

Competitive Grant Funding Available
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TO THE ELIGIBLE APPLICANT ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Request for Application # 701-09-122
Algebra Readiness Cycle 1 Grant

Eligible Applicants

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is requesting applications under Request for Application (RFA) #701-09-122 for the Algebra Readiness Cycle 1 grant from Texas independent school districts (ISDs) and/or open-enrollment charter schools in Texas on behalf of campuses that meet the following criteria:

- The campus must serve students in grades 6–8 or grades 7–8; and
- 65 percent or fewer students in grades 7 and 8 (calculated as a combined average) met the passing standard on the mathematics portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) on the first administration when averaged over the preceding three school years (2006–2007, 2007–2008, and 2008–2009).

ISDs and open-enrollment charter schools must submit a separate application for each eligible campus. Shared service arrangements are not permitted for this grant application.

An ISD or open-enrollment charter school may not apply for funding under this grant program for a campus that has not been serving students in grades 7–8 for the three preceding school years (2006–2007, 2007–2008, and 2008–2009).

The competitive nature of the Algebra Readiness Cycle 1 grant application will be based upon TEA rank ordering eligible campuses according to average passing rates on the mathematics portion of the TAKS; the total number of students in grades 6–8 or 7–8 at or above 400; and the average rate of improvement for passing rates on the mathematics portion of the TAKS. Funding will be distributed from highest-ranking campuses to lowest-ranking campuses until all available funds have been awarded. Applications must be submitted by the deadline to be eligible for ranking and consideration for funding. Refer to the RFA for specific details of the eligibility and ranking process.

Description of Program:

The purpose of the Algebra Readiness Cycle 1 grant is to implement programs that increase the preparedness of middle school students to meet standards and pass future assessments in Algebra I. Intervention programs should be designed to do the following:

- Increase teachers' mathematics content knowledge for instructional effectiveness in order to improve performance for struggling students and those at risk for failure in mathematics.
- Equip school leaders to support and facilitate teachers' efforts to increase student achievement in mathematics.
- Provide targeted intervention services to middle school students identified as unlikely to meet the end-of-course standard in future Algebra I assessments.

School districts and open-enrollment charter schools funded under this program will develop and implement a comprehensive school improvement model to improve student achievement in the area of algebra readiness as measured by TAKS Mathematics Objective One (numbers,

operations, and quantitative reasoning) and TAKS Mathematics Objective Two (patterns, relationships, and algebraic reasoning). Key practices impact student achievement and provide direction and meaning to the comprehensive school improvement and student learning.

Campuses receiving funding under this grant will implement the following key practices:

- Use of extended learning time (e.g., double blocking) for mathematics
- Instructional coaching
- Effective professional development
- Common planning time
- Effective supplemental resources
- Administrator training
- Appropriate technology
- Active, ongoing student engagement
- Guidance and communication for parents

Upon award, grantees will begin the planning phase of the grant immediately and will be required to attend technical assistance sessions and professional development. The implementation phase of the grant will begin at the latest by June 1, 2010.

Project Funding:

The Algebra Readiness Cycle 1 grant will be implemented during the 2009–2010, 2010–2011, and 2011–2012 school years. Applicants should plan for a starting date of no earlier than January 1, 2010, and an ending date of no later than May 31, 2012.

Approximately \$23,500,000 is available for funding Algebra Readiness Cycle 1 grants during the January 1, 2010, through May 31, 2012, project period. It is anticipated that 50 to 80 campus-based projects will be funded during the first cycle of this grant program. The maximum award per campus is \$235,000. An ISD or open-enrollment charter school may apply on behalf of one or more of its eligible campuses. ISDs and open-enrollment charter schools must submit a separate application for each eligible campus. For example, if District A has five eligible campuses, it may submit five applications. If District A is awarded all five grants, District A may receive up to \$1,175,000 on behalf of the five campuses.

This project is 100-percent state funded by the General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 42, Student Success Initiative, 81st Texas Legislature, 2009.

Selection Criteria:

Applications will be selected based on the ability of each applicant to carry out all requirements contained in the RFA. Applications must address each requirement as specified in the RFA to be considered for funding. TEA reserves the right to select from the highest-ranking applications those that address all requirements in the RFA and that are most advantageous to the project.

TEA is not obligated to approve an application, provide funds, or endorse any application submitted in response to this RFA. This RFA does not commit TEA to pay any costs before an application is approved. The issuance of this RFA does not obligate TEA to award a grant or pay any costs incurred in preparing a response.

Requesting the Application:

RFAs are no longer available in print. The announcement letter and complete RFA will be posted on the TEA website at <http://burluson.tea.state.tx.us/GrantOpportunities/forms> for viewing and downloading. In the "Select Search Options" box, select the name of the RFA from

the drop-down list. Scroll down to the “Application and Support Information” to view all documents that pertain to this RFA.

Applicants’ Conferences:

Applicants’ conferences will be held according to the schedule listed below. To locate the nearest Texas Educational Telecommunication Network (TETN) facility, please contact the TETN site manager at your regional education service center (ESC). (The following webpage includes links and contact information for each ESC in Texas: [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ESC/.](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ESC/))

Date of Applicants’ Conference	Time	Location	Topics
September 28, 2009	2:00–4:00 p.m.	All 20 regional ESCs: TETN event #5716	Grant application information
September 30, 2009	2:00–4:00 p.m.	All 20 regional ESCs: TETN event #5717	Grant application information
October 1, 2009	9:00–11:00 a.m.	Webinar https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/406793315	Grant application information

Questions relevant to the RFA may be sent in writing to the Algebra Readiness e-mail box, algebrareadiness@tea.state.tx.us. These questions, along with other information, will be addressed in the presentations. Questions that applicants wish to have addressed during the Applicants’ Conference must be submitted no later than September 24, 2009. The conferences will be open to all potential applicants and will provide prospective applicants an opportunity to receive general and clarifying information about the program and RFA.

The entire applicants’ conferences will be digitally recorded. Prospective applicants who are not able to attend the applicants’ conference may request a password to download a video stream that is viewable on their computer desktop. Applicants should contact the TETN site manager at their local ESC to request the procedures to download the video stream. Applicants wishing to view the webinar may find it at www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=5299 after Thursday, October 8, 2009.

For Further Information:

For clarifying information about the RFA, contact Mona Corbett, Division of Discretionary Grants, TEA, (512) 463-9269.

In order to assure that no prospective applicant may obtain a competitive advantage because of acquisition of information unknown to other prospective applicants, any and all questions pertaining to the RFA must be submitted in writing to Algebra Readiness e-mail box, algebrareadiness@tea.state.tx.us, no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time Friday, October 2, 2009. The questions and their answers (FAQs) will be posted on the TEA Grant Opportunities website on or before Thursday, October 8, 2009. To provide all applicants with equal opportunity to review all FAQs prior to submitting the grant application, any questions received after Friday, October 2, 2009, will not be answered by TEA.

Copies of the questions and the written answers thereto will be posted on the TEA website in the format of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at <http://burlson.tea.state.tx.us/GrantOpportunities/forms>. In the “Select Search Options” box,

select the name of the program/RFA from the drop-down list. Scroll down to the "Application and Support Information" to view all documents that pertain to this RFA.

Deadline for Receipt of Applications:

Applications must be received in the Document Control Center of TEA by 5:00 PM (Central Time), Thursday, October 29, 2009, to be eligible to be considered for funding.

Sincerely,

Nora Ibáñez Hancock, Ed.D.
Associate Commissioner
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation