
PRIME Blueprint for Texas ACE v2

December 15, 2011

Texas Education Agency



Find the PRIME Blueprint online at www.texasace21.org/content/prime-blueprint-texas-ace

List of Significant Changes in Version 2

- Added appendices:
 - Instructions for accessing the original Requests for Application on the TEA website, Appendix 2
 - ACE Safety Checklist, Appendix 10
 - Family Engagement Specialist Guide, Appendix 13
 - Additional example of Personnel Certification to aid in time keeping documentation, Appendix 18
 - Updated ACE PRIME Assessment procedure and template, Appendix 29
 - Grantee Performance Status Report template, Appendix 30
 - Project Plan template, Appendix 32
- Added information
 - Field Trip Approval Process, Task 3, page 17
 - Not allowable to mandate student attendance, Task 4, page 18
 - Suggestions for budgeting for training and conferences, Task 5, page 21
 - Center Plans, Task 9, page 39
- Revised information:
 - Training and required conferences, Task 5, page 22
 - Guidance for applying for access to TX21st, Task 6, pages 26-27
 - Program Implementation Assurance process, Task 8, page 38
 - Updated website links for MyTexasACE, public website (TexasACE21.org) and external links

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OVERVIEW OF TEXAS ACE

TEXAS ACE OBJECTIVES

The 21st Century Community Learning Center’s program, now known as Texas ACE, is intended to improve the following outcomes for students:

- Academic Performance
- Attendance
- Behavior
- Promotion rates
- Graduation rate

These objectives are specifically aligned with the goal of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to ensure that all students are college and career ready and each ACE program should articulate how they can help contribute to meeting these objectives.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

To achieve its goals and ensure excellence, TEA has identified a set of critical success factors and milestones. Critical Success Factors (CSF) reflect behavioral changes that must be demonstrated by students enrolled in the program or by the adults working on their behalf. Milestones are key strategies that establish the foundation on which critical success factors are built.

TEA’s Critical Success Factors for ACE:

- Students’ and families’ active participation and engagement in learning
- Students’ and families’ increased sense of involvement in school
- Use of assessment data to revise/evaluate student services
- Implementation of strategies learned through training for ACE Leaders and Staff

TEA’s Milestones for ACE:

- Utilizing innovative instructional techniques for academic and enrichment activities
- Providing adult advocates, based on student need and in accordance with best practices
- Conducting ongoing/continuous student assessment to determine need and improve targeted services
- Providing training opportunities for staff development

See **Appendix 1** for the TEA’s full CSF model.

OVERVIEW OF THE PRIME BLUEPRINT FOR TEXAS ACE

WHY A BLUEPRINT FOR AFTERSCHOOL?

TEA created this Blueprint to provide guidance for all of the 21st Century Community Learning Center programs (now known as Texas Afterschool Centers on Education or Texas ACE) to “build” TEA’s vision for the program. The Blueprint offers a foundation & a framework of critical elements, including both grant requirements and research-based practices, on which all stakeholders will focus and provides the context for communication, training, and implementation assurance.

HOW WAS THE BLUEPRINT CREATED?

To create the PRIME Blueprint for Texas ACE, TEA first carefully examined the grant requirements outlined in the Request for Application for each grant cycle. They then conducted the following steps to finalize the Blueprint:

- Reviewed most rigorous literature about out of school time (OST), youth development, and dropout prevention.
- Reviewed promising program tools in use by other state agencies.
- Drafted a framework from research findings.
- Mapped RFA requirements to framework.

Throughout this process, much thought was given to sustainability. Is that what we mean or is it something else? Sustaining something principally means to support, hold, undergo, keep up, or bear up, typically structurally. Sustaining a program has become just another task to be accomplished. But, what if enduring was the goal in terms of programs and the people impacted by them? When something endures it principally means it continues or lasts in the needed and embraced form and is generally acknowledged as having done so. Enduring can mean “going beyond sustainability” and become a key differentiator for Texas ACE Programs.

THE BLUEPRINT

From the above process, four categories of activities and program requirements emerged which include *Planning, Resourcing, Implementing* and *Managing* all focused on creating an *Enduring* program. These activities comprise PRIME: A Blueprint for Afterschool.

Planning:

Create an enduring program through a comprehensive planning process that begins with a needs assessment that informs the strategic plan, and each grantee’s and center’s project plans.

Resourcing:

Connect the many valuable human and financial resources in your community to engage partners in strategic and long-lasting ways.

Implementing:

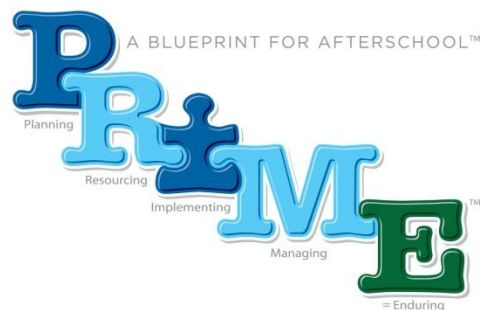
Implement a high-quality program that includes the Four-Component Activity Guide through an effective and research-based curriculum delivered by well-prepared staff and volunteers.

Managing:

Manage resources effectively to create a dynamic program that meets performance standards, uses data to inform improvement, employs data confidentiality processes and complies with all grant requirements.

Enduring:

Maintain and evolve the program into one that has an enduring impact on students, families and the community.



THIS GUIDE

Grantees must abide by all of the requirements in the Request for Application and the negotiated grant application. This guide is intended to elaborate on the grant requirements across all Texas ACE grant cycles and provides additional information about TEA's expectations for grant implementation, helpful resources, tools, and templates to aid in the work of grantees. It is organized around four requirement areas and a section about additional support.

The Four Requirement Areas include:

- Section A: Program Requirements;
- Section B: Data Requirements;
- Section C: Fiscal Requirements;
- Section D: Quality Assurance Requirements; and
- Section E: Where to Find Additional Support.

This guide provides a comprehensive blueprint that breaks down these four requirements into 10 key tasks, which grantees must complete in order to achieve true programmatic success.

The 10 Key Tasks for quality programming are:

1. Conduct Community & Campus Needs Assessment
2. Involve Community & Conduct Ongoing Outreach
3. Develop Program Strategies & Implement Activities
4. Recruit Students & Families
5. Resource Your Program (Staffing and Partners)
6. Manage Data Collection & Reporting
7. Implement Processes for Sound Fiscal Management
8. Maintain Quality Assurance Across Program
9. Develop Grantee & Center Project Plans
10. Improve Management Practices

USING PRIME TO MANAGE YOUR GRANT

Grantees are expected to use a disciplined project management approach to planning, organizing, securing and managing resources to bring about the successful completion of specific project goals and objectives. Using the tools and resources provided in this guide and in future workshops will help grantees develop the required Project Plans for both the Grantee (administrative) level and Center level. These plans are critical to the overall success of a Grantee in achieving desired program results as they act as the operational guide. Grantees should keep in mind the fact that each task leads to the development of the Project Plan and thus should be completed with careful diligence. Project Plans are described in detail in Section D: Quality Assurance Requirements.

SECTION A: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS BY CYCLE

- Required
- Recommended/Best Practice

Requirement	Cycle 5	Cycle 6	Cycle 7
Task 1: Community and Campus Needs Assessments			
Community Needs Assessment	■	■	■
Campus Needs Assessment	■	■	■
Task 2: Outreach and Community Involvement			
Partnership Development, Community Involvement and Outreach	■	■	■
Five-Year Strategic Plan	■	■	•
Community Afterschool Task Force	■	■	•
Task 3: Strategies and Activities that Align with Needs and Grant Requirements			
Four-Component Activity Guide	■	■	■
ACE Activity & Lesson Planning	■	■	■
Task 4: Recruiting Participants			
Student Recruitment	■	■	■
Family Engagement	■	■	■
Task 5: Resourcing with Staffing and Partners			
Grant Staffing (specific requirements for each cycle)	■	■	■
Attending Training and Conferences	■	■	■

DESIGNING YOUR PROGRAM

In order to prepare to design your program, you must identify and gather the following:

- your cycle’s Request for Application (RFA). Step-by-Step instructions to access your Cycle’s RFA can be found in **Appendix 2**;
- your grant application; and
- your final negotiated grant application.

TASK 1: COMMUNITY AND CAMPUS NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Conducting community and campus needs assessments are the first critical steps in determining the scope and goals of a Texas ACE program. Needs assessments should be completed prior to submitting a grant application, and updated at least annually in preparation for the continuation application process. TEA considers connecting with the school day and involving students and families during the needs assessment process as essential in creating a high-quality program.

Aligning with the School Day

During the campus needs assessment process, care should be taken to align the ACE services to the school day whenever possible. Aligning with the school day allows for opportunities to strengthen the relationship between ACE goals and the school day goals for students. This relationship is critical to increasing the benefits for the students being served by your ACE program, can increase the effectiveness of your afterschool program, and can help a campus reach its Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) goals. A strong partnership between ACE and the school day will require ACE leaders to understand the needs of their campus. To accomplish this, the Project Director and Site Coordinators must be familiar with the academic performance of students on that campus as well as the activities, gaps, and opportunities that exist, which can be addressed through afterschool programming.

Student/Family Voice and Choice

It is important to have a balance of activities that meet the needs of the campus and the participants. Often the ideas and desires of the students and families served in the ACE program are overlooked. Grantees are encouraged to use surveys, focus groups, and interest inventories to determine what potential program participants want from the afterschool program. Because grantees are required to serve the number of participants specified in the grant application, it is important that the services provided are those that the targeted participants want to attend.

CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Grant applicants shall conduct a thorough community needs assessment prior to submission in order to determine the most appropriate centers to include in the grant application, identify meaningful activity types, and locate community resources that can be used to address needs and gaps in services. Conducting a systematic community needs assessment and examining the resources already available in your community via an asset mapping process (described in detail below) can help you make the most of the ACE grant for the following five reasons:

- Avoid duplication of other projects with similar activities.
- Determine the "most pressing" of all the problems/needs first. By prioritizing the most pressing needs first, you have a greater chance of success, and success more quickly.
- Leverage and maximize the resources you have within your agency and community.
- Determine the "impact" of getting a grant. You can use this information to set the scope of your grant (i.e., number of centers, students, families) and set measurable goals; and you can also get a better idea of the future impacts on personnel, facilities and equipment.
- More clearly justify the need for your project and grant.

There are many approaches to conducting a community needs assessment, and a typical needs assessment process will involve the following steps to result in clear directives for program planning (See Figure 1 on page 12 for a diagram of the inventory process):

- Identify the purpose, target population, and create guiding questions for the assessment by creating a general profile of the community's population demographics, social characteristics, and valued resources.

- Determine necessary information and data to gather, as well as appropriate collection formats that will effectively address the guiding questions. Information gathering and analysis should focus on investigating areas such as population density, literacy rates, crime rates, health statistics, logistical or transportation issues, existing or missing services, and useful resources within the immediate community. (See **Appendix 3** for needs assessment resources.) Useful information sources might include reports or datasets from organizations such as:
 - U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics;
 - Local law enforcement agencies;
 - Texas Workforce Centers;
 - Juvenile Justice and Texas Youth Commission programs; and
 - School district performance reports from the Academic Excellence Indicator System.
- Gather and organize information and data from the identified sources. See **Appendix 4** for Needs Inventory and Asset Inventory worksheets.
- Analyze the collected data and information by mapping the priority needs to available assets and documenting the specific findings. The product of mapping the community needs to resources will result in a list of programming strategies to meet the needs of ACE participants and maximize the use of local resources. Figure 2 features a diagram which illustrates mapping assets to needs to generate a list of program strategies to inform ACE activity development. See **Appendix 5** for a Strategy Development worksheet. Activity development is described in Task 3.
- Develop a set of recommended program strategies for selecting appropriate centers, activity types, priority needs, potential community partnerships, and broadly defined goals.
- Prepare a summary report that describes the assessment process, answers the initial guiding questions, and describes the recommendations emerging from the process.

CONDUCTING A CAMPUS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

After completing the community needs assessment, a more targeted campus needs assessment should be conducted for each campus participating as an ACE center. A systematic campus needs assessment will involve steps similar to those in the community needs assessment process and should result in clear directives for each campus in need of afterschool services. (See Figure 1 - Needs and Asset Inventories for a diagram of the inventory process) The steps include:

- Identify the purpose, target population, and create guiding questions for the assessment focused on identifying specific issues, needs, and resources for each campus that will be served by the ACE program.
- Determine necessary information and data to gather, as well as appropriate collection formats that will effectively address the guiding questions such as appropriate program, logistics, staffing, resources, and activities aligned with ACE goals. (See **Appendix 3** for needs assessment resources.) Useful information sources¹ include:

¹ These reports and resources can be found by contacting your district's Curriculum Coordinator, campus Principal and PEIMS Coordinator. It is recommended that this data be reviewed and assessed prior to having program planning/design conversations with campus leaders and prior to responding to the RFA or developing your Project and Center Plans.

- district and campus improvement plans and goals;
 - school performance reports which include graduation rates, promotion rates, discipline data, attendance rates and student test results;
 - student and family surveys;
 - interviews with school staff including counselors, Title I liaisons, teachers, principal, etc.;
 - current campus partners (i.e., YMCA, Communities in Schools);
 - other services already offered for students and families on the campus; and
 - curriculum maps/scope and sequence plans used during the school day.
- Gather and organize information and data from identified sources. See **Appendix 4** for Needs Inventory and Asset Inventory worksheets.
 - Analyze the collected data and information by mapping the priority needs to available assets and documenting the specific findings. The product of mapping the campus needs to resources will result in a list of programming strategies to meet the needs of ACE participants and maximize the use of local resources. Figure 2 features a diagram which illustrates mapping assets to needs to generate a list of program strategies to inform ACE activity development. See **Appendix 5** for a Strategy Development worksheet. Activity development is described in Task 3.
 - Develop a set of recommended program strategies to address issues & gaps between current and ideal situations and to inform recommendations for the most appropriate program structure, use of potential campus resources, collaborations with similar programs, and specific activities that target the needs of the campus and utilize relevant campus resources.
 - Prepare a summary report that describes the assessment process, answers the initial guiding questions, and describes the recommendations emerging from the process.

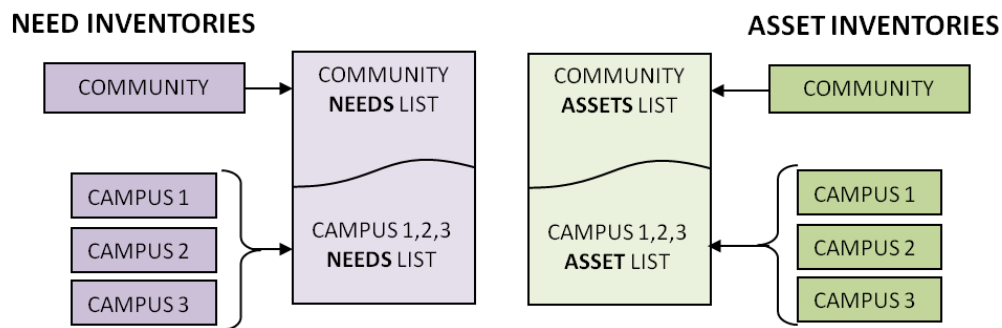


Figure 1 - Needs and Asset Inventories

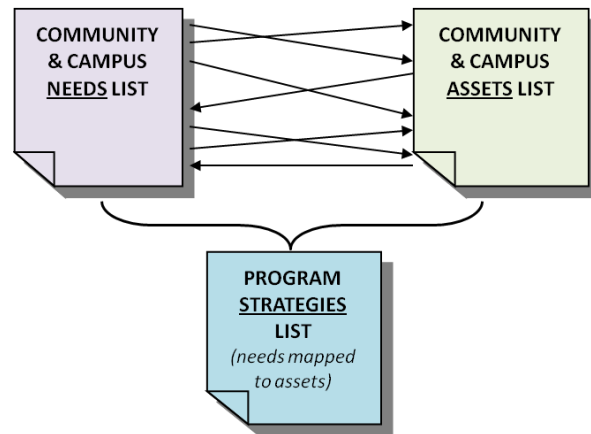


Figure 2 - Mapping Assets to Needs

TASK 2: COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Regular outreach and communication with key program stakeholders from the beginning and during the life of the grant is a key for creating an enduring program. Programs with strong community and school/family support are more likely to be seen as valuable and more likely to sustainⁱⁱ. Grantees are expected to document their outreach and communications in the form of meeting agendas, contact records, flyers, invitations, etc. Key strategies for outreach include:

- regular communications to principals, school day staff, partners, school board members, other key stakeholders (i.e. attending school day staff meetings);
- regular community networking (i.e., attending local community meetings such as the Chamber of Commerce, Lion’s Club, etc.);
- creating a Community Afterschool Task Force (required for Cycles 5 & 6 and described below);
- using the ACE Promo Center and other outreach materials which TEA provides for Grantee use. See examples of the materials at <http://mytexasace.org/course/view.php?id=8>; and
- Sharing successes and evaluation results of Texas ACE and your ACE program (i.e. school board meetings, etc.).

COMMUNITY AFTERSCHOOL TASK FORCE

To develop a comprehensive strategic plan, grantees in Cycles 5 and 6 must address collaboration, partnership and community support by developing a Community Afterschool Task Force (CTF). The CTF shall consist of members who are reflective of the community in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity; the CTF members shall represent agencies, businesses, the partners and vendors for your Texas ACE program and other youth programs, school district, students and family members. Both the Project Director and a member of the school district served by the program must serve on the CTF. Please note that another existing community board or organization may serve as the CTF and while not required for Cycle 7 grantees, it is strongly recommended that community members are regularly involved in many aspects of the grant including the needs assessment, inventory and

mapping process, project planning, identifying and securing partners, etc. For all CTF or other outreach activities, it is recommended that grantees document their work with meeting agendas, minutes, partner rosters, sign-in sheets, or other relevant documentation.

Some steps to consider when creating the Community Afterschool Task Force include:

- scanning the community for prospective members;
- identifying and contacting prospective members;
- creating a plan for regular meetings (incorporated into the grantee project plan);
- defining task force role and products;
- reflecting on the progress of the group and their contributions to meeting ACE goals and using these reflections to improve their work and your program.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Grantees in Cycles 5 and 6 must develop a five-year strategic plan that addresses promotion of the program, expansion of services, and program sustainability. The strategic plan, required by the end of the grantee's first year, must be updated annually during the continuation process. The Superintendent and Principals from participating centers must participate in updating and implementing the strategic plan along with the assistance of the Community Afterschool Task Force.

TASK 3: DEVELOPING ACTIVITY TYPES TO MEET NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Out of school time provides a great opportunity to deliver innovative and engaging activities to students and their families that *expand* on the school day. Grantees are encouraged to be creative when identifying activity types, but also to investigate and integrate elements of those that have shown impact. This can be done by reviewing the latest research on effective practices in Out of School time, as well as from other afterschool practitioners via the www.MyTexasACE.org online portal. The *types of activities* offered will differ from grantee to grantee, but should be informed by and aligned with what emerges from the needs assessment process (Task 1). Project Directors should work collaboratively with their Community Afterschool Task Force, Site Coordinators, partners, and school day staff to:

- create activity types;
- ensure the quality of these activities; and
- coordinate the logistics of these activities to ensure timely delivery.

CREATING ACTIVITY TYPES

Each center will develop activities or programs balanced across the four core components: Academic Assistance; Enrichment; Family and Parental Support Services; and College and Workforce Readiness (For examples see the Four-Component Activity Guide in **Appendix 6**). The Four-Component Activity Guide establishes a foundation for improving student success. Activities in each of the four components must be provided by each center, each term (fall/spring/summer), and must focus on areas of need as indicated by results of community and campus needs assessments conducted in Task 1. Activities are not limited to those on the Four-Component Activity Guide but must follow these same guidelines.

ENSURING THE QUALITY OF ACTIVITIES

Grantees are encouraged to evaluate each activity to ensure that it not only aligns with TEA's required Four-Component Activity Guide, but also with the requirements of the Department of Education (i.e., the principles of effectiveness), with the grant requirements (i.e., aligned with TEKS, must expand and enhance learning), and with objectives set for the ACE grant. A sample activity alignment form that may help track the alignment and quality of activities is in **Appendix 7**.

Resources for Planning and Implementing Engaging Activities for Students and Families

Having students and families engaged in the afterschool program is one of TEA's critical success factors to ensure program success (see **Appendix 1** for CSFs). There are many activities listed on the ACE Activity Database (<http://activity.mytexasace.org/description/showDashboardMain>) which have been used by current grantees and proven successful. These activity plans are available for use as starting points when creating your campus schedule of activities and were developed using the Texas ACE Activity and Lesson Plan Worksheets that specifically integrate:

- Texas ACE goals and objectives along with the Four-Component Activity Guide types;
- national and state standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, Technology Applications TEKS, English Language Proficiency, Texas College Readiness, and Partnership for 21st Century Skills);
- engaged learning strategies (Modified 5E lesson cycle, Global Learning, Project Based Learning, Field Trips, Service Learning, Technology, Cooperative Learning);
- school day and family connections; and
- activity reflections from afterschool staff and participants.

Grantees are encouraged to use these planning worksheets to guide their activity development. (See the Texas ACE Activity/ Unit & Lesson Plan Worksheets in **Appendix 8**).

You may also refer to other helpful resources when planning activities such as the district's curriculum site that often has Curriculum Maps. These may include higher-order questions, hands-on activities, and a scope and sequence of content area topics that are key in planning when to address high need academic topics. There are also a variety of sites that outline engaging afterschool activities to provide guidance as the program activities are being designed. These sites include Afterschool.org, SEDL.org, and ReadWriteThink.org that offer information on promising practices and databases of afterschool activities for students and families.

Scheduling activities is also a key element to consider when planning activities. It is important to coordinate efforts with others responsible for delivering programs that occur before and after school on each campus. This will help ensure that you are working together and not in competition with these extra-curricular activities, especially at the middle and high school levels. There are a variety of ways that grantees schedule Texas ACE activities. These include rotating students through a variety of activities within a day or throughout the week. A sample center schedule is provided in **Appendix 9**.

Educational Field Trips

Educational field trips are allowable when they are pre-approved, planned instructional activities that involve students in learning experiences difficult to replicate in a classroom setting and provide hands-on activities that encourage students to experiment and ask questions. The Texas ACE Activity Worksheets are useful tools when planning educational field trips as it helps document the alignment of the field trip with program goals. The Request for Application, Part 2: Program Guidelines, Appendix: Guidelines Related to Specific Costs clearly provides guidelines related to field trips. It is important to think creatively and to integrate technology to leverage funds and take students and families to out of reach locations via the internet. Grantees have taken their participants on Virtual or Electronic Field trips such as:

- college/university tours;
- explorations of wildlife in the Rain Forest;
- traveling through History with a walking tour of the U.S. Constitution and Museums; and
- space tours.

See the MyTexasACE.org portal for more resources on Virtual Field Trips. To obtain approval on educational field trips that are not pre-approved, you may send the request and unit/lesson plan electronically through MyTexasACE at <http://mytexasace.org/course/view.php?id=40> or you may send the request to the Texas ACE Help Desk at TexasACE21@edvanceresearch.com.

Securing Adequate Space for Activities

One of the most challenging tasks in getting your program started may be securing adequate, safe space to provide your activities. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Campus Principal should be created to outline the needs and responsibilities of the ACE Program Staff and the Campus Administration. Be sure to include provisions within the MOU for times when the school day needs space for their extended day program activities (i.e., PTA activities, special events, including outdoor and indoor areas) and staff (work areas, storage for supplies and materials). These should also include any provisions for any changes (emergency or unplanned) in the use of space with ample notification and back-up locations. For example, an emergency staff meeting may require the use of the cafeteria that is the designated place where tutoring activities occur. Being proactive and identifying a back-up plan that might require students and instructors to move to designated portables for any unplanned or emergency situations should be included. Also, consideration should be made to ensure the safety of students, their families and center staff during delivery of all ACE programming. To assist grantees in ensuring a safe environment, an ACE Safety Checklist has been created, see **Appendix 10**. Each ACE Center is expected to complete the ACE Safety Checklist annually as part of the ACE PRIME Assessment visit discussed in Section D: Quality Assurance.

ACE programs also make use of adjunct sites to offer programming for students and families. An adjunct site is a facility where supplementary programming/activities occur on an occasional basis and support the activities offered at the main center. (For example: swimming pools, recreational facilities, bowling alley, etc.). Remember that activities at adjunct sites do not replace or exceed the amount of programming offered at the main center that is designated in the grant application. See sample memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Campus Leaders in **Appendix 11**.

Working across grant to set-up Activities

While each campus may have different needs, many of the activities offered will be similar. Assigning one or two designated staff to input activities into TX21st² will ensure consistency in reporting. Once activities are entered, Site Coordinators can then set up their sessions specific to their center within the activities.

MANAGE PROGRAM LOGISTICS

ACE programs consist of many moving parts. Key areas of logistics that will require the regular attention of each Site Coordinator and front-line staff member are:

- space for programming (campus, adjunct site, back-up location when need arises);
- nutritional snacks (procurement, storage, distribution);
- transportation (bussing schedules, parent permissions);
- safety (emergency plan, contact procedures i.e. parent and school administrator in emergency event); and
- maintaining center supply lists/inventory.

As needs arise, use what you have learned from managing logistics to update your policy and procedure handbook (described in Task 5 below) to help run a smooth program.

TASK 4: RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

STUDENT RECRUITMENT PLANNING

The grant is designed to serve students in most need of academic support, adult advocacy, and enrichment opportunities. To communicate this focus to the community, grantees should create a set of strategies for student recruitment and enrollment. These strategies should be included in your Policy and Procedure Handbook (described in Task 5), as well as posted in the ACE Enrollment Packet and Parent Handbook. The ACE Program is voluntary and grantees must not mandate or require student participation. Be sure that the Enrollment Packet and Parent Handbook are provided in English and Spanish (or the language most used by your participants). See **Appendix 12** for Enrollment Packet and Parent Handbook samples.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVITY PLANNING

Engaging families is critical to the success of your ACE program, yet getting family members to participate regularly is the area where grantees report having the most difficulty. In recent statewide evaluations, TEA has learned that students who had at least one adult family member participating with them in center activities participated in more activities than students with no family members participating. The data show that once they do participate, adult family members return to participate again at a very high rate.ⁱⁱⁱ When ACE programs reach out to and engage families everyone stands to benefit—youth, family members, programs, communities, and even schools. Specifically, research shows that family engagement can:

² TEA's statewide, web-based daily student tracking application; please see Section 2: Data Requirements of this document for more information about the TX21st Student Tracking system.

- **Support improved participation in afterschool programs.** Families are critical partners in afterschool programs' recruitment and retention efforts. They are often a program's best ambassadors, not only in encouraging their children to participate, but in reaching out to other families to help them understand the importance of participation in afterschool programming.^{iv}
- **Benefit afterschool participants themselves.** When afterschool programs are intentional about their family engagement strategies then program participants tend to exhibit better outcomes. For example, a study of 96 school-based afterschool programs supported by The After-School Corporation (TASC) efforts to engage families (including hiring a parent coordinator and communicating regularly with families at pick-up time) were some of the most common features among the 10 programs whose participants had the highest academic performance.^v Similarly, a Massachusetts statewide study of quality afterschool programs found that communication with families was one of six quality indicators associated with positive academic and behavioral youth outcomes, notably, on improved relationships with adults.^{vi}
- **Impact family engagement with learning at school.** Family engagement in afterschool programs can be leveraged to improve family engagement in learning. For example, some research studies have found that family engagement in afterschool can lead to greater involvement in school events, increased assistance with homework, and more encouragement for reading.^{vii}

When developing your Family Engagement Component, the Harvard Family Research Project suggests the following four strategies:

- **Support Families:** focus on families' assets, consider the concerns and needs of the families and children served, and solicit family input. Activities would include family engagement workshops, adult education classes, and health/social service support.
- **Communicate and build trusting relationships with families:** communicate frequently and in positive ways, be there for families, provide leadership opportunities for families. Activities would include welcoming family members by name when they enter the building, conduct periodic family orientations, ask current families to help you with orientation to new families and offering social events.
- **Hire and develop a family-focused staff:** family members are more likely to become engaged when they are encouraged and feel welcome. Strategies would include designating a staff member with family engagement responsibility, hire staff who share experiences with the families you serve, and foster professional development. Activities would include exercise classes, first aid courses, art classes, etc. designed for both family members and staff.
- **Build linkages across individuals and organizations:** partnering with local organizations and your campus are the means for meaningful family engagement. Activities would include: serving as a liaison between families and schools, provide workshops on how family members can obtain services their children need, offer to attend parent/teacher conferences with families and helping family members develop advocacy skills.

For more, information about these strategies, please see **Appendix 13** for the Family Engagement Specialist Guide; **Appendix 14** for a Family Engagement Survey; and *Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School* at <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/focus-on-families!-how-to-build-and-support-family-centered-practices-in-after-school>.

TASK 5: RESOURCING YOUR PROGRAM WITH STAFFING AND PARTNERS

CREATING YOUR ACE TEAM

The required staff positions and number of weekly working hours required for Cycle 7 grantees are outlined in Figure 3 below. Both Cycles 5 and 6 are required to have a full-time Project Director and a Site Coordinator (minimum of 30 hours per week) for each ACE site.

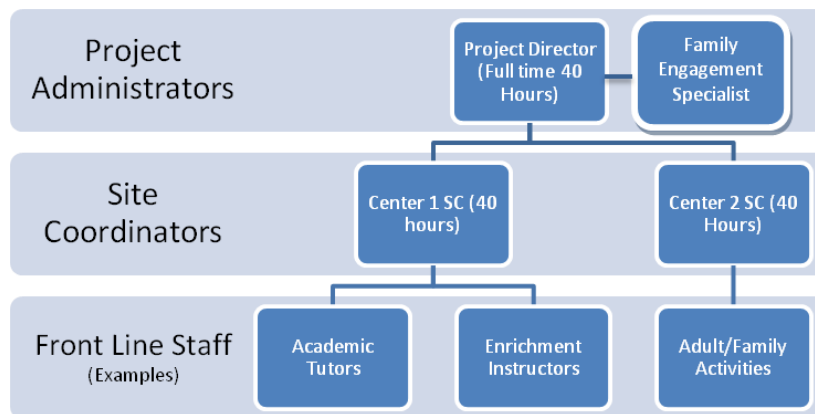


Figure 3- Sample ACE Organization Chart

Sample job descriptions for the following positions can be found in **Appendix 15**:

- Project Director;
- Site Coordinator; and
- Family Engagement Specialist.

Volunteers

The use of volunteers is encouraged and can help provide students with an adult advocate, which is both a critical success factor for Texas ACE (See **Appendix 1** for CSF model) and emphasized in the best practice research on afterschool. Please note: In accordance with Senate Bill 9, all staff and volunteers that participate in the program must be fingerprinted and undergo a criminal background check in order to ensure the safety of all children served in the program. Grantees should refer to their district or agency policies regarding fingerprinting procedures. For the most current fingerprinting requirements see TEA's website http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=5535&menu_id=840&menu_id2=794.

SECURING PARTNERSHIPS AND CONNECTING WITH THE SCHOOL DAY

Creating a strong partnership begins with clearly managing the expectations of both parties. ACE grantees are required to have written agreements in place with all external partners, including vendors, sub-contractors, and community partners. ACE grantees that sub-contract services will typically have a contract in place that outlines the services to be provided, but it is also important to secure a written agreement when no contractual relationship exists with the partner so that both the ACE program and the partner have documented their understanding of the needs and the services to be provided (for example: use of facilities, in-kind services/ donations, providing PEIMS data, Adult Learning classes, etc.). See a sample written agreement with an external partner in **Appendix 16**.

Connecting with the school day leaders and staff is key to a successful ACE program. Consider the following as you build your relationships with school day leaders and staff:

- Attend school day team meetings and trainings; invite them to your training sessions.
- Observe school day lessons.
- Hold regular principal meetings to debrief about program progress.
- Access school day curriculum and resources.
- Meet regularly with Title I parent involvement staff, counselors, and others who regularly connect with students and families.
- Meet regularly with school resource officers or campus police.

See a sample written agreement to partner with school day leaders and staff in **Appendix 11**.

CREATING A STAFF HANDBOOK FOR POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Each ACE program should have a written handbook with a set of policies and procedures for operating so that all ACE staff, campus personnel, and ACE partners understand how to do their work. Policy handbooks typically contain information about roles and responsibilities of staff; key contact information; emergency plan; code of conduct and dress code; appropriate uses of space and materials; and data privacy policy. Other important information could include nutritional snack guidelines, enrollment and discipline procedures, site related policies such as storage, copy machine use, common area use, etc. See sample Handbook in **Appendix 17**.

TRAINING YOUR STAFF & PARTNERS, INCLUDING VENDORS AND SUB-CONTRACTORS

ACE staff must use strategies learned during training and translate those strategies into noticeable differences in instruction and facilitated activities for students and their families. The use of innovative instructional strategies and strategies learned through training are critical success factors for the Texas ACE Program (See **Appendix 1** for the CSF model).

Grantees are expected to provide training for staff, and partners when appropriate, at all levels in staff meetings as well as during pre-service and in-service trainings. Grantees generally minimally offer training regarding local policies and procedures, and TEA strongly encourages grantees to go beyond the minimum training to share strategies with staff that help them engage effectively with students and their families. TEA also encourages Grantees to collaborate on and share resources when designing and offering training for staff. For example, multiple Grantees within a geographic

area can jointly purchase a training product or guest speaker/consultant to provide support for staff.

Training provided for ACE grantees includes webinars, various regional trainings in specific core content areas, and other program-related topics, and an annual summer conference. Additionally, Edvance Research, Inc. (Edvance), TEA's Program Enhancement & Quality Assurance contractor, provides one-on-one training and technical assistance to grantees based on the results of the ACE PRIME Assessment (described in Section D: Quality Assurance Requirements). Programs must budget for staff to attend all required trainings. The selection of the appropriate team members for each training session is dependent upon the contents of the training session. Grantees will receive information on the required meetings, various training opportunities, and summer conferences from Edvance, on behalf of TEA.

When budgeting for any travel expenses, grantees should use the current per diem rates for the areas in which they are travelling as outlined by the U.S. General Services Administration at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>. TEA expects Grantees to use funds judiciously. For example, selecting training and conference opportunities in Texas when available and high-quality or carefully selecting consultants and sub-contractors that do not duplicate services provided by TEA.

TEA Required Training

TEA offers a variety of training opportunities throughout the year. Grantees are required to budget for at least two regional trainings. Details for the required training sessions will be announced via email and at www.MyTexasACE.org as they become available.

ACE Annual Conference

Each Grantee is required to attend the ACE Annual Conference. The Project Director is required to attend and is encouraged to bring several additional grant staff (such as Site Coordinators, Family Engagement Specialist, and/or Fiscal staff). Each year, based on budget availability, TEA will outline the number of staff that each Grantee is allowed to bring. Note that TEA expects all conference attendees will share information learned at the conference with staff and provide necessary training to implement new practices.

Out of School Time Conferences

Attendance at one of the approved Out of School Time conferences is required for each ACE Project Director (National Afterschool Association, Foundations, BOOST or the 21st CCLC Summer Institute). These conferences are typically hosted out of state and Grantees are welcome to register other grant staff depending on budget availability. Grantees may attend other related conferences with prior approval from TEA. You may submit your request through the ACE Help Desk at TexasACE21@edvanceresearch.com. Grantees should be conscientious of the proper use of funds when travelling for conferences.

HOLD REGULAR STAFF MEETINGS AND REVIEW PROJECT PLAN

In a recent study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation^{viii}, researchers identified that holding regular staff meetings was one of five most critical factors for increasing student retention in an

out-of- school time program. Regular staff meetings can offer “opportunities for problem solving, professional development, and staff interaction that may boost staff members’ morale and encourage them to stay involved with the program longer, which some providers suggested can keep youth engaged over time.” Meetings should be planned in advance and documented with attendance lists and meeting minutes. Discussion of the Project Plan is included in Section D.

IMPLEMENT STAFF OBSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

As part of an ongoing internal monitoring process, each Project Director should observe Site Coordinators and front line staff to evaluate their performance, give recognition, and offer constructive feedback for improvement when necessary. Site Coordinators should also do the same with their staff and document the staff observation process and results. It is also good practice to have Site Coordinators and front-line staff provide feedback on their direct supervisor’s performance. Many Grantees ask students for feedback about the program and staff as well.

Ongoing Staff Development

Project Directors must plan for ongoing staff development to provide up-to-date information, as well as offer support in areas where staff need good ideas and improved skill. Training can be provided during staff meetings, at conferences or regional events, and through your train-the-trainer sessions. See the “Where to get Additional Support” section in this guide to learn about training and resources provided by TEA and other external providers to enhance your staff development effort.

CONDUCT REGULAR PARTNERSHIP REVIEWS

ACE grantees should regularly review the performance of their partners/ vendors to ensure that they are meeting the ACE grant requirements. Grantees typically conduct partner reviews via surveys to staff and participants and review that information during quarterly partner meetings. Information gathered from these reviews create a level of accountability and assist ACE grantees in determining whether they should maintain the partnership or seek alternative partners / vendors.

SECTION B: DATA REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS BY CYCLE

- Required
- Recommended/Best-Practice

Requirement	Cycle 5	Cycle 6	Cycle 7
Task 6: Data Collection and Reporting			
Coordinate with PEIMS Coordinator	■	■	■
Collect student grades in core content areas	■	■	■
Collect student attendance during the regular school day	■	■	■
Collect student behavior reports and referrals during the school day	■	■	■
Pre- and Post-test assessments for tutorials	■	■	■
Program Activity data collection: ACE Attendance and Participation, Partnerships, Staffing, Funding Sources, etc.	■	■	■
Data confidentiality (FERPA, PIA, and Encryption of Removable Data)	■	■	■
Weekly data entry in TX21st	■	■	■
Daily data entry in TX21st	•	•	•
Monthly review of data by Project Directors	■	■	■

TASK 6: DEVELOP PROCESSES FOR DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

TEA thoroughly reviews and approves data submitted by grantees through the CCLC-TX21st Student Tracking System, also known as TX21st, before submitting the state data annually to the federal [21st CCLC Profile and Performance Information Collection System \(PPICS\)](#), managed by American Institutes for Research who in turn provides reports on the results for the 21st CCLC program across all states to the Department of Education, Congress, etc...

TEA staff reviews and analyzes data collected from each Texas ACE grantee (or fiscal agent) each term (fall, spring, and summer) through TX21st to ensure that all programs are meeting state and federal programmatic requirements and as a strategy for identifying best practices and programmatic needs. See Figure 4 on the next page for a depiction of the process.



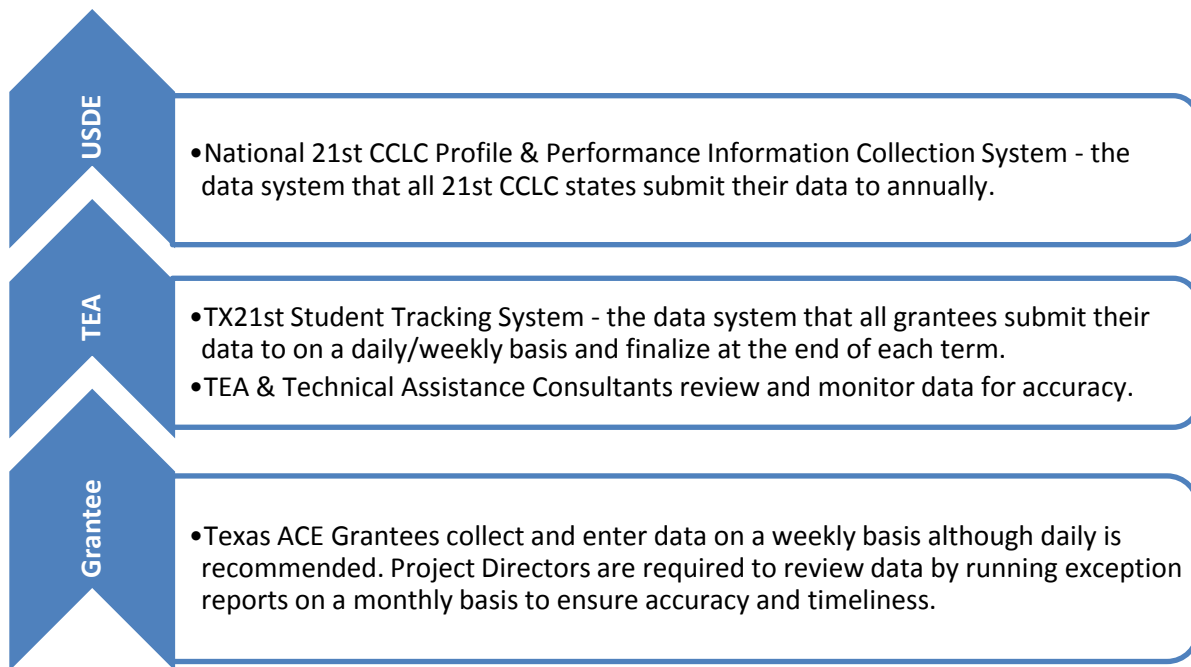


Figure 4- Data Review Process

The types of data entered into the TX21st Student Tracking System and sources in Figure 5 below:

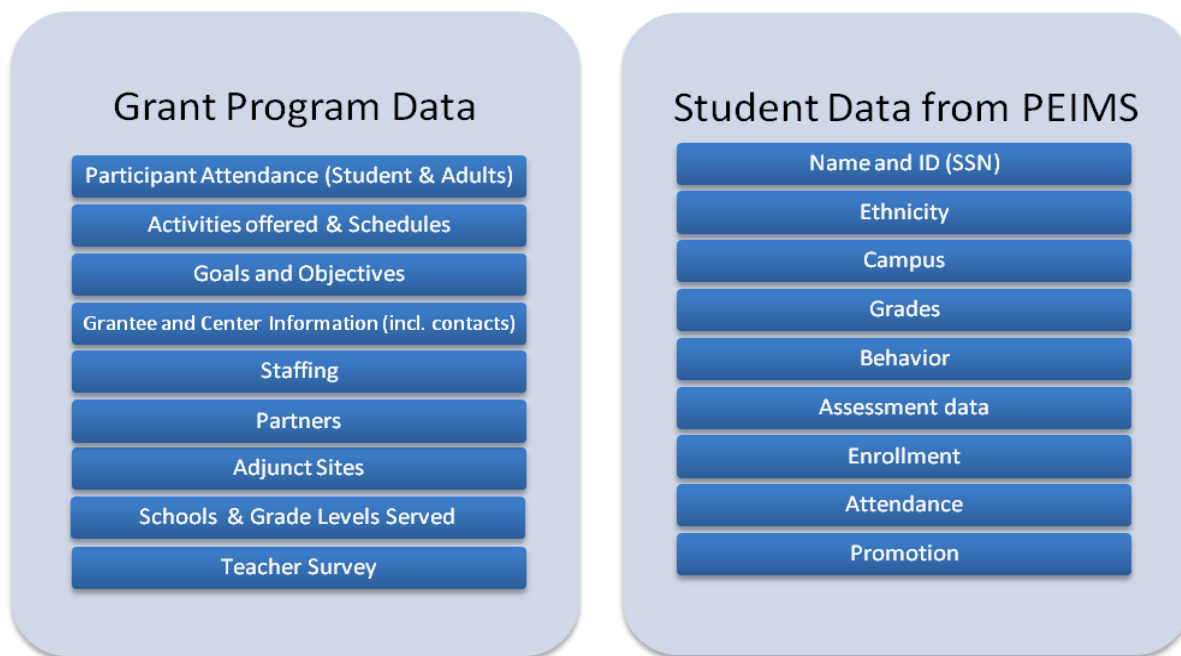


Figure 5 - TX21st Data Types and Sources

POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR DATA MANAGEMENT

Student and adult participant data is considered confidential information. All grantees and users of TX21st must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 - <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>;
- Public Information Act (PIA) - https://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/pia/piasign_oag.pdf; and
- Texas Administrative Code Title 1 Part 10 Chapter 202 - [http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=1&pt=10&ch=202&rl=Y](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=1&pt=10&ch=202&rl=Y).

It is strongly recommended that each grantee create a set of documented policies and procedures for data collection, management and reporting, share those policies and procedures with district or agency leadership and provide training for all staff. These policies should be included in the program's policy and procedure manual (See example in **Appendix 17**) and reviewed by the appropriate fiscal agent's administrator. TEA also expects for each Project Director to conduct regular monitoring of staff at each center to ensure that the policies are being implemented appropriately. It is expected that all documentation such as sign-in sheets to support the data entered into TX21st should be kept on premises as a backup and for potential audit purposes.

STAFF ACCESS TO TX21ST

Each grantee is required to request staff access to TX21st and access must be updated (added, modified or revoked for new/ departing employees) each term. A step-by-step guide and the application for gaining access to TX21st for all roles are included in **Appendix 19**.

There are four user roles in TX21st: Center Staff, Grantee Staff, Grantee Approver, and Evaluator. Each of the roles and their duties are outlined below:

- Center Staff: Center staff include the Site Coordinator who is responsible for entering data on a daily/weekly basis and notifying the Project Director when their data is ready for final approval. For each of these users, applicants must indicate their Center.
- Grantee Staff: Grantee staff include the Project Director and any other grant administrators responsible for reviewing data on a regular basis, submitting TX21st/ TEA SE access requests to TEA, and should have grantee staff role and be one of the two required *Approvers*.
- Grantee Approver: TEA requires that each grantee have two Grantee Approvers who are responsible for reviewing finalized data and approving the data for final submission to TEA at the end of each term.
- Evaluator: TEA has created a role for the Independent Evaluator to allow them access to program data, such as enrollment, demographic, attendance and activity information.

Family Engagement Specialists are typically assigned using the Grantee Staff role as they have a responsibility to support all campuses, but are not required to enter student or family attendance data.

ACCESSING TX21ST

The CCLC-TX21st Student Tracking system is one of many data applications in the TEA Secure Environment (TEA SE) which is used to collect data from programs offered through the Texas Education Agency. You can access the TEA SE application from the TEA web site at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us>, and click on the *Sign-up for TEA SE* button in the right-hand navigation bar. From the TEA SE Applications Reference page, follow the appropriate link for requesting access to the *Twenty-first (21st) CCLC Student Tracking System*.

The Project Director must submit a request for TEA SE access for *each* of their staff outlined above specifically for the CCLC-TX21st Student Tracking system (see **Appendix 19** for a sample Request for Access form and Getting Access to TX21st Process Guide) to TEA upon receipt of their Notification of Grant Award (NOGA) to ensure that their grant is set up and data is entered on a timely basis.

Important Notes / Common Errors:

- Each TEA SE submission must be approved by the Superintendent of the district(s) where their students are being served or by the Executive Director of the Non-Profit / CBO. (See **Appendix 20** for the memo to Superintendents that outlines TEA's data requirements and **Appendix 19** for the Getting Access to TX21st Process Guide that outlines required signatures).
- **School Districts, ESCs, and CIS:** If the grantee is a school district, ESC, or CIS they must request access for each identified staff member directly online by following the link to the 21st CCLC online access request link at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2684>.
- **Non-Profits and CBOs:** If the grantee is a non-profit, or community based organization, they are required to submit an access request paper form to TEA with the required signatures which can be downloaded at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/forms/tease/21stcclcc.htm>.
- **Incorrect NOGA:** When requesting access to TX21st, be sure and use your 1st Year NOGA number. This is the most commonly made mistake that causes a delay in receiving TX21st approved access.
- **Forgot My Password:** Click "Did you forget your password" online in the TX21st application and follow the password reset process. You will receive an email from the system to reset your password, if you do not, check your junk or spam mail folders to access the message and follow its instructions.

Important Notes for ESCs and CIS grantees:

- CIS and ESC Executive Directors and their Designees have the ability to request TEA SE user accounts and modifications for TX21st online. The Secondary Request Submitter role in User Administration + is for an organization Executive Director who needs to submit staff requests for access to TEA online applications. The Secondary Request Submitter may submit for up to three applications.
- To obtain this role, the Executive Director should apply for a TEA SE account with User Administration +, select Secondary Request Submitter role, and on the next screen, darken

the applications for which she or he wants to request for the staff member. Fill in the Organization Scope field with your CIS/ESC number. TEA will confirm independently that the Executive Director should have this responsibility and approve or deny the request.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT TX21ST

TEA has created several support documents to help grantees learn how to use TX21st Student Tracker data system and lack of knowledge about the system is not considered an excuse for late, missing or inaccurate data. Please access the MyTexasACE My Data pages to discover resources to help access and use the TX21st system (<http://mytexasace.org/course/view.php?id=5>). The TX21st system also has embedded tutorials to help guide you along with way.

ACQUIRING ADDITIONAL REQUIRED STUDENT DATA

In addition to grant staff, it is also important to involve several district staff from the beginning. Upon receiving your Notification of Grant Award, Project Directors and Site Coordinators should contact the campus or district PEIMS Coordinator and the School Attendance clerk to alert them to the type of data you will need from the PEIMS system and to determine timely receipt of the student data required for entry into TX21st. It is recommended that you have a written agreement in place with these staff to ensure their cooperation. A sample written agreement with PEIMS Coordinator is in **Appendix 21**.

INTERNAL MONITORING & DATA REVIEW

An integral part of determining whether grant goals and objectives are being met is through ongoing internal monitoring and review of program data. Project Directors and Site Coordinators should employ the following resources, tools, data sources, and strategies as part of this process:

- Review TX21st Reports (Grantee, Center, and Exception) and Exports for data summaries and details about programming, Regular Participant attendance (students who attend 30 or more program days), and suspect/missing data. These reports and exports are instrumental in creating Progress Reports to communicate program success and to identify areas in need of improvement with stakeholders and staff.
- Project Directors and Site Coordinators should conduct Center and Activity observations regularly to monitor student and family engagement, discover best practices in grantee and center management, and identify both effective instructional strategies and areas of growth for staff and the ACE program.
- Review staff attendance documented through time and effort logs.
- Conduct data review meetings with staff to reflect on program goals and objectives and take appropriate program adjustments and plans of action.
- Project Directors and Site Coordinators are responsible for reviewing data on a regular basis (at least monthly) to ensure data accuracy and integrity. Data certification/submission is required at the end of each term (see TX21st Checklist and Calendar in **Appendix 22** for deadlines). A variety of TX21st reports and export options support the data review and certification process. The *Data Review Webinar* on the MyTexasACE My Data page provides information about how to prepare for data submission.

- Analyze Year-End Data to report to TEA in the Final Yearly Report and share yearly progress with stakeholders, staff, and administrators and inform program adjustments.

FINAL YEARLY REPORT

Each grantee is required to complete a Final Yearly Report (FYR) for TEA which includes information about the grant beyond what is collected in TX21st. The FYR offers grantees an opportunity to comment on:

- the Four Component Activity Guide and its impact on the program;
- performance measures specific to the grant application required for Federal reporting purposes (GPRA measures; see more at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/performance.html>);
- performance regarding TEA's Critical Success Factors (**Appendix 1**);
- technical assistance and tools received by TEA and its contractors; and
- program sustainability in future years.

SECTION C: FISCAL REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS BY CYCLE

■ Required

• Recommended/Best-Practice

Requirement	Cycle 5	Cycle 6	Cycle 7
Task 7: Develop Processes for Sound Fiscal Management			
Detailed Program and Center Budgets	■	■	■
Funds are appropriately budgeted for Project Director, Site Coordinators, and Family Engagement Specialists to attend all trainings, conferences, workshops, and meetings, to include at least one out-of-school time and state conferences and other technical assistance trainings as requested by TEA	■	■	■
Financial reports (i.e., end of month grant expenditures, draw down status, time and effort logs)	■	■	■
Document other funding sources used to supplement funds for the purpose of the grant	■	■	■
Maintain Appropriate Documentation	■	■	■
Fiscal control and accounting procedures must permit the tracking of funds to a level of expenditure adequate to establish that funds have been used in accordance with the approved grant application	■	■	■
Budgeted expenditures are shown by class-object code	■	■	■
Accurate time and effort records	■	■	■
Financial management system must meet federal financial management standards and must provide for accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the grant project	■	■	■
Submit grant amendment when appropriate	■	■	■

TASK 7: DEVELOP A FISCAL PLAN TO MANAGE GRANT FUNDS

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXAS ACE GRANT

Texas ACE programs are funded by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program administered by the U.S. Department of Education (www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/) and managed by the Texas Education Agency. Applying for funding under this grant is a competitive process where applications are submitted by qualifying prospective grantees (local education agencies and nonprofit organizations, etc.) and awarded based on the scores given by application reviewers. Grantees apply for continuation for years two (2) through five (5) based on their performance in the prior year(s). This grant is considered a *discretionary grant* which means:

- the fiscal agent of the grant must expend their local funds and then submit for reimbursement of these funds through the Texas Education Agency;
- these funds can only be used for allowable costs incurred by the Texas ACE program;
- it is expected that the grantee will expend all funds awarded for the year (any remaining funds are not rolled over to the next grant year); and
- must follow federal and state grant requirements as outlined in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars³ and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

It is important for Project Directors, Site Coordinators, and grantee staff responsible for managing the fiscal duties to understand the following:

- allowable and unallowable costs;
- reasonable and necessary costs;
- Federal Cost Principles;
- program income;
- donations and fundraising;
- community service activities;
- budget amendments;
- continuation application process;

TEA strongly recommends reviewing detailed explanations regarding the points above in Part 2: Program Guidelines of each RFA and viewing the Texas ACE Fiscal Requirements Podcast episode and the NOGA, Now What? Podcast Episodes six (6) through nine (9) available through the Texas Education Agency on iTunes University or at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/TexasACE21>.

DETAILED PROGRAM AND CENTER BUDGETS

Grantees typically have specific organizational policies regarding fiscal management and those policies should provide the foundation for maintaining grant budgets. A responsibility of the Project Director is to create a program budget and update it on a regular basis (monthly recommended).

³ For a side-by-side view of the three most relevant OMB circulars see: http://maverick.tea.state.tx.us:8080/guidelines/Reference%20Materials/CostPrinciples_sidebyside.pdf

This ensures the expenditure of all project funds for each year during the life of the grant. Below are steps for you to consider in planning, implementing, and updating the program budget:

- **Refer to the proposed budget from your grant application.** It is important that your projected program budget adheres to what was proposed in your grant application as well as document supplemental funding sources. See **Appendix 22** for a Direct Costs Budget Worksheet that will assist in your overall budgeting process. If there are any significant changes to the budget, a budget amendment must be submitted to TEA for approval (more information regarding amendments is available later in this section).
- **Involve Site Coordinators in center budgeting.** Center budgets will inform the overall grant budget. Site Coordinators are an integral part of activity planning which involves identifying and coordinating activities across centers as well as budgeting for center activities. Site Coordinators should consider the following as they estimate their center budgets: the number of anticipated participants, the required materials/equipment, staff and the number of hours for activity delivery, and activity total cost. See **Appendix 24** for a sample Estimated Activity Cost worksheet. Also, remember to budget for participation in TEA regional trainings and conferences, as well as other professional development activities for grant leaders and staff. See Section A: Program Requirements for more details on required trainings.
- **Provide each Site Coordinator with their center's budget.** Once the grant budget is final, the Project Director should provide each Site Coordinator with his or her Center's budget. Site Coordinators should be required to update it on a monthly basis as expenses are incurred and order materials and supplies using the appropriate forms and procedures set by the Fiscal Agent and Project Director. See **Appendix 25** for a sample Budget Expenditures Tracking form and Supply Request form.
- **Schedule, monthly center budget updates.** The Project Director should update the program budget on a regular basis by compiling center budgets and documenting grant level expenses. See **Appendix 26** for a sample Monthly Budget Update by Center spreadsheet.

PROCESS FOR FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Texas ACE Grantees have different funding requirements based on their grant cycle. Cycle 5 Grantees are required to secure a 10% funding match. This match can consist of an in-kind, cash, or third party donation and is in addition to the amount required to sustain year four/five decreased funding. Cycle 6 & 7 Grantees are required to leverage funds to supplement the program and to build those funds into their program budgets. See **Appendix 27** for a Leverage Funding Chart that will assist in this area. It is important to note that all Grantees are required to demonstrate proof of matching or leveraging funds in each continuation year.

DOCUMENTING OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Costs of organized fundraising, including solicitation of gifts and bequests (such as calling a business to ask for donations for gift cards, food, etc.), endowment drives, financial campaigns, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are not allowable. Costs associated with training on fundraising or grant writing are not allowable. Because grant funds cannot be used to solicit financial support, enlist the community members, volunteers, Community Afterschool Task Force members, and anyone who is not paid with grant funds to engage in these activities on behalf of the program. Many grantees fund the full-time Project Director position 80 to 90 percent from the ACE program and 10 to 20 percent from local funds to allow this person to participate in and coordinate fundraising activities.

MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION

Project Directors should work closely with district/organizational staff responsible for fiscal responsibilities to develop policies and procedures, as well as documentation that meets grant, federal, state, and district/organizational requirements for many functions of the grant. Grant documentation must be retained for five (5) years. Two aspects of documentation are discussed in more detail:

- procuring equipment and supplies and maintaining an accurate inventory; and
- payroll and time and effort documentation.

Procuring Equipment & Supplies and Maintaining an Accurate Inventory

Ensure that you are following district/organizational documentation and guidelines when purchasing equipment and supplies. The process used by many districts and organizations may vary and could include the following steps/procedures:

- requisition for supplies/equipment along with justification as documented by Activity and Lesson Plans;
- approval indicating request is within allowable costs of the grant and included in the approved budget;
- purchase order is created and submitted to vendor indicating specifications (delivery address, payment terms, types, quantities, and agreed prices);
- supplies/equipment are delivered and received before the end of the grant date and receipt of items is documented (date/time/by whom); and
- payment is submitted to vendor and expenses documented in grant budget.

This process can be documented electronically or via paper form. Listen to the Fiscal Requirements Podcast Episode for more information on required documentation.

Payroll and Time & Effort Documentation

Fiscal grant requirements include documenting time and effort of all grant staff. There are two sets of rules for documenting time and effort:

- Governmental Entities such as School Districts should follow the guidelines as stated in Title 2 part 225, Appendix B at http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr225_main_02.tpl.
- Non-Profit Organizations should follow the guidelines as stated in Title 2 Part 230, Appendix B at http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr230_main_02.tpl.

For grant staff **funded 100% out of the Texas ACE grant**, a Periodic Certification is required. This is a simple statement attesting that they worked 100% of the time on the Texas ACE program. Typically school district staff can maintain a semi-annual certification which is signed by their supervisor. Staff from non-profit organizations must keep time and effort records daily even if they are completely funded from the ACE grant.

For grant staff **funded out of two or more different funds**, for example, Title I funds and the Texas ACE grant, a Personnel Activity Report or an Extra Duty Agreement is required. The Personnel Activity Report is a document that accounts for the time they worked on each of the grants they are funded through. The Extra Duty Agreement details the employee's, typically a school-day teacher, additional duties and responsibilities, where a sign-in and sign-out sheet will be sufficient in documenting their time.

Important note: Project Directors should check with the fiscal agent regarding their policies and procedures on documenting grant staff time and effort and include this information in the Employee Handbook (See **Appendix 17** for a sample Staff Handbook and **Appendix 18** for a sample Time and Effort document).

AMENDMENTS

If a grantee needs to deviate from the approved budget in the NOGA, an amendment must be submitted to TEA for approval. The schedules that must be completed as part of an amendment are located in Part 4 of all active RFAs. Below are budgetary and programmatic instances when an amendment might be approved depending on circumstances and documentation.

Budgetary:

- An increase or decrease in the amount approved in any class/object code (i.e., 6100–6600) on Schedule #5—Program Budget Summary by more than 25% of the current amount approved in the class/object code.
- An increase or decrease in the *number of positions* approved on the Payroll Costs.
- A new class/object code is added. Note that if new technology/equipment items are added at the end of the grant period, these additions may not be approved.

Programmatic:

- A change in the name / 9-Digit Campus ID number of a center.
- An addition of feeder schools (which must remain throughout the life of the grant).
- An addition of adjunct sites.
- A change in partnership or in the relationship/ scope of an existing partnership.

- A change in objectives (Cycle 5 grantees only).

The following changes do not require an amendment, but must first be approved by TEA Program Staff and should be documented in the Center Project Plan:

- increasing the number of hours/ days/ weeks or number of participants served;
- making up missed program days over the full year (not substituting hours for days); and
- changing the distribution of program hours per day to better accommodate participant needs (i.e. A 3-6 PM schedule could change to a 7-8 AM and 3-5 PM schedule to better accommodate the needs of participants).

There are no limits on budget amendments; however the last day to submit an amendment to TEA is 90 days prior to the ending date of the grant. **Note:** Additional information on amendments, including descriptions when they are required versus when they are not, are included in Part 3: Schedule Instructions of the RFA, as well as through the NOGA, Now What Podcast episode #8.

CONTINUATION APPLICATION

Texas ACE grantees are expected to submit an application each year for continued funding. For years two (2) through five (5), grantees must maintain the scope and level of program services to students and adults as outlined in the approved year 1 grant. When drafting the continuation application, Project Directors should involve Site Coordinators, administrators, school day staff, family members, students, community members, partners, and other key stakeholders in:

- identifying successes and program impact targeting Texas ACE program goals and objectives, local goals and objectives, and the data supporting these statements;
- identifying new opportunities for growth and needs based on a recent assessment;
- reflecting on lessons learned and emerging best practices that contribute to the field of afterschool;
- creating center project plans that merge new opportunities with lessons learned and best practices; and
- planning the next year's budget.

As stated above, grantees are required to provide the same level of services in each continuation year as stated and awarded in the original/ Year 1 grant application. Because these grants are awarded on a competitive basis, changing the scope of the grant during continuation years will not be permitted. Below are examples of changes that reduce the scope of the grant and are not allowed:

- decreasing the number of program hours or days per week;
- decreasing the number of weeks per year; and
- decreasing the number of students or adult/ family participants served.

RESOURCES FOR FISCAL REQUIREMENTS

There are a variety of resources needed to be able to manage the fiscal requirements of the Texas ACE grant. These human and system resources include:

- district, campus, and/or organizational staff with fiscal responsibilities;
- other department resources (transportation, technology, janitorial, etc.);
- Texas ACE project staff (Project Directors, Site Coordinators, Family Engagement Specialist, Administrative Assistant, etc.);
- financial system (including forms and processes);
- external auditor; and
- Expenditure Reporting System – Merle Hollub, Grants Administration Division from the Texas Education Agency.

It is imperative that the Project Director act as the facilitator and manager of grant funds with support from the fiscal agent resources, and coordinate efforts at the onset of the grant to arrange for the timely procurement of goods and services from external (vendors, contractors, partners) and internal (departments such as technology, transportation, janitorial, etc.) suppliers in a proactive manner so as not to disrupt grant programming.

FUNDING AN ENDURING PROGRAM

It is the intention that funding for the Texas ACE program be used to begin community-wide student and family support programs. Funds should be used to start up and build programs and not relied upon as an ongoing funding source. Grantees that begin planning for an *Enduring Program* at the onset as they are planning and co-creating their grant application with key stakeholders (district and organizational leadership, school administrators, community leaders/members, family members, school day staff, and students) have shown great success in creating lasting partnerships, funding streams, and sustainable programs. There are many opportunities available for Project Directors to explore when seeking out additional funding streams. Project Directors can:

- connect with other local/national funding sources;
- use volunteers; and,
- create partnerships with other programs in your community.

SECTION D: QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS BY CYCLE

- Required
- Recommended/Best-Practice

Requirement	Cycle 5	Cycle 6	Cycle 7
Task 8 –Maintain Quality Assurance Across Program			
Independent Evaluation	■	■(not during year 1)	■
Internal Monitoring	■	■	■
ACE PRIME Assessment	■	■	■
Program Implementation Assurance	■	■	■
Statewide Evaluation	■	■	■
Task 9 –Develop Grantee & Center Project Plans			
Center Plan	■	■	■
Grantee/Administrative Plan	■	■	■
Task 10 –Improve Management Practices			

TASK 8: INTEGRATE QUALITY ASSURANCE ACROSS THE PROGRAM

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

TEA requires that each 21st CCLC/Texas ACE Grant Program work with an independent evaluator to conduct a periodic evaluation which is intended to measure progress toward program goals and inform the process of continuous program improvement. (See the RFA Application Guidelines Part 2: Program Guidelines for TEA Program Requirements.)

TEA has created an *Independent Evaluation Guide*, see **Appendix 28** which was created to help Project Directors and Independent Evaluators accomplish this grant requirement efficiently. Whether your program chooses to contract with an external evaluator (one not employed by the fiscal agent) or work with an internal evaluator (employed by the fiscal agent but NOT directly on the ACE program) the resources in this guide are intended to be helpful as you identify and work with an independent evaluator.

The concepts in the *Independent Evaluation Guide* represent the requirements of the Texas ACE grant program. Resources to create this guide have been collected from other states and national organizations, as well as local evaluators and Project Directors from across Texas. In each section, you will find guidance about various elements of the independent evaluation requirement and templates you can edit as required. Resources displayed or presented in this guide are not official products of or endorsed by the Texas Education Agency, but are provided as a starting place in developing and managing a high-quality Texas ACE program evaluation.

Internal Monitoring

Internal monitoring is a key activity to ensure grantee success. Each grantee should establish a procedure and schedule for internal monitoring minimally of the:

- programming (i.e., activities) at each center;
- participant attendance toward performance goals for regular attendees;
- data entry and security processes;
- staff performance evaluation and development; and
- spending and progress toward budget.

All internal monitoring activities should be documented to provide evidence to TEA that they are occurring regularly. These documented internal monitoring activities will be shared during the ACE PRIME Assessment.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Each grantee will be required to participate in self-assessment and certification processes as designated by TEA. The ACE PRIME Assessment process is fully operational and each grantee will be required to review the protocol, gather and organize the required documentation as outlined in the self-assessment, complete the self-assessment rating, host the Technical Assistance Consultant (TAC) for an on-site visit, review the results of the assessment process with the TAC, and implement the corresponding recommendations for performance improvement (including the development of a program improvement plan when necessary). Both the ACE PRIME Assessment procedure and self-assessment rubric can be found in **Appendix 29**. Note that the ACE Safety Checklist must be completed by each Center for the ACE PRIME Assessment. The ACE Safety Checklist can be found in **Appendix 10**.

Following the ACE PRIME Assessment, the TACs will maintain a Grantee Performance Status Report (GPSR). The GPSR will include the results of the ACE PRIME Assessment; timeliness and quality of data entry; percent of funds downloaded by period; and other management items such as amount of staff turnover and information related to the ongoing work with the independent evaluator. See the GPSR template in **Appendix 30**.

TEA will implement its Program Implementation Assurance (PIA) Process during the Fall of 2011 and Cycle 7 grantees will be evaluated in the Spring of 2012. The purpose of the PIA risk assessment process is to provide TEA an opportunity to assess the risks associated with the implementation of ACE programs and document that the Agency has identified and investigated any significant implementation risks.

STATEWIDE EVALUATION

Each grantee assures its full participation in the statewide evaluation of the ACE program. Grantee participation may include:

- providing responses to surveys (staff/students);
- hosting site visits;
- participating in advisory capacity; and
- providing additional data or documentation to TEA or its evaluator.

TASK 9: DEVELOP PROJECT PLAN (GRANTEE/ADMINISTRATIVE) AND CENTER PLANS

Once a grantee has investigated all of the grant requirements and developed strategies and activities for outreach, recruiting, programming, data collection, reporting and fiscal management, the Grant Project Plan and Center Plans should be developed. A listing of Grant Management Tasks is included in *Appendix 31*.

PROJECT PLAN (GRANTEE/ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN)

The Project Plan is the overall description of how the grantee will carry out all the tasks identified in this document and include the key activities for each of the Center Project Plans. This document is required to be submitted to TEA thirty (30) days prior to the start of programming for grantees each subsequent year. The Project Plan template is provided in *Appendix 32*.

CENTER PROJECT PLAN

The Center Plan should encompass all the activities that will take place on the campus. The plan should include enough information to ensure that the ACE activities align with the Campus Improvement Plan and that programming is intentional (See the Activity Alignment Form in *Appendix 7* for more details). Grantees are required to submit an annual Center Plan for each campus included in the grant. This plan should be based on the identified needs and will include the processes utilized to determine schedule, activities, communication plan, recruitment plan, and outreach plan. A sample document will be provided to newly awarded grantees at the required orientation. This Center Project Plan should be no longer than a few pages and should remain with the Project Director and Site Coordinator. The Center plan does not need to be submitted to TEA but the relevant components of the plan should be recorded and updated as part of the Project Plan for the Grant.

TASK 10: IMPLEMENT AND MANAGE PROJECT PLAN AND CENTER PLANS

The primary challenge of managing a project this complex is to achieve all of the project goals and objectives while honoring the preconceived project constraints. Typical constraints are scope, time, and budget. To overcome these constraints, Project Directors and their team will need to understand that the process of managing a project comes in stages. The Texas ACE program uses PRIME (Planning, Resourcing, Implementing, Managing, and Enduring) to describe the stages. See Figure 6 which illustrates the PRIME life cycle of a Texas ACE project.

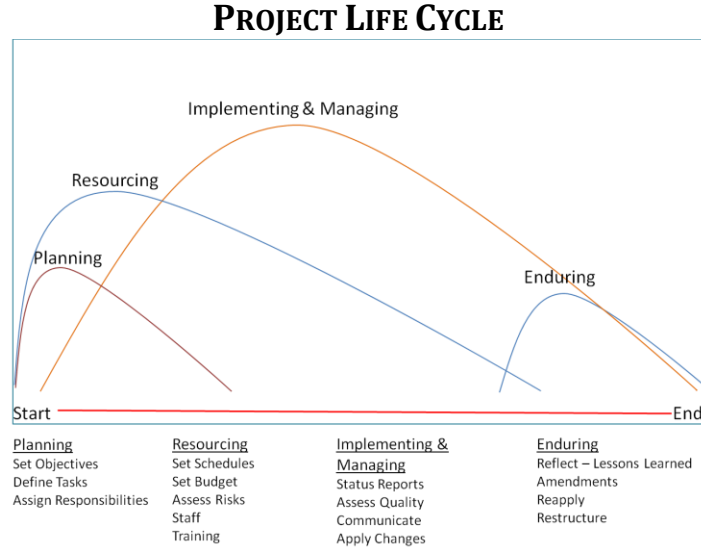


Figure 6 - Project Life Cycle

To aid in project management, three checklists have been developed for Program, Data and Fiscal Requirements, these are included in **Appendix 31**. For new grantees, the first category of PRIME, Planning, will be based on the design phase of your grant application through grant award. The last four PRIME categories will be used once the grant has been awarded and the project begins. These four categories will be included in a training session for new grantees which will be designed to help Project Teams develop an effective plan. Regional training opportunities for Project Management 101 and Project Management 201 will be offered on an ongoing basis and listed on MyTexasACE.

Resources for developing your project plan can be accessed on MyTexasACE under My Quality Assurance at <http://mytexasace.org/course/view.php?id=38>.

SECTION E: WHERE TO FIND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

TEA offers multiple sources of support for ACE Grantees; recommended steps to finding answers to your questions are in:

Figure 7 below:

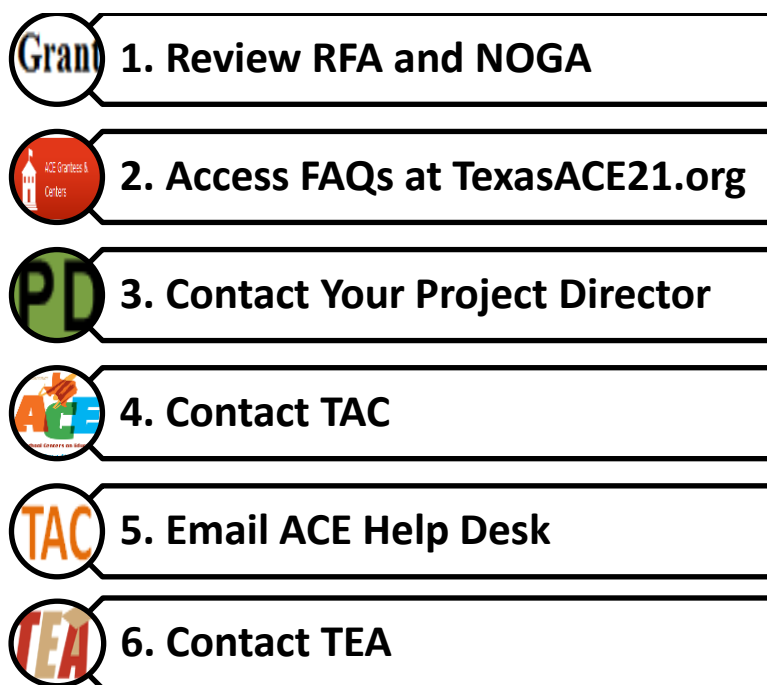


Figure 7- Steps for Receiving Technical Assistance

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY CONTACTS

Issue Area	Name & Title	Email Address	Phone Number
Programming	Candace M. Ferguson, State Coordinator/ Program Manager	Candace.Ferguson@tea.state.tx.us	512.463.5619
Data Requirements & TX21st	Liza Lorenzi, Program Specialist	Liza.Lorenzi@tea.state.tx.us	512.463.6782
Fiscal Issues	Sarah Averill, Grant Manager	Sarah.Averill@tea.state.tx.us	512.463.6905
Expense Reporting	Merle Hollub, Fiscal Processing Supervisor	Merle.Hollob@tea.state.tx.us	512.463.9269

To find answers to frequently asked questions about grants in general, access <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/grantdev/faq.html>.

ACE HELP DESK @ EDVANCE RESEARCH, INC.

The ACE Help Desk was created to assist grantees, centers, and the general public across Texas with questions related to their Texas ACE program, grant, funding, training, and general information. Texas ACE grantees email their questions to TexasACE21@edvanceresearch.com.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONSULTANTS

The Technical Assistance Consultant (TAC) role was created to provide individualized field support that is instrumental to successful Texas ACE programs statewide. The TAC plays a multi-faceted and critical role in supporting the Texas ACE program by helping to ensure that grantees are implementing their programs in compliance with grant requirements and to provide quality technical assistance for program improvement. TACS are assigned to specific regions throughout the State to provide sufficient coverage based on geographic dispersion of Centers. Each TAC supports approximately 20 grantees. The current TAC regions include: Dallas/Fort Worth East, Dallas/Fort Worth West, Houston, Central Texas, South Texas, and Rio Grande Valley.

REGIONAL AND ANNUAL TRAINING

Regional Training Opportunities

Each year, regional training opportunities will be provided to Texas ACE grantees focused on TEA's program improvement goals and strategies.

Texas ACE Annual Conference

Each year a state conference is held in August. This conference is an important event in that it serves multiple purposes including:

- presenting the Texas ACE annual strategic vision and roadmap;
- creating a venue for Texas ACE Grantees and Center staff to interact and share experiences; and
- providing professional development opportunities for participants from experts in their field.

For information related to the ACE Annual Conference, visit <http://mytexasace.org/course/view.php?id=43>.

ACE COMMUNICATION NETWORK

The Texas ACE Communication Network was created to ensure grantees across Texas have a voice in programs and develop a system of communication that brings grantees and stakeholders across Texas together to collaborate, network, and enhance the consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness of ACE programs. The Communication Network consists of approximately 30 members including representatives (grantees/stakeholders), one from each Education Service Center (ESC) region of the state in which there is an ACE grant, TEA representatives and Technical Assistance Consultants (TACs) and Program Quality Assurance representatives. For additional information about this key network, visit the following site at: <http://mytexasace.org/course/view.php?id=44>.

TEXAS ACE PUBLIC WEBSITE – WWW.TEXASACE21.ORG

The TexasACE21.org site provides a venue where students, family members, schools and community partners can easily access information about Texas ACE. Some key information on this site includes the ACE Welcome Video, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's), and specific information for prospective Grantees.

MYTEXASACE PORTAL – WWW.MYTEXASACE.ORG

The MyTexasACE.org portal is accessible to current ACE grantees. This portal allows grantees to interact and connect with one another, participate in formal and informal discussions, share lessons learned, contribute to collections of resources, and provide feedback and reflections on their practice. Grantees can also get the most current TEA updates and training through webinars, podcasts, resources, etc.

When you register for access to MyTexasACE, you will receive a confirmation email from the system to ensure that you are a valid user. If you do not receive an email shortly after registering, please check your junk/spam mail to look for the email. Once you receive the email, please follow its instructions to confirm your registration. If you have any questions or issues contact the ACE Help Desk at TexasACE21@edvanceresearch.com.

TX21ST

TEA staff reviews and analyzes data collected from each Texas ACE grantee (or fiscal agent) each term (fall, spring, and summer) to ensure all programs are meeting state and federal programmatic requirements and as a strategy for identifying best practices and programmatic needs. TEA collects this data through its own performance and measurement system, the TX21st Student Tracking System. Texas ACE grantees and their staff request access to the web-based application in order to input participant and program data such as: program objectives; center-level operational information (staffing, hours, days, grade levels served); activities and services provided along with attendance; students and student-related assessment data; and adult/family members served. TEA also uses TX21st to send out alerts to inform grantees of specific issues related to the ACE program.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NETWORKS & RESOURCES

There are a number of regional and national groups that provide important information and resources for Afterschool programs:

Regional & Statewide Networks

- Texas Partnership for Out-of-School Time (TxPOST) - <http://www.txpost.org/>
- South East TX After-School Association-
http://www.afterschoolzone.org/default.aspx?name=After-School_Leaders
- Central Texas Afterschool Network - <http://www.ctanweb.org/>
- Dallas Afterschool Network - <http://dasn.org/>

National Groups/Networks

- You 4 Youth Website - www.y4y.ed.gov
- Afterschool Alliance - http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyStateFacts.cfm?state_abbr=TX

- National Afterschool Association - <http://www.naaweb.org/>
- U.S. Department of Education 21st CCLC - <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>

APPENDIX

SECTION A: PROGRAM

1. *CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR MODEL*
2. *INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING THE REQUEST FOR APPLICATION*
3. *RESOURCES FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT*
4. *NEEDS INVENTORY AND ASSET INVENTORY*
5. *STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET*
6. *FOUR-COMPONENT ACTIVITY GUIDE*
7. *ACTIVITY ALIGNMENT FORM*
8. *TEXAS ACE ACTIVITY/ UNIT & LESSON PLAN WORKSHEETS*
9. *SAMPLE CENTER SCHEDULE*
10. *ACE SAFETY CHECKLIST*
11. *SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CAMPUS LEADERS*
12. *ENROLLMENT PACKET AND PARENT HANDBOOK SAMPLES*
13. *FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST GUIDE*
14. *FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY*
15. *SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS*
16. *SAMPLE WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH EXTERNAL PARTNER*
17. *STAFF HANDBOOK FOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*
18. *SAMPLE TIME AND EFFORT DOCUMENT*

SECTION B: DATA

19. *ACCESSING TX21ST PROCESS GUIDE*
20. *MEMO TO SUPERINTENDENTS OUTLINING TEA'S DATA REQUIREMENTS*
21. *SAMPLE WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH PEIMS COORDINATOR*

22. TX21ST CHECKLIST AND CALENDAR

SECTION C: FISCAL

23. DIRECT COSTS FUNDING WORKSHEET

24. ESTIMATED ACTIVITY COST WORKSHEET

25. BUDGET EXPENDITURES TRACKING FORM AND SUPPLY REQUEST FORM

26. MONTHLY BUDGET UPDATE BY CENTER WORKSHEET

27. LEVERAGE FUNDING CHART

SECTION D: QUALITY ASSURANCE

28. INDEPENDENT EVALUATION GUIDE

29. ACE PRIME ASSESSMENT FORM AND SITE VISIT PROCEDURE

30. GRANTEE PERFORMANCE STATUS REPORT (GPSR)

31. MANAGEMENT CHECKLISTS

Program Management

Data Management

Fiscal Management

32. PROJECT PLAN TEMPLATE

i Johncock, P. (2010, January 21). Why Conduct a Needs Assessment First?. Retrieved December 7, 2010, from <http://ezinearticles.com/?Why-Conduct-a-Needs-Assessment-First?&id=3600948>

ii Burkhauser, M., Metz, A. J. R. (June 2009) Building Systems Level Partnerships. Retrieved from http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_06_23_RB_SystemsPartners.pdf

iii A full list of published reports can be found at: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2908&menu_id=949

iv Lauver, S. & Little, P.M.D. (2005). Recruitment and retention strategies for out-of-school time programs. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2005(105), 71-89.

v Birmingham, J., Prechman, E.M., Russell, C.A., & Mielke, M. (2006). *Shared Features of High-Performing After-School Programs*. New York: The After School Corporation.

vi Intercultural Center for Research in Education and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2005). *Pathways to success for youth: What counts in after-school: Massachusetts After-School Research Study (MARS) report*. Boston, MA: United Way of Massachusetts Bay.

vii See, for example, Harris, E. & Wimer, C. (2004). *Engaging with families in out-of-school time learning*. (Out-of-school Time Evaluation Snapshot No. 4). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

viii Deschenes, Sarah N., Arbreton, A., Little, P.M.D., Herrera, C., Baldwin Grossman, J., Weiss, H.B., Lee, D. (2010). *Engaging Older Youth: Program and City-level Strategies to Support Sustained Participation in Out-of-School Time*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.