



**2022-2023 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant**  
**Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, November 16, 2022**

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.

Application stamp-in date and time

TEA must receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, November 16, 2022**.

Grant period from

Pre-award costs permitted from

**Required Attachments**

- 1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)

See the Program Guidelines for for additional attachment information.

**Select Focus Area (Applicants May Select One or Both Focus Areas)**

- Focus Area 1: Career and Technical Education Course
- Focus Area 2: Work-Based Learning Experiences

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization  CDN  Campus  ESC  UEI

Address  City  ZIP  Vendor ID

Primary Contact  Email  Phone

Secondary Contact  Email  Phone

**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  Title

Email  Phone

Signature  Date

**Shared Services Arrangements**

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are permitted for this grant. **Check the box below if applying as fiscal agent.**

- The LEA or ESC submitting this application is the fiscal agent of a planned SSA. All participating agencies will enter into a written SSA agreement describing the fiscal agent and SSA member responsibilities. All participants understand that the "Shared Services Arrangement Attachment" must be completed and signed by all SSA members, and submitted to TEA before the NOGA is issued.

**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 provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this LOI will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.
2. The applicant provides assurance that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.
3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2022-2023 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant Program Guidelines.
4. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2022-2023 Summer Career and Technical Education Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.
5. The applicant provides assurance that curriculum will be appropriately aligned to regional labor market supported CTE programs of study.
6. The applicant provides assurance to provide data to TEA on student completion of courses through a special collection process run by TEA.
7. The applicant assures that any Electronic Information Resources (EIR) produced as part of this agreement will comply with the State of Texas Accessibility requirements as specified in 1 TAC 206, 1 TAC Chapter 213, Federal Section 508 standards, and the WCAG 2.0 AA Accessibility Guidelines.

**Summary of Program (Focus Area 1)**

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

N/A

**Summary of Program (Focus Area 2)**

Provide an overview of the program to be implemented with grant funds. Include the overall mission and specific needs of the organization. Describe how the program will address the mission and needs.

Grant funds will allow Merkel ISD to implement a work-based learning program (student internships) in partnership with Trent ISD. We will serve 20 students through the program, targeting enrollment of incoming 11th and 12th grade students from both Trent ISD and Merkel ISD. Merkel is a small town on the I-20 corridor approximately 18 miles west of Abilene. Business and industry is generally concentrated in Abilene so providing work-based learning experiences in Merkel can be a challenge. Summer CTE Grant funds will help us create opportunities which may not be available during the school year due to travel and time limitations. Merkel ISD's mission is to engage and empower students to meet challenges, demonstrate resilience, and achieve excellence. One of our top goals is to connect with the community and business partners to produce well rounded students who are marketable, informed, knowledgeable and prepared to enter the workforce. This summer program closely aligns to our mission and will provide a valuable experience that improves the college, career, and military readiness of our students.

Our proposed plan is to facilitate work-based learning opportunities (internships) and Project-Based Research coursework (PEIMS Service ID# 12701500) for 20 Merkel ISD and Trent ISD high school students. Students will be placed as interns at local businesses and Merkel ISD offices. While working at their internship placements, students will meet as a class one day per week to discuss employability skills and complete coursework for the Project-Based Research course. During the class, students will each choose an issue related to their internship placement's industry. The students will conduct research regarding their chosen issue and synthesize their findings and possible recommendations in a research paper and formal presentation.

Our goal is to expose students to a full-time work schedule as part of this experience. Throughout the program, interns will work as close to full-time as possible (32-40 hours a week). We believe this is an important aspect of the program to give students a glimpse into full time working conditions. Specific internship placements will be coordinated with business partners including Taylor Electric, Taylor Telecom, Elliott Air Conditioning, Visualutions, Kyle Paul Construction, the City of Merkel, Great State Apparel, and the Merkel ISD business, IT, and maintenance offices.

**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel (Focus Area 1)**

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

Title and Responsibilities of Position	Required Qualifications and Experience
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A

**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel (Focus Area 2)**

Outline the required qualifications and experience for primary project personnel and any external consultants projected to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the program. Include whether the position is existing or proposed.

Title and Responsibilities of Position	Required Qualifications and Experience
CTE Teacher (Heather O'Malley) will serve as lead Project-Based Research Teacher and internship supervisor (existing position)	CTE teacher with experience planning and monitoring work-based learning experiences
Internship Supervisors, will supervise student interns and communicate with the CTE Teacher as needed (existing positions at business partners)	Employees of business partners; Ability to mentor and supervise student interns
Grant Manager (Aimee Allen) will oversee grant implementation, including activities and expenditures (existing position)	Experience implementing and monitoring state grant programs; strong understanding of school and program goals
Superintendent (Joseph O'Malley), will coordinate financial aspects of grant activities (existing position)	Experience leading district-wide programs; experience managing grant-funded programs
External Consultant (Lauren Dwiggins) will assist with coordination of summer activities, data collection, analysis, and reporting (grant funded)	Experience coordinating/facilitating work-based learning experiences for students; experience collecting and analyzing data for state and federal grant programs

**Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (Focus Area 1)**

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

N/A

**Goals, Objectives, and Strategies (Focus Area 2)**

Describe the major goals/objectives of the proposed program. What activities/strategies will be implemented to meet those goals/objectives?

Grant funds will be utilized to plan and implement an internship program for students from Merkel ISD and Trent ISD. We aim to serve 20 students (targeting enrollment of incoming 11th-12th grade students) by coordinating and offering paid internships with Merkel ISD and several business partners (Taylor Electric, Taylor Telecom, Elliott Air Conditioning, Visualutions, Kyle Paul Construction, the City of Merkel, Great State Apparel). Our goal is for all 20 students (100%) to complete their internship placement (estimated to be 90-125 hours depending on the placement), pass and earn credit for Project-Based Research (PEIMS Service ID# 12701500), and demonstrate growth in employability skills (as measured by Internship Training Plans). A big-picture objective is to generate additional buy-in from our community to showcase our growing and improving Career and Technical Education programs. The summer internship program is a strategy which we believe will help us strengthen existing partnerships and develop new partnerships with businesses aligned to high-wage, in-demand career pathways in our region.

We will support the program by having a designated staff member (CTE Teacher) lead the course and internship facilitation. The teacher will work with the grant manager to liaise with the business partners to monitor students, identify student strengths, and troubleshoot any issues which arise. To prepare students for the internships, the staff members will mentor students regarding workplace expectations and employability skills. We will support the teacher by providing time for mentoring alongside the Project-Based Research class time. We will also contract with a technical assistance provider, CareerCraft, to help support the work-based learning aspect of the program (internship design) and data analysis/reporting to measure program effectiveness through Internship Readiness Assessments/ Training Plan development. Customized training plans will drive our determination of student outcomes and student growth in both technical and soft skills.

**Performance and Evaluation Measures (Focus Area 1)**

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

N/A

**Performance and Evaluation Measures (Focus Area 2)**

Describe the performance measures identified for this program which are related to student outcomes and are consistent with the purpose of the program. Include the tools used to measure performance, as well as the processes that will be used to ensure the effectiveness of project objectives and strategies.

The Merkel ISD team will collect data on the demographics of students who enroll in, participate in, and complete the summer internship program, including grade level, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged status, as well as whether they have been identified as in need of special education services. We will also monitor and report to TEA: a list of business/industry partners offering work-based learning to students through this grant program, total and average hours worked by students in the program, total and average hourly earnings of students in the program, training plans for each student in the program, partnership agreements for each business partner involved in the program, and a recognition of skills/growth for each student in the program. All applicable data will be reported in the PEIMS Fall Submission. Other data and artifacts (such as training plans) will be maintained locally and reported to TEA upon request. We will utilize other data collected for TSDS PEIMS to provide analysis numbers for district leadership and each of our school boards. Our goal is for all 20 students (100%) to complete their internship placement (estimated to be 90-125 hours depending on the placement), pass and earn credit for Project-Based Research (PEIMS Service ID# 12701500), and demonstrate a growth in employability skills (as measured by Internship Training Plans) by September 30, 2023. The teacher will utilize formative assessments to gauge the workplace readiness of students. Competency-based evaluations will be utilized as part of the training plan to record student ability and competency to perform various tasks while on the job. Customized internship training plans will drive our determination of student outcomes and student growth in both technical and soft skills over the course of the internship. The internship supervisors will meet weekly with each intern to identify areas of strength and areas where the intern requires additional support and coaching. Feedback will be gathered from internship supervisors at Taylor Electric, Taylor Telecom, Elliott Air Conditioning, Visualutions, Kyle Paul Construction, the City of Merkel, Great State Apparel, and Merkel ISD to evaluate student behavior and performance and identify areas for improvement. Data collected throughout the program will be harnessed to ultimately inform improvements in our CTE instruction and evaluate feasibility of offering student internships in the future.

**Budget Narrative (Focus Area 1)**

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

N/A

**Budget Narrative (Focus Area 2)**

Describe how the proposed budget will meet the needs and goals of the program, including for staffing, supplies and materials, contracts, travel, etc. If applicable, include a high-level snapshot of funds currently allocated to similar programs. Include a short narrative describing how adjustments will be made in the future to meet needs.

Merkel ISD does not currently offer summer work-based learning opportunities. During the school year, work-based learning opportunities are largely offered through Career Preparation I and II courses. Grant funds will allow us the opportunity to support students during the summer months. This program will help our district meet our goal of preparing students for college, a career, or the military. The student internships will allow students to explore potential careers and prepare for future careers by gaining employability skills. Should the program be successful, we hope to identify future funding sources to sustainably offer a summer internship program.

Our proposed budget has been developed to maximize our impact in a short amount of time. Extra duty pay has been allocated to pay for a lead teacher (CTE teacher, who will teach Project-Based Research and lead internship facilitation), a grant manager (who will oversee grant activities and expenditures), and a payroll manager (who will be responsible for paying the students). Funds have been allocated to pay student interns a stipend of \$1,650 each (estimated average of \$15 per hour), as we anticipate interns working between 90-125 hours during the summer program. A small portion of the grant will be used to pay a contractor, CareerCraft, for assistance with internship design, data collection, analysis, and reporting associated with the grant. Funds have also been allocated for the procurement of shirts (t-shirts and/or polo shirts) for the interns to wear as a way of distinguishing them as interns at their worksites. Finally, a small amount of funds have been allocated to the Other Operating Costs budget category primarily to cover any small, miscellaneous expenses which arise during the program. We plan to use local funds and resources to provide student transportation. A small amount has been allocated for indirect costs to the district.

**Program Requirements**

1a. Needs Assessment (Focus Area 1)

N/A

1b. Needs Assessment (Focus Area 2)

Through this grant funding, we will be able to serve students who may not be able to participate in work-based learning experiences during the traditional school year due to scheduling constraints and other obligations and commitments. Over 55% of our students are economically disadvantaged and 18% of our students receive special education services. This grant program is greatly needed to provide Merkel students with meaningful, high-quality student internships that they would not otherwise be able to have. It is important to our community that students work an internship schedule of 32-40 hours a week so that students can have the experience of working full time and all that it requires. Merkel ISD is unable to offer this type of internship program during the school year because most students do not have availability in their schedules to work during the school day. Furthermore, most students have a full load of academic, elective and extracurricular commitments during the school year, so working during the year is difficult. This summer internship will allow students to solely focus on their internship placement, rather than competing priorities that may cause their academics to suffer.

Additionally, teacher availability is a limitation during the school year. Because we are a small, rural school district, our teachers' schedules are full. We have limited staff and recently changed to a 4-day instructional week during the school year. This means our teachers have less time for instruction during the year and we must be efficient with the time available. The summer program will allow one of our CTE teachers to solely focus on the program and course, thus providing a more meaningful experience for students.



**Program Requirements, cont'd.**

**2. Focus Area 1:** Applicants must specify which program(s) of study and the CTE course(s) in the program(s) of study that will be offered (see <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/college-career-and-military-prep/career-and-technical-education/cte-programs-of-study> for a list of the approved statewide programs of study). Include the number of students who be engaged and supported in this focus area.

N/A

**3. Focus Area 2:** Applicants must specify business and industry partners who will be involved in the program. Additionally, specify the work-based learning model(s) which will be utilized and the number of students who will be engaged and supported.

Merkel ISD will utilize paid internships as the primary work-based learning model for our proposed summer program. The program will serve 20 students (targeting enrollment of incoming 11th and 12th grade students) from Merkel ISD and Trent ISD. Students will also take Project-Based Research (PEIMS Service ID# 12701500) as a summer course. While working at their internship placements, students will meet as a class one day per week to discuss employability skills and complete coursework for the Project-Based Research course. During the class, students will each choose an issue related to their internship placement's industry. The students will conduct research regarding their chosen issue and synthesize their findings and possible recommendations in a research paper and formal presentation. Customized internship training plans will be utilized for each of the interns to create scaffolded learning opportunities throughout the program as well as to document competency on specified tasks. Specific internship placements will be coordinated with business partners including Taylor Electric, Taylor Telecom, Elliott Air Conditioning, Visualutions, Kyle Paul Construction, the City of Merkel, Great State Apparel, and the Merkel ISD business, IT, and maintenance offices. Internships will be aligned with high-wage, in-demand industries/career pathways in our region. Most internship opportunities will directly align with Merkel ISD's CTE programs, including Design and Multimedia Arts (Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications); Early Learning (Education and Training); Teaching and Training (Education and Training); Carpentry (Architecture and Construction); and Family and Community Service (Human Services). We believe these experiences will help our students develop valuable employability skills and experience while gaining awareness of career possibilities for their lives. We believe these activities will also allow students to gain understanding of workplace responsibilities and settings necessary for long-term, successful employment.

**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**