



**2024-2025 Special Education Specialized Supports**  
**Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, October 2, 2023**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

This LOI application must be submitted via email to [loiapplications@tea.texas.gov](mailto: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, October 2, 2023**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from **July 8, 2024 - August 31, 2025**

Pre-award costs permitted from **Pre-award Costs Are Not Permitted**

**Required Attachments**

- Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)  
**(List any attachments required to be submitted with this application - limited to 10 pages)**

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization **ESC Region 11** CDN **220950** Campus **NA** ESC **11** UEI **HUPKFNH5JUF1**

Address **1451 South Cherry Lane** City **White Settlement** ZIP **76108** Vendor ID **1751246000**

Primary Contact **Shari King** Email **sking@esc11.net** Phone **817-740-7633**

Secondary Contact **Laura Weir** Email **lweir@esc11.net** Phone **817-740-3602**

**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 **Dr. Clyde W. Steelman, Jr.** Title **Executive Director**

Email **clydes@esc11.net** Phone **817-740-3630**

Signature  Date **09/29/2023**  
Clyde Steelman, Sep 29, 2023 16:06 CDT

**Shared Services Arrangements**

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

**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 agrees to all Provisions and Assurances as detailed on pp. 7-9 of the *2024-2025 Special Education Specialized Supports Program Guidelines* available on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) grant-specific page.

**Statutory/Program Requirements**

**1. Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel:** Partner with TEA to support the scope of work in this grant by employing a team of professionals who have a minimum of 5 years of experience overseeing and/or participating in the following areas of special education: services for students with significant cognitive disabilities and complex access needs, services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), visually impaired (VI), or deafblind (DB), assistive technology, and linking families to applicable agencies, including those who support students birth to 3 who are DHH, VI, or DB. **Provide a description of the qualifications key personnel in your organization have to fulfill the requirements of this grant and indicate how you will recruit qualified candidates if needed.**

Collectively, the ESC Region 11 (ESC 11) sensory support and complex access needs professionals have 135 years of experience serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), 32 years serving students who are blind or visually impaired (BVI), 84 years serving students who are deafblind (DB), and 90 years serving students with complex access needs. Staff members have extensive experience analyzing the needs of students, providing assistive technology (AT) training and support, selecting AT equipment, and working with a myriad of assistive technologies (AT). All current TxSSN and Texas CAN staff at ESC 11 have master’s level degrees in an education-related field, and two staff members have expertise and experience with project management. Additional certifications include Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS), Board of Evaluation for Interpreters (BEI) Master and Advanced Levels, T-TESS Appraiser, Texas Assessment of Sign Communication-ASL (TASC-ASL), Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) rater/trainer, Listening and Spoken Language Auditory Verbal Therapist (LSLS Cert AVT), and Active Learning. One employee has 14 years of experience as a Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD) Supervisor. Since the inception of the RDSPD Program Review process, four current ESC 11 employees with experience serving in RDSPDs have participated in multiple Program Reviews throughout Texas. One staff member is the recipient of the Joy Zabala Fellowship and will be presenting at the National Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) Conference. Team members have diverse instructional backgrounds across multiple birth-to-22 educational settings such as Head Start, ECSE, self-contained, inclusion, life skills, medically fragile, homebound, early intervention, transition, resource, general education, early intervention, elementary, middle, secondary, post-secondary, itinerant, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). ESC 11 staff serving students who are BVI, DB, DHH, and with complex access needs collaborate extensively with the ESC 11 Speech Language Pathologist, Early Childhood Special Education Specialist, and autism, behavior, dyslexia, and transition specialists, as well as experts in the fields of general education, administration, and technology. All staff members are experienced in creating professional development, presenting to audiences both in-person and virtually, incorporating adult learning styles, developing online courses, providing quality technical assistance, and coaching interpreters, teachers, and paraprofessionals. ESC 11 staff have presented at multiple local, state, and national conferences. The current team is robust, experienced, respected, and knowledgeable.

ESC 11 plans to collaborate with the highly qualified staff at ESC Region 3 who have over 20 years of experience supporting students with complex access and AT needs; therefore, three project managers (BVI, DHH, and CAN) will be tasked with meeting the needs of all statewide stakeholders. If needed, ESC 11 will recruit staff by continuing to partner with experts currently employed in other regions, networking with statewide and national organizations, posting jobs on national boards (EdWeek, CEC), using social media platforms as a recruitment tool (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook), partnering with IHEs and community and professional organizations, and networking with LEAs and other regional and statewide stakeholders. If additional ESC Region 11 personnel are needed to fulfill grant requirements, staff will be in place before July 8, 2024. Potential interview questions will focus on data-based decision-making, impactful data analysis, creating inclusive language-rich environments, best practices for adult learning, content-specific information, utilization of evidence-based research, and leadership development. Candidates will be asked to respond to a problem of practice and demonstrate their ability to provide effective instruction and implement coaching strategies. The essential qualifications of new staff will include a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience with students in the designated specialty area, successful experience in program development and training teachers and other adults, and experience in educational leadership (preferred.) To maintain the current and future staff, ESC 11 will fund mutually-designed, personalized professional development that is targeted and aligned with each area of expertise and will provide continuous improvement opportunities that foster employee satisfaction, collaboration, and a positive work environment.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

2. **Budget:** The costs detailed in the budget should demonstrate an exceptional plan inclusive of all aspects of the program, including personnel, materials, flow-through funds to various organizations and projects, and ongoing support. Additionally, the plan should detail how the program will utilize existing resources and systems. The budget should also address cost considerations for contingency plans. **Provide a description of how you will ensure funds are used with fidelity for activities related to services for students who are DHH, VI, and DB, have a significant cognitive disability and complex needs, and assistive technology.**

The proposed budget, totaling \$2,000,000, has been created as follows:

Payroll Costs (6100): Funding for Specialized Support Network consultants, one coordinator, and support staff, including temporary employees for the following TEA projects: the RDSPD Program Review, the Interpreter Mentor Project, and the Foundations for Literacy training/coaching initiative.

Professional and Contracted Services (6200): Funding for contracted services with ESC Region 3 staff who specialize in serving students with complex access and assistive technology needs, and funding for all TEA-designated, flow-through projects such as professional conferences, new teacher recruitment and training, tuition support, mental health initiatives, family involvement events, sign language development, and mentoring for interpreters working toward certification.

Supplies and Materials (6300): The overhead costs for materials include general supplies, technology, reference materials, computer software, websites, and supplies for LEAs and Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) events.

Other Operating Costs (6400): Travel for ESC 11 personnel to other ESCs and LEAs to provide ongoing support, instructional coaching, professional development, and monitoring; travel to RDSPDs across Texas for Program Reviews; stipends for cooperating Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI); a National Braille Association Membership; and facility and supply fees for BVI, DHH, and CAN outreach opportunities, meetings, and events.

Debt Service (6500) and Capital Outlay (6600): No funding is allocated for debt service or capital outlay.

ESC 11 will continue to provide ongoing network support by funding a portion of the Specialized Supports team members' salaries and benefits, providing a safe and supportive work environment, funding internal and external personalized professional development, and prioritizing networking with leadership at the other 20 ESCs in Texas.

ESC 11 will monitor the budget through monthly meetings with the ESC 11 Grants Administrator, the ESC 11 Business Office, and the members of the Specialized Supports Team. Staff members will be assigned to oversee specific projects and collect impact data internally and externally to submit to TEA quarterly.

ESC 11 will utilize existing resources and systems to ensure fidelity of implementation by maintaining relationships with professionals who serve students with specialized needs across the state, disseminating guidance documents, maintaining and updating current online courses vetted and approved by TEA, promoting the use of the new TEA SPED Supports website, continuing existing virtual coaching projects (Foundations for Literacy and the Interpreter Mentor Project), implementing new coaching projects as needed, networking with all 20 ESC professionals to assist with coaching and monitoring the fidelity of implementation across all 20 regions, and utilizing technology (Zoom, Teams, GoReact, etc.) to maximize the number of professionals in Texas who need training or who need 1:1 or small group coaching.

The proposed budget includes funding to organize, update, and coordinate the RDSPD Program Reviews. The Program Review teams will consist of one representative from the grantee, an RDSPD supervisor, a Program Review coordinator, and a TEA representative.

ESC 11 will address cost considerations for contingency plans through consistent, monthly monitoring of funding to ensure predicted costs are actual costs and reallocate funding, as needed, to projects that may become necessary throughout the fiscal year.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

**3. Summary of Training and Coaching Knowledge:** Partner with TEA to conduct and support the training of trainers (i.e., ESC representatives from every region) on a suite of synchronous and blended training options previously developed by TEA and former grantees, the Texas Complex Access Network and Texas Sensory Supports Network. The awardee will support those trained to ensure fidelity of implementation when turning around that training and will provide training and oversight for the coaching component. There may be opportunities to develop additional resources in these areas as the need arises. **Provide a description of your knowledge of and experience with the trainings developed by these sources and your plan to address any gaps you may have. Include specific details for how you will support trainers and ensure fidelity of implementation of the trainers and the trainees, citing evidence of previous training and coaching success.**

The current ESC 11 staff have completed the TEA NCIS coaching training and have extensive experience providing training and coaching opportunities for professionals who serve students who are BVI, DHH, DB, and who have complex access needs, as well as those using assistive technology (AT). ESC 11 staff will continue to offer learning opportunities to develop coaching knowledge and skills. The following are examples: Best Practices in Early Intervention for BVI and DHH, online courses; TOTs for selected TODHHs, TVIs, and COMS in Texas to provide local workshops on Early Intervention services; Foundations for Literacy training (DHH) including 1:1 instructional coaching; the Interpreter Mentor Project (1:1 coaching for sign language interpreters working toward certification); Active Learning coaching; and TXCAN IEP Quality and Rigor training and coaching. ESC 11 plans to contract with ESC Region 3 to facilitate and maintain the multiple online courses, guidance documents, and videos available for professionals serving students with complex access and AT needs. ESC 11 staff will emphasize the importance of ECC events, plan and conduct ECC events, attend ECC events throughout Texas, educate parents and professionals on the components of the ECCs for students who are DHH and BVI, and promote the use of and benefit of AT to parents, students, stakeholders, and professionals through the continued development and execution of transition fairs (in-person and virtual); the Navigating Life for Students who are DHH curriculum; Imagination Texas, a fine arts weekend for Texas high school students who are DHH; Camp Rock On (BVI); Exploring Art Through the Senses (BVI); Technology Olympics (BVI); and Camp Abilities (BVI). Currently, not all ESCs offer ECC events; therefore, creating a training or guidance document for LEAs and ESCs to clarify the importance of ECC events is needed. Team members will monitor the fidelity of implementation by submitting quarterly data from each training, event, and coaching session, and all subsequent steps will be based on the examination of gathered data to determine additional growth opportunities. Using evaluation data to inform modifications and adjustments allows the program to be adapted and improved, leading to greater effectiveness and sustainability in the long run.

Maintaining existing partnerships with HHSC ECI, Texas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (TEHDI), the Statewide Outreach Center (SOC) Intervention Care Coordination, TSBVI Outreach, Statewide Orientation and Mobility Association (SWOMA), Learning Forward, DeafBlind Symposium, Region 10 LID Academy, TXCAN Summer Teacher Institute, TXCAN Conference, the Texas Workforce Commission (Project Dream), Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth, and the Assistive Technology Industry Association are vital to the success of the grant. The ESC 11 team will continue to leverage the professional skills and knowledge of existing staff and ESC Region 3 staff to create resource documents on the topics of low-tech, mid-tech, and high-tech AT suggestions for children who have complex access needs or are DHH, BVI, or DB. We will continue to organize quarterly AT meetings around the state, maintain the ATIA state subscription, maintain the AT tool, attend AT conferences (TTAP, ATIC, & CSUN), and collaborate with other TEA grantees, as needed, including the SLP network to provide AT support in all 20 regions. ESC 11 staff will continue to partner with TEA on the suite of activities as mentioned above, support the maintenance of the new TEA SPED Support website, and create a framework for TOT in-person, virtual, and hybrid trainings and coaching opportunities (synchronous and asynchronous). A data dashboard will be developed and refined to capture TOT metrics and resource usage data.

ESC 11 will ensure implementation fidelity by providing virtual and in-person instructional coaching support and technical assistance, hosting quarterly virtual support groups, and offering recorded, asynchronous, research-based webinars that reinforce learning and provide opportunities to expand learning. ESC 11, in partnership with TEA, will use Qualtrics data to develop a coaching framework and template similar to other network coaching systems to oversee coaching components. Any gaps in the knowledge of ESC 11 staff will be identified using the TEA statewide needs assessment, focus groups, and dialogue opportunities to determine topics for future workshops, instruction, guidance documents, and technical assistance and mitigated by connecting with outside stakeholders such as IHEs, LEAs, community employers, and disability groups as well as professionals at all 20 ESCs. Previous successes in these areas are evidenced through the quarterly accountability metrics reported to TEA, increased applicants for and certifications as a result of the Interpreter Mentor Project, the thousands of subscribers to ESC 3's TXCAN newsletter, and the increased number of people trained to use Active Learning Strategies.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

4. **Outreach and Scaling:** Partner with TEA to scale existing resources and trainings to all LEAs in the state and ensure fidelity of implementation by those trained. This is critical to the success of this grant. Texas has about 400,000 educational professionals working in LEAs, so scaling training statewide and ensuring the training positively affects educator practice can be daunting. **Provide a description of potential outreach and scaling plans that have worked for you in the past. Explain how these plans can be generalized to scaling across the entire state of Texas and identify any barriers you foresee.**

Reaching professionals working in LEAs statewide requires creativity, flexibility, collaboration, and resourcefulness. The current ESC 11 staff have extensive experience creating synchronous and asynchronous coursework as well as public-facing guidance documents for professionals serving all ages of students who are BVI, DB, DHH, or who have complex and assistive technology (AT) needs. Partnerships with professionals are currently in place and robust, yet nurturing these partnerships demands continuous networking, relationship-building, re-imagining, and problem-solving. Currently, the ESC 11 staff partners with TEA to meet the needs of stakeholders statewide by promoting the new Texas SPED Supports website; creating and distributing guidance documents on a variety of subjects related to students needing specialized supports; hosting quarterly, virtual networking meetings; creating and facilitating online, asynchronous courses that professionals' complete at their convenience; presenting virtual workshops; networking with state organizations (Heath and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Texas Workforce Commission, etc.) and disability organizations (Texas Hands and Voices, Lighthouse for the Blind); joining cluster meetings in partnership with ESCs statewide; and sharing information through newsletters, email, and the Community of Practice. Accomplishing all of the above at a statewide level necessitates disseminating information via multiple means (online, virtual, in-person, printed) and at various times (asynchronous, synchronous, during school hours, after school hours, and on weekends).

The ESC 11 team has found that monitoring implementation fidelity and integration into current instructional practices is best done through 1:1 and small-group coaching. Working with LEA leaders state-wide and modeling the use of the TEA-approved TXCAN FOI coaching rubric would allow the team to build capacity across the state while expanding the availability of coaching opportunities for any teacher serving students who need specialized support. Embedding opportunities for refreshers and collaboration through virtual office hours for the network staff and encouraging office hours in regional offices and local LEAs would provide coaching at the macro and micro levels. Offering these opportunities consistently and at regularly scheduled times enables educators statewide to ask questions, troubleshoot situations, collaborate with other professionals, and celebrate successes while allowing the Specialized Supports team an opportunity to deliver an array of technical assistance.

Time is a precious commodity for educational professionals; therefore, finding or making time to participate in professional development can be a barrier. The services provided to all stakeholders must be well-researched, current, professional, helpful, and of the highest quality. Networking with campus, district, program administrators, and consultants at all 20 ESCs will help identify professionals statewide who would benefit from additional learning and follow-up coaching. These connections would also foster mutually beneficial interactions between experienced and less-experienced professionals.

ESC 11 has demonstrated outreach and scaling successfully through the following projects: Interpreter Mentor Project (applications have increased every year); Engage newsletter (reaches between 1000 – 1200 professionals in Texas each month); CAN Connection newsletter (reaches between 200-250 professionals each month); 'Terp Talks for sign language interpreters; online, virtual, and in-person professional development opportunities; the comprehensive RDSPD Program Review process; virtual networking meetings; the creation of guidance documents and informational videos for parents and professionals; virtual and in-person instructional coaching; and partnerships with non-profit organizations, institutes of higher learning, and community organizations to fund Expanded Core Curriculum events and reach more students and families. ESC 11 plans to partner with ESC Region 3 to capitalize on their established networks, including the 4,264 subscribers to their TXCAN newsletter.

**Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

4. **Additional Requirements:** Additional requirements of the grant include assisting with the logistics and facilitation of a variety of stakeholder engagements (e.g., conferences, focus groups, advisory groups, communities of practice, professional learning communities, ESC representative quarterly meetings); disseminating information as requested by TEA; data collection, analysis, and reporting; attending weekly or bi-weekly check-in meetings with TEA program staff; drafting reports; providing technical assistance to ESCs, LEAs, and families; participating in collaborative activities with other TEA special education grants; creating resources and trainings based on needs assessment activities; and updating existing resources as needed based on changes in federal and state law or commissioner's rules. **Provide a description of your experience with activities similar to the additional requirements (i.e., stakeholder engagement, technical assistance, collaboration with other organizations, resource development, data collection, analysis, and reporting) of this grant, including how to navigate emerging needs of the field within the parameters of the grant.**

ESC 11 staff have successfully navigated stakeholder engagements by facilitating the quarterly Deaf Education Administrators and Leaders (DEAL) Meetings and quarterly meetings with agencies serving BVI students (e.g., Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), Texas Tech University, and Stephen F. Austin University); participating on statewide committees and in statewide meetings (e.g., Pearson Accessibility Meetings, EdAction, Texas Association of Parents and Educators of the Deaf (TAPED), Board of Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI), Texas Society of Interpreters for the Deaf (TSID), Statewide Conference on the Education of the Deaf (SWCED), SELA Committee, SWOMA); providing flow-through funding to various stakeholders (e.g., TAPED, TSID, SWCED); responding promptly to statewide requests for technical assistance with information supported by legal statute found in the Legal Framework, TEA guidance documents, and/or information from the U.S. Department of Education, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, and other state and federal supporting documents; and working at and funding camps and Expanded Core Curriculum events for students who are BVI, DB, and DHH. Emerging and urgent needs such as teacher recruitment, retention, and support; serving students with multiple disabilities; and equipping professionals with strategies and resources to better understand and manage the mental health needs of students with disabilities are addressed through collaboration with qualified and certified professionals, both internal and external, to provide professional development and 1:1 or small group coaching while maintaining a balanced budget.

ESC 11 staff collects, analyzes, and reports performance data by conducting annual needs assessments and submitting attendance and participation data on a variety of professional development (e.g., Foundations for Literacy training and coaching, Signing Exact English Skillshop, Communication Skills Workshops, TXCAN workshops and videos), coaching, and technical assistance. Evidence of success in 2022-2023 includes a 95% Improvement in sign language skills based on the Sign Language Proficiency Interview for participants in the 2022-2023 Interpreter Mentor Project, and a total of 38 TODHHs, TVIs, and COMS across Texas who successfully completed the Best Practices in Early Intervention workshops. Outreach to families is provided in cooperation with LEAs, RDSPDs, TAPED, Texas Hands and Voices, the Statewide Outreach Center at Texas School for the Deaf, TWC, HHSC, ECI, TEHDI, TSBVI Outreach, and the Texas DeafBlind Project. Collaboration with other TEA special education grants and networks is a priority, including collaboration with Child Find, Evaluation, and ARD Support Network, Texas CAN Network, TSLAT Network, Inclusion Network, TxSSN, and Transition Network. Ensuring those serving students who are BVI, DB, DHH, and those who have complex access or AT needs are aware of the services provided by other networks is critical.

ESC 11 will ensure the quality of all deliverables and public-facing resources through multiple peer reviews prior to the submission of documents and presentations, continuous communication with TEA staff to ensure deliverables are congruent with expectations and desired outcomes, effective use of the TEA quality assurance checklist and brand book, and collaboration with instructional designers when building Canvas courses to ensure engaging, meaningful materials are being created. Examples of ESC 11's past successes include partnerships with other ESCs to offer discipline-specific conferences (e.g., ICE Conference, Assessment Conference, Transition Conference) and interdepartmental conferences (e.g., Teaching and Learning, Administration Leadership and Support, Federal Programs). ESC 11 staff have been invited to speak at state hearings, the state Autism conference, institutes of higher learning, and ATIA. ESC 11 will maintain a balanced budget while navigating the emerging needs of stakeholders by partnering with community agencies to participate in a variety of parent and community events and by collaborating with TEA and all 20 ESCs through regular network meetings to build capacity across the state, especially with ESC contacts who are responsible for BVI, DB, and DHH services and services for students with complex access needs but who do not have the certifications, experience, or training to provide effective technical assistance and professional development. Ensuring the staff on all 20 ESCs are equipped to provide services to professionals serving students with specialized needs and their families will increase the outreach and scaling of this work while also using funding more efficiently.

**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"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>



**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**