

**Funding
Available**

TO THE ELIGIBLE APPLICANT ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Request for Application (RFA) #701-06-006
Texas High Schools That Work Enhanced Design Network (includes Texas High
Schools That Work Mentor Schools) RFA

Eligible Applicants:

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is requesting applications under Request for Applications (RFA) #701-06-006 from eligible school districts or open-enrollment charter schools. An eligible school district or open-enrollment charter school shall include (1) a campus serving students in Grades 9-12 (A campus serving Grade 9 or Grades 9-10 may combine with a senior high school campus to submit one application on behalf of both campuses.); (2) a campus that is not a recipient of a Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring Grant, Cycle 1 or Cycle 2, a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR)--Texas High School Initiative grant, or a redesign grant from the Communities Foundation of Texas or the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and (3) a campus either (a) within a district with a Stage 3 or Stage 4 intervention level for Career and Technology Education under the 2005-2006 TEA Performance-Based Monitoring System; or (b) with a rating of Academically Unacceptable in 2005 under the Texas Accountability Rating System; or (c) that participated as a member of the HSTW statewide network during the 2005-2006 school year.

A school district or open-enrollment charter school applying for this grant must be financially viable as determined through fiscal review by the TEA Division of Financial Audits. Additionally, to maintain eligibility for this grant, both the school district or open-enrollment charter school and the campus under the school district or open-enrollment charter school must be in compliance with all intervention requirements as established by the TEA Division of Program Monitoring and Interventions. An open-enrollment charter high school campus shall become ineligible for grant funding (or if a campus has applied for and received funding for this grant, will have its grant funding placed on hold) if the commissioner of education notifies the campus' charter holder of the commissioner's intent to revoke or non-renew such charter under Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 12, or to close the campus under TEC, Chapter 39, for any of the reasons set forth in either statutory provision. If the commissioner of education ultimately revokes or denies renewal of an open-enrollment charter or closes a campus that has been awarded funds under this grant program, grant funding shall be discontinued.

Description of Program:

The purpose of the High Schools That Work (HSTW) Enhanced Design Network is to support under-performing high schools in the use of the HSTW school improvement design as a framework to improve academic and career/technology instruction and overall student achievement. The primary goal of this grant program is for high schools to implement the following HSTW key design principles: (1) a challenging curriculum for all high school students, including four credits of math, four credits in a career/technology concentration, and four credits in an academic concentration, with at least one of those

credits being Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual credit; (2) schoolwide literacy goals across the curriculum; (3) intervention strategies for equipping under-prepared students for challenging high school work; (4) programs to reduce the failure rate at ninth grade; and (5) links to postsecondary education. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how school district resources, including in-kind resources, will be dedicated toward the project; how the campus will utilize the HSTW school improvement consultants and incorporate identified professional development into their campus improvement plans; and how the program will be sustained using other funding sources, including federal, state, local, or private funds, beyond the life of the project period.

Five high school campuses will be eligible to serve as mentor schools as part of the HSTW Enhanced Design Network for the HSTW Mentor High Schools Program. The purpose of the HSTW Mentor High Schools program is to create a group of high schools that can provide resources and guidance, host site visits, and model best practices in the implementation of the HSTW key design principles. A list of high schools identified by the Southern Regional Education Board as high-implementers of the HSTW design will be included in the RFA, and those schools will be eligible to apply to be mentor high schools.

HSTW Mentor High Schools will be required to (1) disseminate online resources and other materials that will provide guidance and support in how to implement the HSTW design and how to sustain HSTW activities through other funding sources; (2) host site visits for HSTW Enhanced Design Network schools and other interested parties; and (3) provide guidance and coaching to HSTW Enhanced Design Network schools and other high schools through e-mail and telephone contact. Mentor schools may use grant funds under this program to pay for travel to HSTW state and national conferences.

Dates of Program:

The HSTW Enhanced Design Network Grants will be implemented primarily during the 2006-2007 school year. Applicants should plan for a starting date of no earlier than July 1, 2006, and an ending date of no later than February 29, 2008.

Program Funding:

This grant is competitive. A total of approximately \$800,000 is available for funding HSTW Enhanced Design Network Grants. Each high school campus will receive a maximum of \$30,000 to implement HSTW key design principles. Mentor schools will receive a maximum of an additional \$10,000 per school. This project is funded 100 percent from general revenue funds appropriated by Rider 59, General Appropriations Act, 2005.

Selection Criteria:

Applications will be selected based on expert reviewers' assessment of each applicant's ability to carry out all requirements contained in the RFA. Reviewers will evaluate applications based on the overall quality and validity of the proposed grant programs and the extent to which the applications address the primary objectives and intent of the project. Applications must address each requirement as specified in the RFA to be considered for funding. The TEA reserves the right to select from the highest-ranking applications those that address all requirements in the RFA, contain a comprehensive plan that will fundamentally change and improve the high school campus, and demonstrate an ability to sustain the changes after the grant period ends.

The 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.

Technical Assistance:

Through the Region 5 Education Service Center (ESC), the TEA will provide pre-grant support and guidance in the development of plans that address both campus needs and grant requirements. Through the Region 5 ESC, the TEA will also provide direct training, on-going regional training, and networking activities to those high school campuses that receive the HSTW Enhanced Design Network Grants.

Requesting the Application:

A complete copy of RFA #701-06-006 may be obtained by writing the Document Control Center, Room 6-108, Texas Education Agency, William B. Travis Building, 1701 N. Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701; by calling (512) 463-9304; by faxing (512) 463-9811; or by e-mailing dcc@tea.state.tx.us. Please refer to the RFA number and title in your request. Provide your name, complete mailing address, and phone number including area code. The announcement letter and complete RFA will also be posted on the TEA website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/> for viewing and downloading.

For Further Information:

For clarifying information about the HSTW Enhanced Design Network Grants RFA, contact Karen Harmon, Discretionary Grants Division, Texas Education Agency, (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 additional information, that is different from or in addition to, information provided in the RFA will be provided only in response to written inquiries. Copies of all such inquiries and the written answers thereto will be posted on the TEA website in the format of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/>.

Deadline for Receipt of Applications:

Applications must be received by the Texas Education Agency, Document Control Center, by 5:00 p.m. (Central Time), Thursday, March 30, 2006, to be considered for funding.

Sincerely,



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

cc: Karen Harmon
cc: Barbara Knaggs