators

When a grantee chooses, or is required under a grant, to hire a contracted evaluator, TEA believes that the evaluator must have the capability to remain independent and objective in carrying out the evaluation. "Independent and objective" implies that there is no influence or control, real or perceived, exerted on the evaluator by any person who is involved in the provision of program services. Therefore, the only way in which a contracted evaluator can be truly independent and objective is not to be involved in any manner with the provision of program services or activities. Otherwise, the evaluator is, at least in part, evaluating its own services.

In addition, TEA is aware that some grant writers develop and design the grant program, write the entire grant application, and then wish to evaluate the grant program. TEA also believes that this scenario poses a conflict of interest for the evaluator, in that the evaluator is evaluating the grant program that he or she designed, developed, and wrote. Again, it is not possible for the evaluator to function independently and objectively if the evaluator performed in this capacity. It is certainly acceptable for the grant writer to receive some information from a potential evaluator to include in the evaluation section of the grant application with regard to an appropriate

evaluation plan or design, but communication between the grant writer and evaluator should be limited to that specific topic.

Applicants should make every effort to ensure that contracted evaluators be independent and objective.

# Application Elements

This section describes the requirements and attachments that must be addressed in and included with the application.

## Notice of Intent to Apply

For competitive grants, prospective applicants are requested to submit the Notice of Intent to Apply (NOI) by the date specified in the Grant Timeline. The NOI provides helpful information that allows TEA staff to plan for the management of the applications and review processes. Failure to notify TEA of the intent to apply will *not* disqualify the applicant from applying for grant funds.

The NOI is published along with the RFA on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page.

## Reviewer Information Form

For every application submitted for a competitive grant, the applicant is required to submit the names of three individuals to serve as reviewers in the competitive review process for the grant program. For LEAs submitting multiple campus grant applications, the LEA must submit a minimum of three reviewers per campus application or a total of ten reviewers, whichever is less.

Individuals who are hired to prepare grant applications may not serve as reviewers, and their names should not be submitted. Applicants must notify the people whose names they submit that they may be asked by TEA to serve as reviewers.

Once reviewers are selected, they will receive detailed information about the review process. The competitive review for the grant program will take place during the time period given in the Grant Timeline.

The Reviewer Information Form is published along with the RFA on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. All applicants are required to complete the form and to submit it online on or before the date given in the Grant Timeline.

## Required Attachments

See the following section of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

- Required Program-Related Attachments

**Required Program-Related Attachments**

- **Attachment 1:**
  Document of Collaboration from a 2-year or 4-year institution of higher education that includes the commitment to develop one or more academic pathways which lead to an Associate Degree or earn up to 60 hours toward a baccalaureate degree. Institutions are encouraged to identify any Level 1 or Level 2 certificates that students may also earn as they work toward a degree program, and whether or not students will be expected to complete the Texas Core Curriculum before high school graduation. Institutions are encouraged to provide information regarding how they will ensure transferability and

applicability of college credits earned at their institution. **The Document of Collaboration from each institution is limited to one page. Applicants seeking partnerships with multiple institutions may upload multiple documents as Attachment 1A, Attachment 1B, etc.**

- **Attachment 2:**
  TEA's ECHS Crosswalk Template may be used by applicants seeking priority points. The template should be used to create a course equivalency crosswalk for grades 9-12 for each Associate Degree to be offered through the ECHS program and the corresponding Level 1 and Level 2 certificates which may be associated with the degree. This template can be found on the TEA Grants Opportunities page, posted with the other RFA documents for this grant. **The ECHS Crosswalk template is 1 page. Do not add additional pages.**

- **Attachment 3:**
  TEA's ECHS Academics Matrix for Student Supports and Services Template may be used by applicants seeking priority points. Applicants should identify and describe each type of student support and service that will be provided to ECHS students as they matriculate through the ECHS program. This template can be found on the TEA Grants Opportunities page, posted with the other RFA documents for this grant. **The ECHS Academics Matrix for Student Supports and Services Template may not exceed 2 pages.**

# Scoring and Review

This section provides information on the scoring and review of applications for competitive grants.

## Standard Review Criteria

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Standard Review Criteria.

## Specific Review Criteria (up to 30 points)

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Specific Review Criteria.

| Statutory or TEA Priority | Maximum Points |
|---|---|
| Quality of proposed IHE Partnership as described in **Statutory/Program Requirement #3.** | 10 |
| Strength of collaboration with college/university partner as evidenced in **Attachment #1**. | 10 |
| Development of academic pathway(s) (as required by statutory requirement #3) that leads to postsecondary credential(s) with college and/or university partner as evidenced in **Attachment #2** | 10 |
| **Total maximum number of grant-specific criteria points** | **30** |

## Priorities for Funding (up to 30 points)

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Priorities for Funding.

| Statutory or TEA Priority | Maximum Points |
|---|---|
| LEAs that are classified by TEA district type as rural. According to the TEA definition, a rural district has either:<br><br>a. An enrollment of between 300 and the median district enrollment for the state and an enrollment growth rate over the past five years of less than 20 percent; or<br><br>b. An enrollment of less than 300 students.<br><br>A list of schools by district type can be found at: https://tea.texas.gov/acctres/analyze/1617/district1617.html | 10 |
| Applicant includes a letter of support with evidence of collaboration for building stackable credentials with 2-year college partner to support associate degree completion as evidenced in **Attachment #1**. (maximum of one letter from 2-year institution no longer than one page worth 5 points) | 5 |
| Applicant includes a letter of support with evidence of collaboration for building stackable credentials which lead to a baccalaureate degree and the acceptance of credentials and college credits from the 2-year institution to the 4-year institution as evidenced in **Attachment #1.** (maximum of one letter from 4-year institution no longer than one page worth 5 points) | 5 |
| Applicant demonstrates plan to implement student supports and services which will be provided over Grades 9-12 for students participating in the ECHS program. Submit completed Academics Matrix template as **Attachment #3** (2 pages maximum worth 10 points) | 10 |
| **Total maximum number of priority points available.** | **30** |