



2024-2025 Stronger Connections Grant

Competitive Grant Application: Due 11:59 p.m. CT, July 18, 2023

NOGA ID

Application stamp-in date and time

TEA will only accept grant application documents by **email**, including competitive grant applications and amendments. Submit grant applications and amendments as follows:

Competitive grant applications and amendments to competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov.

The application **MUST** bear the signature of a person authorized to bind the applicant to a contractual agreement

Authorizing legislation:

Grant period:

Pre-award costs:

Required attachments:

Amendment Number

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

1. Applicant Information

Name of organization

Campus name CDN Vendor ID ESC UEI

Address City ZIP Phone

Primary Contact Email Phone

Secondary Contact Email Phone

2. 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 grant application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the grant application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- Grant application, guidelines, and instructions
- Debarment and Suspension Certification
- General Provisions and Assurances
- Lobbying Certification
- Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances
- ESSA Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name Title Email

Phone Signature Date

Grant Writer Name Signature Date

Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization. Grant writer is **not** an employee of the applicant organization.

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Adjustments on this page have been confirmed with _____ by _____ of TEA by phone / fax / email on _____.

3. Shared Services Arrangements

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

4. Identify/Address Needs

List up to three quantifiable needs, as identified in your needs assessment, that these program funds will address. Describe your plan for addressing each need.

Quantifiable Need	Plan for Addressing Need
Our district currently has a high student to campus counselor ratio. The National School Counselor Association recommends 250:1 CJHS- 527:1, HHS- 410:1, RSE- 594:1, MVE- 482:1, CHS- 362:1, MVHS- 404:1, WDS- 486:1, FME- 500:1, ETC.	Hiring additional school counselors &/or Licensed Social Workers will help ensure we meet the 250:1ratio. These positions will provide Tier 1 education & Tier 2 group counseling, restorative practices training and interventions & mentorship opportunities. 25% of school counselors have 3 years or less experience. A lead counselor will help me build capacity in in all my school counselors.
High student Outcry needs since COVID pandemic: 2021-2022 SY = 180 total 2022-2023 SY = 195 total High school had the highest numbers followed by elementary grade students	Licensed Professional Counselors hired via grant will be available to provide therapy access to students post suicide outcry & to victims of bullying and or the bully. They will also be responsible for teaching positive coping and self-management skills; problem solving skills, restorative practices, conflict resolution
Decrease our physical aggression referrals/infractions. 30-60% of district referral infractions are regarding physical aggression, assault, inappropriate contact.	We will incorporate Circles at a Tier 1 level to help all students feel like they have a voice and that they belong. We will train and use restorative practices when we have peer to peer conflict. We will incorporate a Tier 1 Problem Solving Model to help students learn how to problem solve instead of using violence first. We will provide Tier 1 education on David's Law. All contribute to building a positive school culture.

5. SMART Goal

Describe the summative SMART goal you have identified for this program (a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely), either related to student outcome or consistent with the purpose of the grant.

We will reduce the number of suicide outcry data by 10%. We will do so by providing protective factors to include Tier 1-Social Emotional Education particularly regarding self-management and positive coping skills. Minute meetings at the beginning of the year with campus-based counselors will determine which students will need Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.

We will decrease our physical aggression infractions by 10%. We will do so by providing David's Law education to all students and parents at a Tier 1 level. We will incorporate Circles and a campus wide problem solving model at a Tier 1 level. At a Tier 2 level we will practice restorative practices and incorporate circles and small group education.

6. Measurable Progress

Identify the benchmarks that you will use at the end of the first three grant quarters to measure progress toward meeting the process and implementation goals defined for the grant.

First-Quarter Benchmark

Suicide outcry data per campus every month will be collected using school counselor quantitative data. On the last school day of every month, school counselors report the number of District Suicide Protocols they administered on a google sheet that I provide. Campus referrals for physical aggression are recorded in Skyward. I will run the report.

We will collect qualitative data where students who report feeling suicidal will identify two positive coping/regulating skills by using the District Suicide Protocol Safety plan form. With a school counselor students, identify two positive coping skills they can use in the future as well as at least two safe people they can reach out to if needed.

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6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)

Second-Quarter Benchmark

Suicide outcry data per campus every month will be collected using school counselor quantitative data. On the last school day of every month, school counselors report the number of District Suicide Protocols they administered on a google sheet that I provide. Campus referrals for physical aggression are recorded in Skyward. I will run the report.

We will collect qualitative data where students who report feeling suicidal will identify two positive coping/regulating skills by using the District Suicide Protocol Safety plan form. With a school counselor students, identify two positive coping skills they can use in the future as well as at least two safe people they can reach out to if needed.

Third-Quarter Benchmark

Suicide outcry data per campus every month will be collected using school counselor quantitative data. On the last school day of every month, school counselors report the number of District Suicide Protocols they administered on a google sheet that I provide. Campus referrals for physical aggression are recorded in Skyward. I will run the report.

We will collect qualitative data where students who report feeling suicidal will identify two positive coping/regulating skills by using the District Suicide Protocol Safety plan form. With a school counselor students, identify two positive coping skills they can use in the future as well as at least two safe people they can reach out to if needed.

7. Project Evaluation and Modification

Describe how you will use project evaluation data to determine when and how to modify your program. If your benchmarks or summative SMART goals do not show progress, describe how you will use evaluation data to modify your program for sustainability.

If data collected shows that district suicide outcry reports do not decrease through implementation of our planned program, we will implement a screener for all students.

With parent permission, this screener would be administered to all enrolled students 3rd grade-12th grade. Students will be encouraged to answer questions regarding their thoughts and or attempts of suicide in the past, history of outcries, history of parents dying by suicide, ACE questions, etc. Students who identify as positive to any of the instances described above will be invited to participate in small group support where counselors would teach coping and self-management skills as a strategy to prevent suicide outcry reports.

Furthermore, we will offer an opportunity for a mentorship and/or access to therapy services with the district Licensed Professional Counselor if Tier 3 supports are needed.

For students who have repeated infractions for using physical aggression, we will attempt individual school counseling to assist in teaching conflict resolution skills to include problem solving model processing. We will offer anger management regulation skills at a Tier 2 level. For continued infractions, we will offer LPC counseling and mentorship opportunities as tier 3 supports.

The data collection clerk will assist in collecting data required for accountability for this grant.

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8. Statutory/Program Assurances

The following assurances apply to this grant program. In order to meet the requirements of the grant, the grantee 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 grant 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 Statutory Requirements, TEA Program Requirements, and Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024–2025 Stronger Connections Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide the Texas Education Agency, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the grant program.
- 4. The applicant will formally establish a Student Support Program at three district campuses (one elementary, one intermediate/middle school, one high school) to address school climate and establish a student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC.
- 5. The applicant will allocate 6% of awarded funds for contracted services for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
- 6. The applicant will allocate 10% of awarded funds for professional and contracted services with a partner approved by the Texas Center for Student Support and TEA. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
- 7. The applicant will use the family engagement playbook developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to partner and build support with parents and families prior to a student support team assessment, and during the student support implementation process to facilitate a student support partnership with families.
- 8. The applicant will establish a parent, student, and staff advisory committee to provide input on the establishment of the Student Support Program.
- 9. The applicant will engage in Student Support Program planning activities from the beginning of the grant program through implementation at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
- 10. The applicant will establish and implement at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, the Student Support Program aligned to the content and training provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
- 11. The applicant will incorporate a case management system into the student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
- 12. The applicant will align the student support team structure with behavioral threat assessment team operation and outcomes to ensure that students are well supported and that the effectiveness of interventions are monitored.
- 13. The applicant will implement the data collection and reporting system developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy of the implementation of the Student Support Program, including student support team structure, quality of support leading to positive outcomes, and data related to increases in desired outcomes (e.g. increase in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increase in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increase in referrals for mental health services, reduction in removals from class, etc.).
- 14. The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures.

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9. Statutory/ TEA Program Requirements

1. Describe how the LEA will identify the campuses that will participate in the establishment of the Student Support Program described in the program description? Include the criteria or considerations that will influence the determination by the LEA.

We will select campuses based on 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year data regarding the student suicide outcry numbers. We will use 22.23 Physical Aggression number of referrals to determine which of our campuses need the most assistance in violence prevention. We will also use campus student to counselor ratios to determine our priority campuses for additional school counselor support. We have 8 out of 13 campuses who have more than a 400 student to 1 counselor ratio. These campuses also had high suicide outcry reports over the last two years. We will use the data above to select the campuses for this grant.

2. Describe how the LEA will ensure that campus leaders and staff are committed to the success of the Student Support Program.

Prior to committing additional resources to the campuses, the district Director of Counseling will meet with selected campus leadership teams in order to share data and program details. We will work collaboratively on meeting goals, objectives and requirements of the grant program to include Minute Meetings and Tier 1-3 support systems. The Director of Counseling will help to guide transparency of the program requirements, expectations from all stakeholders, goals, possible obstacles and open lines of feedback opportunities, to include possible concerns. Working together as a team would benefit all students and staff and this program will continue successfully.

Faculty, Staff PD and Parent Education Series:
 22-23 & 23-24 Campus Suicide Outcry Data and Physical Aggression Referrals Data
 Share goals for the year which would be to decrease our outcries and physical aggression data by 10%.
 MTSS Overview, Mental Health Tier 1 Education, Tier 2-3 Supports in detail.
 Tier 1- Zen Zone & Regulation Skills, Be An Elephant Creating a Trauma informed care school, Circles PD, Campus Problem Solving Model, David's Law Education and restorative practices and School Counselor SEL plan.

Leadership team and Director of Counseling would need to designate when in the weekly schedule we will be incorporating SEL education and Circles with all students lead by teachers.

Region 19- We will partner with Region 19 to provide all identified teams with professional development opportunities regarding restorative practices.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

3. Describe how the LEA will engage parents and families to solicit support for the program.

Our district will provide parents and families an information night in both English and Spanish to introduce the grant program, as well as benefits of the program for students. As required by ESSA, we will offer multiple opportunities to share the information in a language and format appropriate for all.

We will incorporate a Parent Education Series which will kick-off by sharing the following:
22-23 & 23-24 Campus Suicide Outcry Data and Physical Aggression Referrals Data
Share goals for the year which would be to decrease our outcries and physical aggression data by 10%.
MTSS Overview, Mental Health Tier 1 Education, Tier 2-3 Supports in detail.

Monthly Education Series will include: Suicide prevention and warning signs, non-suicidal self-injury behavior, campus and community resources, college and career opportunities, Zen Zone Tour & Regulation Skills, "Be An Elephant" Creating a Trauma informed care school, Circles what they are and how we are using them at school, Campus Problem Solving Model, David's Law Education and restorative practices and School Counselor SEL plan.

4. Describe how the LEA will ensure that there is adequate staff to support the establishment and implementation of the Student Support Program.

With grant funds, our district intends on hiring personnel and contracting services to support the 3 selected campuses.

They include: Additional school-based counselors and/or licensed social workers to better serve our student individual, social emotional, career/college and academic needs. A school counselor lead to serve in a leadership capacity to help me continue to support the needs of new or novice campus counselors in regards to hands on training and professional development. Licensed professional counselors will provide provide individualized therapy services as a tier 3 intervention removing barriers from the families and students.

These personnel will provide Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports, which include:

Tier 1: All students receive self-management education to include positive coping and self-regulation skills. Students will be able to identify at least 2 positive coping/self-regulation skills; School counselors will conduct Minute Meetings with all students. This will help to identify who will need Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports. We will provide David's Law Education. We will teach students how to use a campus problem solving model.

Tier 2: Small group counseling and or Individual Counseling to further teach self-management skills; anger management skills, conflict resolution, problem solving, and mentorship with a responsible adult;

Tier 3: Individualized therapy from a licensed professional counselor

Our district will also request a grant-funded clerk to serve in a clerical role. Responsibilities include: coordination of family engagement events, compiling data and ensuring appropriate grant-related documentation is collected and submitted as required.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

5. Describe how each of the three campuses that will be supported by the grant program, if awarded, currently conduct behavioral threat assessments and how the campus will incorporate current systems into the student support team structure.

Currently, the suicide outcry protocols we have in place, include:
 Training for school counselors yearly (June/July) regarding District Suicide Protocol Practices and procedures. They in turn, are responsible for training their campus faculty and staff with the same training I provide them by end of July. Our 2023 district survey showed that 95% of faculty and staff know what to do when a student makes a suicide outcry.

When a student makes an outcry to any faculty or staff member, they are not to leave the student alone. They are responsible for getting the student into the school counselors hands. After the student is with the school counselor, the school counselor proceeds to follow our District Suicide protocol which includes a few questions to start. They are also responsible for holding an emergency conference with the student's parent or guardian, releasing the student to the parent or guardian, providing a list of community resources that provide emergency screenings and then following up with the student and family after 1-2 school days. School Counselors notify their principal every time they have a suicide outcry so that he/she is informed at all times.

If we are unable to get a hold of the parent/guardian or they are unresponsive, we have options available to include the local law enforcement crisis team. We can call them in and they will conduct their own evaluation and take the student under emergency detention to get immediate assistance if they deem necessary.

We are in the process with collaborating with the Threat Assessment district training team to see how we can work together and implement systemic processes to help all students that may need more than Tier 1 support.

6. Describe how the LEA currently identifies student support needs and how it identifies and establishes partnerships with external mental health and behavioral health providers to meet student needs.

One method of identification of students needing support is data collected from suicide outcry reports. When a suicide outcry report is received, we follow our current district suicide protocol and related policy in order to support each student. Part of the protocol is providing the family a list of mental health assistance resources. School counselors must follow up with the families after the outcry within 1-2 school days. If a student is receiving assistance at a mental health facility for a number of days, school counselors must hold a re-entry meeting upon student return to campus. We currently have a Memorandum of Understanding and contract with a community organization, Project Vida, which provides services such as, sliding scale mental health assistance and telehealth services for students. MVHS, EMMS, FME and CJHS are the schools participating. At Clint High School we have partnered with the El Paso Child Guidance Center. They provide counseling services to students who can benefit from long term counseling care.

In our district we have data that shows students may self-report if they need assistance. At all campuses, our students are invited to check-in at least once a week in order to self-identify in need of support. Next school year, all school counselors will begin the year with required Minute Meetings. This is a quick way to talk with all students and quickly identify who may need individual, group or a referral to a community service agency. This will allow for building rapport and identifying district needs of students. This upcoming year, the district will begin to implement MTSS training. Campuses will learn how to identify students in need of support and require more intervention related to the Tier support placement.

As students demonstrate they need more than Tier 1 education, campuses will offer more intensive behavioral and mental health tier 2-3 supports in addition to academic supports.

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9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

7. Describe how the LEA currently partners with the regional ESC to support improvement in student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, physical health and wellbeing, and improving academic outcomes for students.

Currently ESC Region 19 attends the regional Directors of School Counseling meetings monthly. Staff listen to regional district needs and attempt to provide professional development that will support documented needs. They also share upcoming professional development opportunities in the region. The Director of Counseling returns with learning opportunities and shares with campus-based counselors. Some examples of learning opportunities in the last couple of years include: solution focused professional development, the Mental Health Conference, PBIS conference, Restorative Circles, suicide prevention, grief support, etc.

8. Describe how the LEA will use this grant program to supplement current work to improve services and supports for the mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness of students.

By requesting additional counselors/social workers, this will supplement the current staff and help to reduce the ratio of students to counselor at each campus. This will facilitate consistent more intensive intervention for students and consistent Tier 1 Social Emotional Education lessons without having to cancel due to existing staff having to respond to a crisis situation.

We will be able to provide consistent and purposeful Tier 2 supports to include small groups, circles, restorative practices and individual school counseling. We intend to implement a mentor-ship program with a responsible adult as this is a protective factor associated with suicide prevention and violence prevention.

Tier 3 supports to include access to therapy services from a licensed professional counselor.

We will use this grant to provide an educational series for parents and educators regarding: creating trauma informed environments, suicide prevention and how to recognize the signs, non suicidal self injury behavior, community resources available, opportunities for higher education available, brain & trauma, self regulation skills. This grant will allow a Lead School counselor hire to help me provide more professional development to my counselors that is differentiated. I currently create and deliver pd at least once a month to all counselors. This pd I create and deliver. I will provide more pd based on counselor identified areas of growth. I am envisioning an educational series that will address the areas they requested which include: MTSS, small groups, group lesson design, grief, trauma, anxiety & anger management, vaping, restorative circles, regulation skills, suicide prevention.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment:

10. Enter the Regional Educational Service Center that serves the LEA:

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10. 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 grant.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this grant.
- 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"/>

11. PNP Equitable Services

Are any private nonprofit schools located within the applicant's boundaries?

- Yes No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the grant?

- Yes No

If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.

Assurances

- The LEA assures that it discussed all consultation requirements as listed in Section 1117(b)(1) and/or Section 8501(c)(1), as applicable, with all eligible private nonprofit schools located within the LEA's boundaries.
- The LEA assures the appropriate Affirmations of Consultation will be provided to TEA's PNP Ombudsman in the manner and time requested.

Equitable Services Calculation

1. LEA's student enrollment	<input type="text"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text"/>
4. Total current-year grant allocation	<input type="text"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the grant's defined limit	<input type="text"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text"/>
LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)	<input type="text"/>

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12. Request for Grant Funds

List all of the allowable grant-related activities for which you are requesting grant funds. Include the amounts budgeted for each activity. Group similar activities and costs together under the appropriate heading. During negotiation, you will be required to budget your planned expenditures on a separate attachment provided by TEA.

Payroll Costs

1.	School counselors and/or licensed social workers - 2 years	\$770,000
2.	Clerk - 2 years	\$90,000
3.		
4.		
5.		

Professional and Contracted Services

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	\$90,000
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	\$150,000
8.	Professional Staff Development	\$25,000
9.	Licensed Professional Counselor Services	\$288,000
10.		

Supplies and Materials

11.	Technology components for new personnel	\$15,000
12.	General supplies to facilitate grant program, reading materials, kits, instructional support	\$15,000
13.		
14.		

Other Operating Costs

15.	Hospitality for parent and family engagement activities	\$10,000
16.	Travel for all counselor to the LSSCA Conference	\$17,000
17.		

Debt Services

18.		
19.		

Direct administrative costs:	<input type="text"/>
Indirect administrative costs:	\$30,000
TOTAL GRANT AWARD REQUESTED:	\$1,500,000

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Appendix I: Negotiation and Amendments

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 of the TEA website and may be mailed OR faxed (not both). **To fax:** one copy of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to either (512) 463-9811 or (512) 463-9564. **To mail:** three copies of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to the address on page 1. More detailed amendment instructions can be found on the last page of the budget template.

You may duplicate this page.

For amendments, choose the section you wish to amend from the drop down menu on the left. In the text box on the right, describe the changes you are making and the reason for them.

Always work with the most recent negotiated or amended application. If you are requesting a revised budget, please include the budget attachments with your amendment.

Section Being Negotiated or Amended	Negotiated Change or Amendment
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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