



**2023 -2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program  
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11:59 p.m. CT, April 24, 2023**

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation

**GAA, Article III, Rider 40, 87th Texas Legislature**

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, April 24, 2023**.

Application stamp-in date and time

Grant period from

**August 1, 2023-April 30, 2025**

Pre-award costs permitted from

the award announcement date to the grant start date

**Required Attachments**

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. Signed Letter of Commitment or MOU
3. Letter from EPP Partner(s)

**Please the program guidelines for further details on the required attachments.**

**Amendment Number**

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

**Applicant Information**

Organization YES Prep Public Schools, Inc

CDN 101845

ESC IV

UEI 945379571

Address 5455 South Loop East

City Houston

ZIP 7033

Vendor ID 17603835

Primary Contact Ruth Yonamine Bobba

Email ruth.yonaminebobba@yesprep.org

Phone 713-842-5540

Secondary Contact Kristi Honore

Email kristi.honore@yesprep.org

Phone 713-842-5554

**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 Mark DiBella

Title CEO

Email markdibella@yesprep.org

Phone 713-967-8840

Signature Mark DiBella

Digitally signed by Mark DiBella  
Date: 2023.04.24 17:30:16 -05'00'

Date 04-24-2023

**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 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.
- 2. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program Requirements and Program-Specific Assurances as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program Program Guidelines.
- 3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2023-2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

**Program Priority Requirement**

For districts/charters that are or have engaged in an ESF diagnostic process during or before the 2022-2023 school year, please provide the year the district went through the diagnostic and the priority focus area in the space below.

N/A

**Summary of Program**

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.

YES Prep Public Schools (YES Prep) is an open enrollment public charter school system that exists to give children in Houston’s underserved communities access to high-quality education that will equip them for success in college and in life. Our vision is that children in Houston will have equitable access to a public school that delivers excellent, college-ready education. U.S. News & World Report ranked all 10 qualifying secondary campuses in the top 12% of the best high schools in the nation.

At the heart of our success model are our teachers. Despite nationwide teacher shortages, we have oscillated between 98 & 99% staffed. Our Talent team is doing an incredible job creating partnerships and working on the teacher pipeline. 91% of our instructional vacancies are filled within 30 days of posting. We streamlined our onboarding process to ensure staff are First Day Ready fast. Our teachers receive classroom observation and coaching to help them develop and grow.

In the past, YES Prep has operated secondary campuses. After realizing that our students are coming to our classrooms two to three years behind grade level, we decided to expand our offerings to the elementary level. In 2020, YES Prep opened its first two elementary schools. We will continue our expansion until we reach 11 elementary schools, adding greatly to our need to attract and retain high quality instructional staff, particularly in the high need areas of special education, bilingual education, and middle-level math and English on K-12 campuses.

YES Prep began a partnership with Texas Tech University (TTU)’s EPP, Tech Teach Across Texas, with the first cohort of clinical placements in the 22-23 school year. This pipeline started with 12 Teacher Candidates and will graduate our first group of TCs in August of 2023, providing high quality, certified teachers in our high need areas.

During the implementation of the TTU pipeline, we discovered current YES Prep Teacher Assistants who wanted to complete their Associate of Arts in Teaching or were already enrolled in a few community college courses. However, some of them were unable to complete their AAT, or to take the remaining classes to fulfill the teaching courses to be eligible to enroll in our existing TTU pipeline because they lacked the financial resources. Being awarded this grant would allow YES Prep to create a pathway for our Teaching Assistants who want to become future YES Prep teachers YES Prep will expand the partnership with TTU creating a new teacher pipeline by financially supporting our Teacher Assistants in completion of their Bachelor’s degree, in addition to a full-year clinical placement on our campuses, and full teacher certification in Bilingual Education, Special Education, or 4-8 Math.

**Qualifications and Experience for Key Personnel**

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
Kristi Honore, Ed.D. Director of Recruitment and Selection YES Prep Public Schools	Current YES Prep Talent Leader Certified Principal and Superintendent; Certified Teacher Special Education and ELAR; Secondary Special Education Program Specialist; Campus Leader
Wendy Nash, Ed.D. Director of Elementary and Home Office Staffing YES Prep Public Schools	Current YES Prep Talent Leader Certified Texas Teacher and Principal; Master Teacher; Coach; Campus Leader
Casey Story, Ed.D. Texas Tech Site Coordinator YES Prep Public Schools	Current YES Prep Position, projected to start June 2023

**Goals, Objectives, and Strategies**

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

The goal of the proposed program is to create a new pipeline that will increase the number of Texas Tech Teacher Candidates by creating an educational pathway to Texas Tech University for our Teacher Assistants who want to be future YES Prep teachers.

Strategies-

With the assistance of Technical Assistance provided by TEA, YES Prep and TTU will collaborate in the design of the strategic staffing model that will focus on Teacher Assistants. Once the program is designed, we will implement the strategic staffing model first to our current Teacher Assistants and then proceed to attract additional Teacher Assistants. For this, we will need to increase district partnerships with three local community colleges and support candidates financially in completion of their AAT. Then, Teacher Assistants will enroll in Tech Teach Across Texas with Texas Tech University. Candidates receive priority hiring as teachers at YES Prep in the Spring semester before graduation.

**Performance and Evaluation Measures**

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.

By the end of year one we will design a strategic program plan outlining implementation of the program, listing benchmarks to monitor progress, selecting five campuses to partner with, and identifying Teacher Assistants who are currently in progress for completion of their Associate of Arts degree. We will enroll 12 Teacher Assistants in the strategic staffing program by the end of year one.

By the end of year two we will have implemented the planned program to support the associate degree completion of 80% of participating Teacher Assistants in preparation for their enrollment in Tech Teach Across Texas to expand our pipeline by 10 additional Teacher Candidates.

**Budget Narrative**

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.

The proposed budget of \$80,000 over the course of two years will meet the needs and goals of the program by co-funding the program manager for our Strategic Staffing partnership with TTU. In addition, YES Prep is budgeting mileage as the operation cost that is required to (1) attend the required face-to-face meetings described in the program guidelines and (2) attend meetings and visit campuses as necessary to design and implement the strategic staffing model. The budget was developed in accordance with TEA’s General and Fiscal Guidelines, Program Guidelines, Guidelines related to Specific Costs, and YES Prep district policies.

**Statutory/Program Requirements**

**1. Description of partnership foundations:** Applicants may have one or more EPP partners on the 2022 Vetted Teacher Residency Program List (link located on TEA Grant Opportunities page). Please list your partner(s) and the following partnership foundations information:

- How many years have you been engaged in a residency partnership?
- How many residents have you placed each year of that partnership?
- Describe your practices for shared governance, or the review of residency program data to inform shared decision-making about teacher candidate and mentor teacher supports. How often do you meet with your partners to review this data? As a partnership, how do you manage follow-up and response to data?
- Please describe any other key features of your partnership's progress toward building a residency program.

YES Prep has been engaged in a residency partnership with Texas Tech University for one year. In the first cohort, we placed 12 teacher candidates in clinical placement. Of those 12, 10 of those have been hired or committed to returning to our classrooms in the 23-24 school year. YES Prep Talent leadership meets with Texas Tech University leadership every other month formally for governance meetings but is in contact regarding progress of Teacher Candidates as needed. The YES Prep Site Coordinator is trained and supported primarily through Texas Tech program leadership and will be attending US Prep training in summer of 2023. During the 22-23 school year, Talent Leadership.

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

**2. Description of goals for paid teacher residencies and strategic staffing models:** After reviewing the Program Elements section beginning on page 7, describe you and your EPP partner's existing or proposed shared goal for teacher resident placement. How will paid teacher residencies support your broader talent strategy as a component of your overall strategic plan and goals?

Paid teacher residencies support the greater talent strategy by growing future YES Prep teachers who are fully certified and have received significant coaching and feedback targeting implementation of effective instructional practices. By increasing the number of Tech Teach Teacher Candidates in our classrooms, additional teachers, who are committed to working with YES Prep after graduation, would be filling our classrooms and supporting the students of Houston in support of YES Prep's mission.

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

**3. Commitment of local resources:** Please review the Program Elements section on page 7 of the program guidelines. How will you, alongside your partner EPP, commit resources and time to 1) the year-long design process and 2) the implementation supports year? Be sure to provide information about the designation of a strategic staffing design lead, whose role will be co-funded by this grant opportunity. Provide a description of your plan to track and maintain evidence of that staff member's time and effort toward strategic staffing project management.

The Texas Strategic Staffing Grant will co-fund the salary of the YES Prep Texas Tech Site Coordinator. The TTU Site Coordinator is a full-time position dedicated solely to facilitating Student Teaching courses, and supporting Teacher Candidates through observation, coaching, and feedback for our existing pipeline. This staff member will lead the work behind creating a new pipeline under this grant, collaborating with TTU as well as other leaders in YES Prep as necessary. As a result, a new pipeline for future Texas Tech Teacher Candidates will be created to increase the size of future YES Prep cohorts. This person will track their time and effort weekly through submission of a time and effort form to their direct manager in Talent.



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

**4. Commitment to shared communication:** Describe how you will maintain strong communication throughout the design and implementation of the sustainable teacher residency program with your EPP partners and your technical assistance provider. How will you demonstrate evidence of communication and ongoing engagement with your partner and provider? For example: evidence of communication logs, shared meeting agendas, etc.

Our Site Coordinator will meet monthly with our EPP partner for design and implementation support of the program at YES Prep. The Site Coordinator, YES Prep Talent Leadership, and EPP partner will meet quarterly to discuss data, progress, placements, support needed, and recruiting towards the next cohort. Additionally, they will meet with the technical assistance provider as required and will reach out for support as needed. The Site Coordinator will be responsible for creating and maintaining evidence of said meetings including meeting notices, agendas, meeting notes, participation rosters, and submission of deliverables as requested to the technical assistance provider. The Site Coordinator will be responsible for creating and maintaining data that will be shared with TEA that reflects the following: Number of teacher residents participating in the year-long teacher residency, demographics of teacher residents participating in the program, number of and type of teacher certifications awarded to teacher residents, and the selected staffing models implemented.

**5. Strategic staffing technical assistance:** The program elements describe how teacher residencies will be made sustainable through strategic staffing models where residents support other instructional needs in the district, such as, for example, substitute teaching or para-professional responsibilities. How do you see the design and implementation of strategic staffing models with teacher residents as a way to support immediate instructional needs in your LEA? Additionally, please describe the rationale you share with your partner(s) for seeking technical assistance for the purpose of designing and implementing strategic staffing models.

First of all, the creation of a new pipeline targeting Teacher Assistants will increase the number of Teacher Candidates in our classrooms working alongside experienced Mentor Teachers. Teachers will be working in assigned YES Prep classrooms. Second, this pipeline will attract new Teacher Assistants to our District, decreasing the need for substitutes, and increasing the number of additional adults in the classrooms to support academic achievement. During clinical placements, our participating campuses will benefit through increased student support and opportunities for small groups or individual re-teach, scaffolding, or feedback, which translates into improved student achievement. As a District, we will see an increase in certified teachers in high need areas for our classrooms.

We currently have four elementary and three secondary campuses that are growing by adding additional grade level and content areas each year. Additionally, as we continue to thrive in the mission and vision of our organization to meet the needs of our community, our district will open an additional three elementary campuses starting the 2024-2025 school year. Our growing district will further sustain the need for this program to fulfill our need for highly qualified and effective teachers. This pipeline of teachers will continue to fill our high compliancy areas of Bilingual education, Special Education, and the hard to fill area of middle level math, providing our students with high quality, certified teachers.

For this program to be successful, YES Prep and our partner will benefit from the technical assistance provided in-kind by TEA. YES Prep will be sure to work closely with our technical assistant for the 23-24 and 24-25 school years to make key decisions and design structures to ensure that in the 25-26 school year YES Prep will have the internal capacity to continue the strategic staffing model. Having an expert in the topic guide and advise in the design and implementation of the program will ensure not only a high-quality program but also sustainability in its implementation.

**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**