

Texas ACE Blueprint - Cycle 9 v3

- Added/revised information
- Appendixes:
 - Updated Job Description Samples – Appendix 18
 - Updated Key Task Assessment SOPM – Appendix 32

Revised September 2017

Find the Texas ACE Blueprint online at <http://www.texasace21.org/mytexasace/resources/texas-ace-blueprint>

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OVERVIEW OF TEXAS ACE

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant program is authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title IV, Part B, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The [Texas ACE grant program](#) is developed in accordance with federal statute and existing federal guidelines as applicable. For the 2016-2017 school year, this Blueprint will continue to address statutory requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act as the Cycle 9 grants were completed using those program requirements. Beginning with Cycle 10 (pending federal funding), a new version of this Blueprint will update requirements and guidance as appropriate under the new [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), which was signed into law on December 10, 2015.

TEXAS LANDSCAPE

The federal 21st CCLC program is the only dedicated funding source in Texas for high-quality before-school, afterschool, and summer academic enrichment programs. The Texas program, administered by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), is also referred to as Texas Afterschool Centers on Education, or Texas ACE[®]. TEA received its first federal allocation for the program in 2002, and funded 33 grantees. Since then, the program has funded nine grant cycles and a total of 349 grants to school districts, community-based organizations (CBOs), regional education service centers, and charter schools across the state. Texas ACE programs have been found to increase school day attendance, student assessment scores, and the impact of traditional intensive tutoring approaches.

Recognizing the importance of these programs in communities across Texas, the 83rd Texas Legislature, 2013, created the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Council to study and make recommendations about the future of expanded learning opportunities in Texas. The ELO Council recognizes the important link between expanded learning and student academic outcomes. In many Texas schools, expanded learning programs are essential tools that provide necessary student supports for Texas' rigorous academic requirements. Innovative and engaging methods of instruction that enhance, but do not replicate the school day can support students who are the most in need of foundation academic subjects of mathematics, English language arts and reading, science, and social studies as well as supporting students through their pathways to graduation (i.e., boosting school day attendance, exploring careers). For more information about the ELO Council visit <http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=4695>.

TEXAS ACE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the federal program relate to improvements in the following outcomes for students:

- Academic Performance
- School Day Attendance
- Positive Behavior
- Grade Promotion Rates
- Graduation Rates

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

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Critical success factors reflect behavioral changes that must be demonstrated by students and families enrolled in the program or by the adults working on their behalf. Critical success factors are essential for Texas ACE programs to succeed in meeting the five objectives defined for the program and are indicators of student success.

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

Milestones are key strategies that establish the foundation on which critical success factors are built. The applicant must develop activities that ensure each of the milestones is met. These milestones correspond to each of the critical success factors above:

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

Texas ACE[®] programs must be designed within this specific framework as it establishes a foundation for effective implementation and high-quality programs for the attainment of stated goals. Therefore, the physical site of an ACE program where students and families are served will be established through a comprehensive, collaborative, and coordinated approach inclusive of the school, student, family, service providers, and the community. The ultimate goals are to help students meet state and local academic achievement standards and help students graduate ready for college and the workforce.

OVERVIEW OF THE BLUEPRINT FOR TEXAS ACE[®]

WHY A BLUEPRINT FOR AFTERSCHOOL OR OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS?

TEA created this Blueprint to provide guidance for all Texas ACE programs. The Blueprint offers a foundation 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 quality assurance.

HOW WAS THE BLUEPRINT CREATED?

To create the original Blueprint, TEA first carefully examined the statutory and program requirements outlined in the Request for Application (RFA) documents. They then finalized the Blueprint by conducting the following steps, and did so annually to update:

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

THIS GUIDE

Grantees must abide by all the requirements in the RFA and the final negotiated grant application. This guide is intended to elaborate on the grant requirements for Texas ACE, Cycle 9 grantees and provide 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 Sections A-D. Section E provides information for grantees and prospective grantees to find additional information about the ACE program.

- 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 the four requirements into 10 key tasks, which grantees must complete to achieve programmatic success. Each task supports multiple functions of ACE and can be viewed within each section. However, focusing on the key tasks ensures measured and intentional implementation and program development.

The 10 Key Tasks for Quality Programming are:

1. School-Community Engagement
2. Intentional Activity Development & Targeted Student Recruitment
3. Family Engagement
4. Operation and Talent Management
5. Data Collection and Reporting
6. Fiscal Planning and Internal Monitoring
7. Sustainability Planning
8. Program Evaluation
9. Quality Assurance Tools
10. Logic Model Development and Implementation

DESIGNING YOUR PROGRAM

To prepare to design your program, you must identify and gather the following: (1) Cycle 9 RFA documents (step-by-step instructions to the RFA can be found in **Appendix 1**); and (2) your approved negotiated grant application and any subsequent amendments.

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Blueprint is to provide guidance and technical assistance to all Texas ACE grantees. It is not to replace or supersede any information disseminated from the grant application process, TEA official guidance, or U.S. Department of Education (ED) official guidance. All grantees are expected to provide all services in the approved grant application, meet all grant-related assurances and requirements, and abide by all applicable local, state, and federal policies and guidance.

SECTION A: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS

■ Required

□ Recommended/Best Practice

Requirement	Cycle 9
Task 1: School-Community Engagement	
Community needs assessment	■
Campus needs assessment	■
Intentional student recruitment targeted to most in need	■
School day alignment	■
Ongoing community involvement	■
Community advisory council	■
Task 2: Intentional Activity Development & Targeted Student Recruitment	
Implement four activity components	■
ACE activity & lesson planning	■
ACE activity & lesson templates	□
Review of data sets	■
Tutorial pre/post assessments	■
Intentional recruitment	■
Ongoing review of data sets	□
Task 3: Family Engagement	
Needs assessment	■
Family engagement activities	■
Coordination with outside partners	■
Family resource center	■
Task 4: Operation and Talent Management	
Grant staffing	■
Attending training and conferences	■
Safety protocols	■
Agreements with partners/vendors/organizations	■
TEA specified training	■
Staff training	■
Staff observations	■

TASK 1: SCHOOL-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The scope and goals of a Texas ACE program must reflect the needs of the students and families you intend to serve at each center with an overarching focus on school-community engagement. This includes conducting needs assessments, planning your program activities based on student and family needs, and implementing your program in partnership with school officials, volunteers, and community organizations. Conducting frequent systematic community and campus needs assessment is the first critical step in designing the structure of your program. While a needs assessment was completed prior to submitting your grant application, it is critical to monitor needs as they change during the school year, and formally update the assessment at least annually in preparation for the continuation of the application process. It is essential to connect with school-day staff and involve students and families during the needs assessment process to create a high-quality and engaging program. Additionally, TEA requires the development of a community advisory council as a source of ongoing feedback for program development, continuous improvement, and sustainability.

Aligning with the School Day

During the campus needs assessment process, plans to align the ACE services to complement the school day and expand learning should be a driving force of program development. Aligning with the school day allows 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 out-of-school time program, and can help a campus reach its Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) goals. A strong partnership between ACE and the school day requires ACE leaders to understand the needs of their campus. To accomplish this, the project director and site coordinators need to be familiar with the academic needs of students on the campus as well as the activities, gaps, and opportunities that exist, which can be addressed through ACE programming. Furthermore, grant staff should promote the value of ACE activities to supplement and complement the regular school day instruction in unique ways, such as offering substantive enrichment activities and offering family activities that help parents support students academically. In addition to reviewing school plans and performance data, the project director and site coordinators should actively engage in schoolwide committees, teacher team meetings, and regular meetings with campus leadership to successfully strengthen alignment with the school day and ultimately increase student and campus achievement. With the implementation of the new Every Student Succeeds Act, each campus implementing a Title I schoolwide program is required to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and create a plan based on that information. Working with the district and campus Title I staff to access and use that information will be important in planning ACE activities that respond to those needs and ensure ACE adds value to the school day. Learn more about this requirement at http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Grants/Federal_Flexibility_Initiative/Schoolwide_Programs/Schoolwide_Programs_Comprehensive_Needs_Assessment/.

Student/Family Voice and Choice

It is important to implement a set of activities that meets 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 and it can be challenging to get feedback from them. Grantees should use brief online or

paper surveys, focus groups, and interest inventories to regularly determine what targeted program participants want from the ACE program. (See MyTexasACE.org for ideas and sample tools.)

CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Grant applicants conducted a thorough community needs assessment prior to submitting the grant application to determine the most appropriate centers to include in the grant, identify meaningful activity types, and locate community resources that can be used to address needs and gaps in services. Conducting regular systematic community needs assessment and examining the resources already available in your community via a **needs and asset mapping** process (described in detail below) can help you make the most of the ACE grant for the following five reasons¹:

1. Avoid duplication of other projects with similar activities.
2. 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.
3. Leverage and maximize the resources you have within your agency and community.
4. Determine the "impact" of your grant. You can use this information to describe 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 impacts on personnel, facilities, and equipment.
5. More clearly justify and be able to articulate 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 activities to result in clear directives for program planning (see Figure 1 for a diagram of the inventory process):

1. Identify the purpose, target population, and guiding questions for the assessment by creating a general profile of the community's population demographics, social characteristics, and valued resources.
2. Determine information and data that are essential 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 and missing services, and useful resources within the immediate community. (See **Appendix 2** for needs assessment resources.) Useful information sources might include reports or data sets from organizations such as:
 - U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics;
 - Local law enforcement agencies;
 - Local health and human services agencies;
 - Texas Workforce Centers;
 - Higher Education Coordinating Board;
 - Texas Juvenile Justice Department;
 - School district performance reports; and
 - Texas Academic Performance Reports.
3. Gather and organize essential information and data from your identified sources. See **Appendix 3** for Needs Inventory and Asset Inventory worksheets. See Task 3 Intentional

Activity Development for more information on data sets that grantees should collect to ensure activities are aligned with campus and community need.

4. 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 that illustrates mapping assets to needs to generate a list of program strategies to inform ACE activity development. See **Appendix 4** for a Strategy Development worksheet. Activity development is described in Task 3.
5. Develop a set of recommended program strategies for the appropriate centers including activity types, priority needs, potential community partnerships, and broadly defined goals.
6. Prepare a summary report that describes the assessment process, answers the initial guiding questions, and describes the recommendations 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 in the ACE program. 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 and summer services. (See Figure 1 - Needs and Asset Inventories for a diagram of the inventory process) The steps include:

1. Identify the purpose, target population, and guiding questions for the assessment focused on identifying specific issues, needs, and resources for each campus that will be served by the ACE program.
2. Determine necessary information and data to gather, as well as appropriate collection formats that will effectively address the guiding questions such as appropriate programming, logistics, staffing, resources, and activities aligned with ACE goals.

Information sources¹ include:

- Title I Schoolwide Program campus needs assessments;
- District and campus improvement plans and goals;
- School performance reports, that include graduation rates, promotion rates, discipline data, attendance rates, and student test results;
- Student-level deficiencies that include specific Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) that students are not mastering, specific negative behaviors students are exhibiting, and specific reasons students are absent or tardy;
- Student and family surveys, interest inventories, and student focus group data;
- Interviews with school staff including counselors, parent liaisons, teachers, principals, etc.;
- Current campus partners (i.e., YMCA, Communities in Schools);
- Other services already offered for students and families on the campus; and

¹ These reports and resources can be found by contacting your district's curriculum coordinator, campus principal, or Public Education Information Management System (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 developing your project and center plans.

- Curriculum maps/scope and sequence plans used during the school day.
3. Gather and organize information and data from identified sources.
 4. 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 that illustrates mapping assets to needs to generate a list of program strategies to inform ACE activity development.
 5. Develop a set of recommended program strategies to address issues and gaps between current and ideal situations and 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.
 6. Prepare a summary report that describes the assessment process, answers the initial guiding questions, and describes the recommendations from the process.

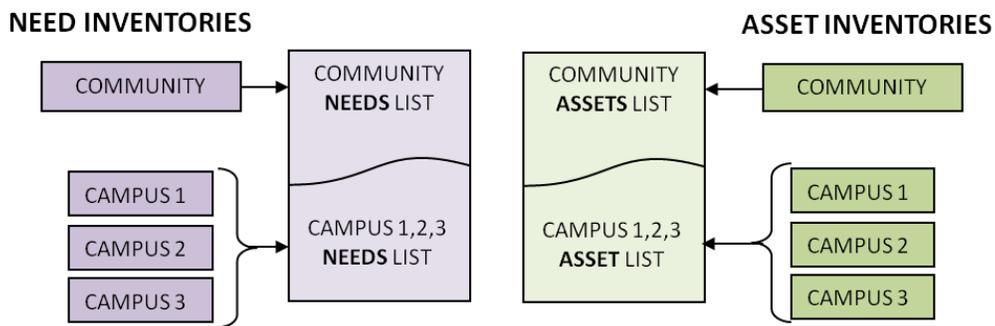


Figure 1 - Needs and asset inventories

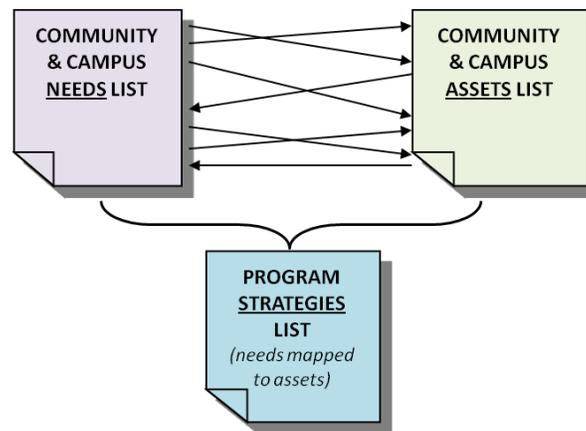


Figure 2 - Mapping assets to needs

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

ACE grantees who have sustained their programs after the grant period credit their partners and champions including district leaders (district leaders and school board members), community organizations, universities, and other local faith-based organizations with continued funding and staffing for afterschool services that were provided by Texas ACE funding.

Cycle 9 grantees are required to develop and engage with a Community Advisory Council (CAC) to ensure collaboration, partnership, and community support between stakeholders and the ACE program.

The CAC shall consist of members who are ideally reflective of the community in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity; the CAC members shall represent agencies, businesses, partners of your Texas ACE program and other youth programs, school district leaders and staff as well as students and family members. Both the project director and a member of the school district leadership team served by the program should serve on the CAC. See **Appendix 5** for a list of possible Community Advisory Council members.

Regular outreach and communication with key program stakeholders from the beginning and during the life of the grant is key for creating an enduring and sustainable program. **Programs with strong community and school/family support are more likely to be seen as valuable and more likely to sustain.**ⁱⁱ Community stakeholders include, but are not limited to, local area foundations, businesses, workforce boards, libraries, health services, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, and faith-based organizations. ACE grantees are expected to collaborate with an appropriate number of organizations and community stakeholders that are representative of their communities.

Community members should be regularly involved in many aspects of the grant including the needs assessment, creating program awareness, program implementation, evaluating program effectiveness, and sustainability. For all CAC or other outreach activities, it is required that grantees document their work with meeting agendas, minutes, partner rosters, sign-in sheets, and other relevant documentation.

Some tasks to consider when creating the Community Advisory Council include:

- Scanning the community for prospective members;
- Identifying and contacting prospective members;
- Creating a plan for regular meetings;
- Defining advisory council roles, tasks, and projects; and
- Reflecting on the progress of the group and its contributions to meeting ACE goals and using these reflections to improve its work and your program.

Additional 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);
- Using the ACE outreach templates and materials that TEA provides for grantee use; and
- Sharing successes and evaluation results of Texas ACE and your ACE program (i.e., at school board meetings).

TASK 2: INTENTIONAL ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT & TARGETED STUDENT RECRUITMENT

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 planning activities, but also to investigate and integrate elements 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 out-of-school time 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 Advisory Council, site coordinators, partners, and school day staff to:

- Create targeted activities and lesson plans;
- 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**.) Activities in each of the four components must be provided by each center and term (i.e., fall, spring, and summer).

INTENTIONAL ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT – ENSURING THE QUALITY OF ACTIVITIES

Grantees must evaluate each activity to ensure that it aligns with TEA’s four required components, the requirements of the ED (i.e., the measures of effectiveness), grant requirements (i.e., aligned with TEKS, must expand and enhance learning), and with the objectives set for the approved Texas ACE grant. Every ACE activity must be designed and implemented to address the specific needs of students and families. Those needs will be clearly articulated in the activity unit and lesson plans described below. Also, a sample activity alignment form is in **Appendix 7** that may help grantees document the alignment of needs to activities.

Resources for Planning and Implementing Engaging Activities for Students and Families

Having students and families engaged in the out-of-school time program is critical to achieving program success. The Texas ACE Activity and Lesson Plan Worksheets specifically integrate:

- Texas ACE goals and objectives along with the four activity 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 out-of-school time staff and participants.

The ACE training team has created an Intentional Activity Development training that exemplifies TEAs expectations of activity development in ACE programs, which is offered periodically regionally and live streamed.

Program leaders should refer to the community and campus needs assessments before determining which activities are going to be offered at each center.

Once activities have been chosen, there are four additional ways that grantees can ensure that each activity is intentional:

1. Learning Objectives,
2. Assessment Component,
3. Activity and Lesson Plans, and
4. Active Recruitment.

Learning Objectives

A learning objective is a brief statement that clearly expresses what the student will be able to do after participating in an activity. Learning objectives should be written for every activity. These objectives are observable, and measure student outcome statements that identify what behavior(s) a student must demonstrate for the instructor to know that the planned learning took place.

Assessment Component

Pre/post-assessments are a Texas ACE requirement for any academic tutoring activity provided and many times are voluntarily used in other intervention activities. Grantees should also consider using informal methods of assessing student ability (based on the specific skills or behaviors an activity is designed to impact) on all activities. Ideally, assessments should be completed both prior to participation in the activity and at the end of the activity. The purpose of the assessment component is to inform a grantee whether an activity had the impact that was intended. The assessment can be simple or complex depending on the desired outcome being assessed. For example, a lesson plan for a cooking program may have the learning objective that students will be able to make pancakes from scratch after the lesson. A simple demonstration from the students at the end of the lesson will determine whether the learning objective was met. In the same cooking class, making a lasagna may take several lessons. Instructors can informally assess each lesson as a step in the learning process, or may wait until the completion of the entire lasagna cooking activity. In both cases, the assessment component is informing the instructor whether learning has occurred.

Activity and Lesson Plans

Intentional activities include both an activity plan and corresponding lesson plans. Templates for both are available in **Appendix 8**. Note that the templates are not required to be used for lesson plans that ACE grantees implemented. Many grantees use curriculum they have purchased that

meets the level of information and documents of the intentionality and outcomes from the lesson. Using these lessons as they are, and not reformatting the content, is completely acceptable.

The activity plan should provide the “big picture” of the activity and generally includes the information that grantees will be required to enter into TX21st. Lesson plans are to be used daily in each classroom to guide the work of the instructor of that activity. Lesson plans should focus on providing opportunities for students to practice, as many times as possible, the skills/behaviors that the grantee has identified as needing improvement. For example, if the activity is cooking and the skills the activity is designed to improve are the use of fractions and measurement, the lesson plans must be written to provide opportunities for students to practice fractions and measurement. Well-designed lesson plans implement the use of the 5 E’s: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate to help students reach higher-level thinking skills included in Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Active Recruitment

Finally, grantees must implement Active Recruitment. If an activity is planned with the level of intentionality discussed above, it follows that grantees must then recruit the targeted students into the activities specifically designed for their benefit. As stated in the RFA Program Guidelines, the intent of this program is to target those students and families who are most in need of assistance in meeting state requirements for advancing to the next grade and graduating from high school. Some centers use a student referral form to solicit targeted student recruitment from the school day staff. See an example in **Appendix 9**.

You should 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 addressing high-need academic topics. There are also a variety of sites that outline engaging out-of-school time activities to provide guidance as the program activities are being designed. These sites include <https://www.texasgateway.org>, www.BeyondTheBell.org, <https://y4y.ed.gov>, <https://www.edutopia.org>, and www.ReadWriteThink.org, which offer information on promising practices and databases of out-of-school time 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 already occur before and after school and in the summer on each campus. This will help ensure that you are working together and not in competition with these activities, especially at the middle and high school levels. There are various ways grantees schedule Texas ACE activities. These include rotating students through a variety of activities within a day or throughout the week, or scheduling programming in 6-week blocks. An optional center schedule template is provided in **Appendix 10**.

Summer Learning Opportunities

The ACE program provides a high-quality learning opportunity for students during the summer. The National Summer Learning Association has identified the following findings about summer learning loss:

- Students with consistent attendance in free, voluntary summer learning programs offered for 5 to 6 weeks experience educationally meaningful benefits in math and reading.ⁱⁱⁱ
- More than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college.^{iv} To see a visual representation of this, check out this video on summer learning loss: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2haD7FhMys>.
- Children lose more than academic knowledge over the summer. Most children—particularly children at high risk of obesity—gain weight more rapidly when they are out of school during summer break.^v
- In a 2014 survey of nearly 14,000 households, 51 percent of families reported they wanted their children to be enrolled in a summer learning program. Only 33 percent of families in the survey reported at least one child participated in a 2013 summer learning program.^{vi}

Because we know that high-quality summer programs improve student outcomes and that consistent participation in programs is important, Cycle 9 ACE programs are required to provide a minimum of 6 weeks of summer programming. Go to <http://www.summerlearning.org> to find research, resources, and training for improving the quality of your summer programming.

PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This grant is designed to serve students who are most in need of academic support, adult advocacy, and enrichment opportunities. While the ACE program is voluntary and grantees must not mandate or require student participation, the expectation is to recruit the students most in need of academic assistance and then enroll other students as space becomes available to meet their service goal. Adopt strategies that will consistently encourage the participation of new students in need of services. To communicate this focus to the community, grantees should create a set of strategies for active student recruitment and enrollment.

Your recruitment strategies and policies should be included in your local program Policy and Procedure Handbook (described in Task 4), as well as described in an ACE Enrollment Packet and Parent Handbook. Be sure that your Enrollment Packets and Parent Handbooks are provided in both English and Spanish (or another language your participants commonly used). See **Appendix 11** for a sample Enrollment Packet and a Parent Handbook template.

TASK 3: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging families is critical to the success of your ACE program, yet getting family members to participate regularly is the area where grantees consistently report having the most difficulty. TEA's program evaluation has shown 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 shows that once they do participate, adult family members return to participate again at a very high rate.^{vii}

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVITY PLANNING

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:

- **Support improved participation in out-of-school time programs.** Families are critical partners in out-of-school time programs' recruitment and retention efforts. They are often a program's best ambassadors, not only in encouraging their children to participate, but also in reaching out to other families to help them understand the importance of participating in out-of-school time programming.^{viii}
- **Benefit out-of-school time participants themselves.** When out-of-school time programs are intentional about their family engagement strategies, program participants tend to exhibit better outcomes. For example, a study of 96 school-based out-of-school time 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.^{ix} Similarly, a Massachusetts statewide study of quality out-of-school time 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.^x
- **Impact family engagement with learning at school.** Family engagement in out-of-school time programs can be leveraged to improve family engagement in learning. For example, some research studies have found that family engagement in out-of-school time can lead to greater involvement in school events, increased assistance with homework, and more encouragement for reading.^{xi}

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 could 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 could include welcoming family members by name when they enter the building, conducting periodic family orientations, asking 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 could include designating a staff member with family engagement responsibility, hiring staff who share experiences with the families you serve, and fostering 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 could include: serving as a liaison between families and schools, providing workshops on how family members can obtain services their children need, offering to attend parent/teacher conferences with families, and helping family members develop advocacy skills.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST (FES)

All grantees must retain a family engagement specialist to coordinate family and community involvement in programming. A full-time FES is a required position for all grants serving more than five centers. Grantees supporting less centers may have a part-time FES (20+ hours per week). However, the role of the FES can still only apply to one individual and, to meet this requirement, the duties may not be distributed to other staff. The role of the FES is to work closely with all ACE program leadership to encourage and support families to participate in their child's education and strengthen the skills they need to support their children's academic growth and success.

In accordance with the Cycle 9 Program Guidelines, each family engagement specialist supports the delivery and coordination of family activities at all centers and focuses on:

- Conducting needs assessments and surveys to determine types of activities to offer;
- Planning, coordinating, and implementing consistent activities for families (see an example family engagement activity monthly calendar on MyTexasACE.org). Topics include, but are not limited to, assistance in:
 - How to support their children in school;
 - Developing parenting skills and building literacy;
 - Making meaningful connections and developing relationships in the school community and with collaborating organizations to meet family need and further academic and career success of Texas ACE participants; and
 - Personal growth and lifetime learning.
- Coordinating services with programs within the school and with external community groups;
- Maintaining regular communication with parents on ACE program activities;
- Reaching out to individual parents and developing supportive relationships;
- Maintaining a family resource center; and
- Coordinating and leveraging funds for positions such as Title I Coordinator or parent liaisons that share a similar requirement when possible.

For more information about these strategies, please see **Appendix 12** for the Family Engagement Specialist guide, **Appendix 13** for a Family Engagement Survey, and [Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School](https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED496170) at <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED496170>.

TASK 4: OPERATION AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

Effective planning and project management of this grant is important for ensuring the success and sustainability of the program. There are many moving parts to the ACE program, and there must be an efficient operation and effective talent management structure in place with strong processes and

leadership to pull all the components together, adhere to requirements, and provide high-quality programming for all participants.

OPERATION MANAGEMENT

ACE grantees must ensure that they can deliver all of the activities in a safe, secure, and appropriate location. The following section outlines many logistical issues that grantees must address to be successful and remain in compliance.

Manage Program Logistics

Key areas of logistics that will require the regular attention of each site coordinator and front-line staff member are:

- Safe space for programming (campus, adjunct site, back-up locations when need arises, emergency plan, contact procedures for parent and school administrator in emergency event);
- Field trips (transportation, TEA approval, parent permissions);
- Daily transportation (bussing schedules, parent permissions);
- Nutritional snacks (procurement, storage, distribution); and
- Center supply lists and inventories (list of serial numbers, quantities, and descriptions of hardware, software, furniture, consumables, etc.).

Maintaining an accurate record of supplies that were purchased for the program is a grant requirement and grantees must provide documentation of the disposition of all supplies at the end of the grant. A sample supply inventory template can be found in **Appendix 14** to aid in this process.

Each year, be sure to use what you have learned from managing program logistics to update your Policy And Procedure handbook to improve your capacity to run a safe and engaging program.

Securing Safe and 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. Sometimes, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the campus principal can be helpful to outline the needs and responsibilities of the ACE program staff and the campus administration; especially when there is frequent turnover of staff. These types of agreements, when in place, should be updated annually and/or upon the employ of any new principal. See sample MOU with Campus Leaders template in **Appendix 15**.

In an MOU, be sure to include a description of available work areas or storage areas for supplies and materials that will be used in the program. The agreement might also include a description of a process to make changes in afterschool programming in the event of an emergency or unplanned need for space that school day staff have to use. For example, an emergency staff meeting may require the use of the cafeteria as 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 areas for any unplanned or emergency situations should be included.

A central focus of all planning should be 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 Self-Assessment has been created, see **Appendix 16**. Each center is expected to complete

the ACE Safety Self-Assessment annually as part of the ACE Key Task Assessment. Safety is a priority and should be a shared responsibility between all ACE program staff. Consider ways to implement checks on all safety protocol and procedures to ensure there are no gaps of supervision.

Educational Field Trips

Educational field trips are allowed when they consist of approved, planned, instructional activities that involve students in learning experiences that are difficult to duplicate in a classroom situation. These field trips must support TEKS, be reasonable in costs, and necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Texas ACE program. The Texas ACE Activity Worksheets are useful tools when planning educational field trips, as they help document the alignment of the field trip with program goals. See **Appendix 17** for a flow chart that outlines the Field Trip Approval Process.

All field trips using grant funds require pre-approval from TEA, which has identified several pre-approved field trips outlined below. If the field trip does **NOT** relate to the below pre-approved activities, you must submit to the Texas ACE Help Desk a field trip request using an online form linked from the main page of www.MyTexasACE.org under *Resources, Additional Support, Field Trip Support*.

Examples of Pre-Approved and Appropriate Educational Field Trips:

- Supplemental curricular academic activities focused on math, science, and technology, such as service learning, internships, or science and technology fairs.
- Laboratory and field investigation instruction used to improve students' understanding of science TEKS objectives.
- Educational tours and interactive activities with local science centers, museums, zoos, horticultural centers, archaeological sites, or nature preserves.
- Time at public libraries to increase access to high-interest reading materials and research tools.
- Visits to colleges and universities to encourage interest in the pursuit of higher education.

You must follow all applicable local, state, and federal travel requirements, whichever are most restrictive. If the field trip is listed as an example of a pre-approved field trip outlined above, be sure to maintain documentation of the field trip and provide clear evidence of how the expense ties back to an instructional objective. Please note that food costs are not allowed on field trips, and therefore, grantees must leverage their use of other funding sources that do allow for these types of costs.

Reminders of Costs That Are Not Allowed for Field Trips:

- Unreasonable costs or unnecessary to accomplish the objectives of the grant program.
- Allotted for social, entertainment, or recreational purposes.
- Supplants and does not supplement local, state, or federal expenditures or activities.
- Not aligned with TEKS or do not meet the instructional objectives of the grant program.
- Not properly documented.
- Travel to entertainment or recreational locations that have legitimate educational programs but more than 25 percent of the time spent at the location is used for entertainment or recreational purposes of field trip participants.

It is also important to think creatively about field trips and use technology to 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 rainforest;
- Traveling through history with a walking tour of the U.S. Constitution and Museums; and
- Space tours.

Programmatic and Location Changes to Negotiated Grant Award

Grantees sometimes need to make changes to their negotiated grant award if a school closes, a center must be moved or relocated during the summer, or the hours of programming must be changed. The following sections include a description of changes made to:

1. Feeder schools;
2. Adjunct sites;
3. Program operations (hours, days, weeks);
4. Temporary changes for summer; and
5. School name/identification number changes.

See **Appendix 17** for a series of flow charts to help you request these changes from TEA.

1. Feeder Schools

Many grantees choose to include feeder schools in their grant applications. Students are transported from a feeder school to the designated center (e.g., students from one elementary school feed into another elementary school that is a host center), and no more than four feeder schools can be included for any center. Grantees must have the physical capacity at the main campus/center to serve all students who will participate in programming from feeder schools.

A feeder school is not considered a center; activities cannot occur separately at feeder schools but instead must all be conducted at the main/ host center; grantees must provide transportation for students served from feeder schools to and from the host center, and it is imperative that feeder schools are within a reasonable geographic proximity (no more than 30 minutes by bus) to avoid extensive travel time between centers. If a grantee included feeder schools in their grant application, the type of feeder schools must be appropriate for the ages and grade levels of the students to be served by the main center (i.e., centers that serve elementary schools may not be appropriate for middle and high school students, and vice versa).

Changes to Feeder Schools

Grantees must obtain permission from TEA to remove, add, or change a feeder school. Grantees may make changes to their feeder schools in their continuation application. Note: Adding a feeder school may affect the eligibility of that campus to be included in an application for other Texas ACE funds during or after the life of this grant. In planning for future funding cycles, grantees cannot remove a feeder school in anticipation of including the campus as a separately funded center. The center budget will not change based on removing or adding a feeder school.

If a feeder school closes or there is a reason to add or replace a feeder school, the grantee must develop a narrative as to why they want to make a change and send the request to TEA via the ACE Help Desk. Eliminating or removing a feeder school will not reduce the required number of regular students served at the host center. See **Appendix 17** for a flow chart to help you request these changes and gain TEA approval.

2. Adjunct Sites

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. An adjunct site is typically a location that can provide an environment for needs-based activities that the main center cannot provide (i.e., swimming pool, recreational facilities, museum/science center, workforce training center). 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 original approved grant application.

Changes to Adjunct Sites

Grantees must obtain permission from TEA to remove, add, or change an adjunct site. At some point during the term, a grantee may have the need to relocate an activity. One example would be if the tennis class were being held at the Community College because of facility resources. During the term, the Community College is not able to provide the space. The grantee will relocate the activity to the local recreation center. The grantee must complete an amendment and update the adjunct site information form from the Standard Application System. Grantees may also make changes to their adjunct sites in their continuation application. Since adjunct sites are facilities where supplemental programming occurs on an occasional basis to support the activities of the center, a grantee cannot offer more programming at an adjunct site than the center. The students must be regularly served at the approved center with only a limited amount of activities being held at the adjunct site. See **Appendix 17** for a flow chart to help you request these changes and gain approval from TEA.

3. Program Operations

From time to time, grantees find it necessary to make changes to their program hours. For example, the school bell schedule may change or they need to eliminate morning programs and add hours to the afternoon. Grantees can typically make changes to program operations assuming that the changes are best for the students and families participating in the ACE program. What follows are instructions for making changes in program hours first in the fall or spring terms and then grantees must follow a different procedure for summer changes.

Changes to Program Operations at a Center During the Fall or Spring Terms

Certain changes to program operations do not require an amendment for grantees, but will require modification to the grantee/center Project Plan. If the grantee wishes to make changes to their schedule of operation (modify, increase, or decrease), they must first ensure these changes are in the best interest of the participants, so they must engage in discussions with their stakeholders and document their findings. Schedule 21 must also be updated and emailed to the Help Desk with a copy to your Technical Assistance Coach (TAC) (e.g., grantee eliminates 1 hour of morning

operations and adds 1 hour to the afterschool schedule). The minimum operation requirement must remain the same.

A grantee may not decrease the number of program hours offered per week nor the number of weeks offered per year. However, grantees may, at any time, increase the number of hours or weeks of programming offered. Once increased, a grantee will be expected to meet the requirements during the program year. A grantee cannot increase during the fall term and then decide to decrease during the spring term because of difficulty of achieving standard. However, if they find that the increase in scheduled weeks is not working for that grant year, during the continuation application process, the grantee could propose to go back to what was originally awarded in the Year 1 approved application.

If a grantee is unable to meet the required number of hours or weeks of programming as approved in the grant application, these hours/weeks must be made up. It is the grantee's responsibility to make sure the hours/weeks of programming promised in the approved grant application are completed by the conclusion of each term.

4. Temporary Changes for Summer

Summer is typically a time when many ACE grantees find themselves needing to make changes to the approved location or program operations due to instances that are out of their control, such as school closure due to construction or consolidation. This is typically allowed given that enough time is provided for TEA to approve the changes, however, this process involves planning and preparation. It is important to note that consolidation will not alter the number of students served or the level of grant staff because summer programming is part of the budget approved at the beginning of each grant year. You may need to consolidate facilities or transportation, but other required programmatic elements must remain unchanged. All requests to make changes for summer programming hours, days, or locations must be submitted to TEA via the Texas ACE Help Desk. See **Appendix 17** for a flow chart to help you request these changes and gain approval from TEA.

- Summer Location Change to a Currently Approved Center, Feeder School, or Adjunct Site: grantees submit a request in writing to TEA via the Texas ACE Help Desk with a letter from the fiscal agent's superintendent or executive director before the first Friday in May each subsequent year. The letter should contain detailed information explaining the reason for changing the location, including the process to poll students/parents, staffing plan, facility management, transportation plan, etc. The process would be used if the grantee were merging several centers to one currently approved center, Feeder School, or adjunct site temporarily during the summer.
- Summer Location Change to a New, Unapproved Location: grantees submit a request in writing to TEA via the Texas ACE Help Desk with a letter from the fiscal agent's superintendent or executive director and an amendment that adds the location before May 1. The letter should contain detailed information explaining the reason for changing the location including: the process to poll students/parents, staffing plan, facility

management, transportation plan, etc. The process would be used if the grantee were moving any centers to a new, unapproved location temporarily during the summer.

- Summer Programming Changes (no decrease in hours or days permitted): the project director must submit a request for any changes in the schedule (i.e., programming hours, days of programming). The PD must describe the reason for the requested change, process for polling students and parents, the staffing plan, and facility management. If grantees make any adjustment to the schedule of operations (i.e., change original schedule from 8 am – 1 pm, now they want to change the schedule to 9 am – 2pm, they would follow this process).

5. Campus/School Name or ID Number Changes

If the name or identification number of the campus of a funded center changes, the grantee must develop a brief narrative of the change, attach evidence of need for change (i.e., board agenda, school closure documentation), and file an amendment with the change. See **Appendix 17** for flow charts to help you document these changes with TEA.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Grantees are encouraged to recruit and hire their staff based on demonstrated expertise and the needs of the students and community served. It is important to consider how the individual skills of each staff member will contribute to the overall growth and quality of the program. Grant leadership should also consider how each individual will build effective relationships both with students and the ACE team.

Creating Your ACE Team

The staff positions and responsibilities required for Cycle 9 grantees are outlined in Figure 3 below.

Project Director

- Full-time position responsible for grant implementation

Family Engagement Specialist

- Full-time or 1/2 time position responsible for coordinating adult and family engagement activities in and across all centers

Site Coordinator(s)

- Full-time position responsible for operating one center
- If the grant is for one center, Project Director can fulfill the Site Coordinator role

Figure 3- Required ACE positions

Sample job descriptions for the following positions can be found in **Appendix 18**:

- Project director;
- Site coordinator; and
- Family engagement specialist.

These sample descriptions are provided to inform your job postings. Grantees must always follow local policy to fill grant-funded positions.

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, and emphasized in the best practice research on out-of-school time. For an example volunteer handbook, see the sample posted on MyTexasACE.org. Please note: in accordance with the Texas statute, all staff and volunteers who participate in the program must be fingerprinted and undergo a criminal background check 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://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Certification/Fingerprinting/.

Securing Partnerships and Connecting with the School Day

Connecting with 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 school staff 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.
- Discuss ways ACE programming can support statutory endorsement options and graduation requirements.

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, an emergency plan, code of conduct and dress code, appropriate uses of space and materials, data privacy policy, and social media policy. Other important information could include required trainings and the professional development opportunities offered, nutritional snack guidelines, enrollment and discipline procedures, site-related policies such as storage, copy machine use, common area use, etc. Find a template to create a handbook in **Appendix 20**.

Training Your Staff and Partners, Including Vendors and Subcontractors

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.

Grantees must provide meaningful training for all staff members including training opportunities provided in staff meetings, professional development, retreats, and other relevant settings. The training should include information about local policies and programs, but must also provide staff with strategies that help them engage effectively with students and their families. See sample staff training schedule template in **Appendix 21**.

TEA also encourages grantees to collaborate 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 by TEA for ACE grantees includes webinars, various regional trainings in specific core content areas and other program-related topics as well as an annual summer conference. Additionally, TEA's Program Enhancement and Quality Assurance contractor provides one-on-one training and technical assistance to grantees based on the results of the ACE Key Task Assessment (described in Section D: Quality Assurance Requirements). Each year, grantees will receive information on the required meetings, various training opportunities, and summer conferences from TEA via email, and they are posted on the calendar at MyTexasACE.org. See the "Where to Find Additional Support" section on page 47 in this guide to learn about training and resources TEA and other external providers provide to enhance your staff development effort.

TEA expects grantees to use funds judiciously. For example, selecting high-quality training and conference opportunities in Texas when available and or carefully selecting consultants and subcontractors who do not duplicate services TEA provides. Participation in training is encouraged and grantees should make an effort to expose staff to a variety of high-quality relevant training experiences and share information with colleagues upon returning. The Texas ACE program provides several free webinar opportunities throughout the year, and participation is highly encouraged. Pre-recorded webinars are available online at MyTexasACE.org.

Out-of-School Time Conferences and Events

Grantees may attend up to two national out-of-school time conferences using grant funds. Pre-approved conferences include the National Afterschool Association, BOOST, Beyond School Hours by Foundations, Inc., the National Summer Learning Conference, and the Federal 21st CCLC Summer Institute. Grantees may attend other related conferences out of state after receiving approval, or other conferences in Texas in accordance with federal guidelines and local travel policies. To receive approval please complete the [Justification for Out of State Travel Form](#) and submit it to the help desk at HelpDesk@TexasACE21.org.

Hold Regular Staff Meetings and Trainings

In a study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation,^{xii} 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.” Time for staff to participate in meetings and training events must be planned and budgeted. All staff meetings should be planned and documented with attendance lists and meeting minutes. This documentation should be maintained for periodic site visits.

Implement Staff Observation

As part of an ongoing internal monitoring process, each project director observes site coordinators and front-line staff to evaluate their performance, give recognition, and offer constructive feedback for improvement when necessary. Site coordinators should 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. For an example Site Observation form see **Appendix 22**.

Conduct Regular Partnership Reviews

ACE grantees should regularly review their partners/vendors performance 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 ones.

SECTION B: DATA REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS

■ Required

□ Recommended/Best-Practice

Requirement	Cycle 9
Task 5: 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 (Family Education Rights & Privacy Act [FERPA], Public Information Act [PIA], and encryption of removable data)	■
Weekly data entry in TX21st	■
Daily data entry in TX21st	□
Monthly review of data by project directors	■

TASK 5: DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

TEA thoroughly reviews and approves data submitted by grantees through the TX21st Student Tracking System, also known as TX21st, before submitting the state data annually to the ED.

TEA staff reviews and analyzes data collected from each Texas ACE grantee 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 for a depiction of the process.

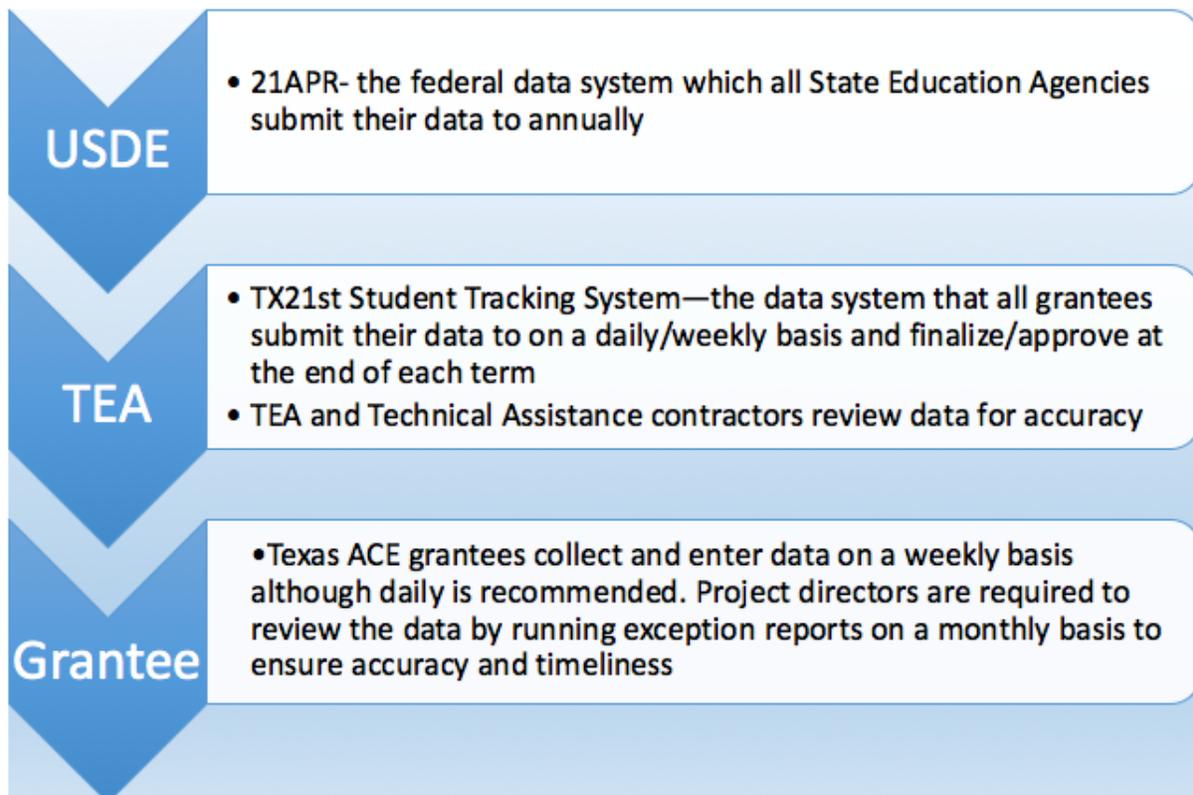


Figure 4 - Data review process

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

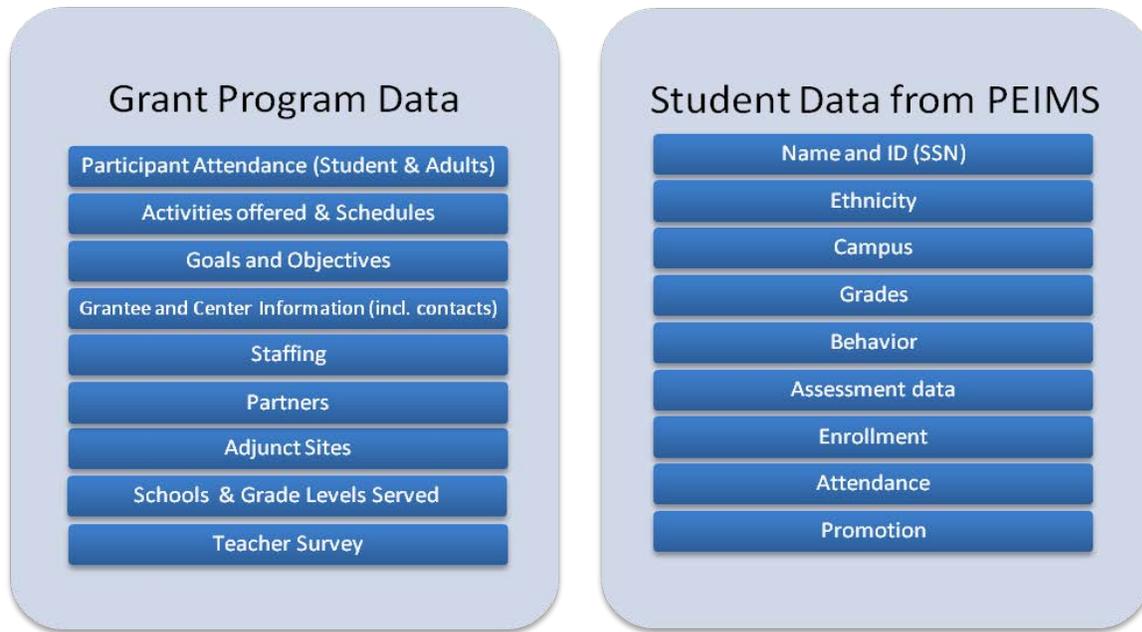


Figure 5 - TX21st data types and sources

POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR DATA MANAGEMENT

Student and adult participant data are considered confidential information under federal and state law. 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://comptroller.texas.gov/about/policies/public-information-act.php>; and
- Texas Administrative Code Title 1 Part 10 Chapter 202 - [https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=1&pt=10&ch=202](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=1&pt=10&ch=202).

It is strongly recommended that each grantee create a set of documented policies and procedures for data collection, management and reporting, and 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 and reviewed by the appropriate fiscal agent's administrator. TEA also expects 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.

ACCESS TO TX21ST

All staff/contractors who need to enter and have access to data about the program, will need to request access to TX21st. Project Directors should review who has access annually and ensure modifications are made if there are staffing changes so that only approved/appropriate people have

access. A step-by-step guide and the application for gaining access to TX21st for all roles is included in **Appendix 23**.

There are six user roles in TX21st: Grantee Staff, Grantee Approver, Grantee Staff & Approver, Grantee Evaluator, Center Staff, and Family Engagement Specialists. Each of the roles and their duties are outlined below:

- **Grantee Staff:** Grantee Staff include the project director and any other grant administrators responsible for reviewing data on a regular basis and submitting TX21st access requests to TEA. The project director and any other grant administrators 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 viewing finalized data and approving the data for final submission to TEA at the end of each term.
- **Grantee Staff & Approver:** This role allows grantee leadership such as the project director or executive director to enter data at the center and grantee level, as well as approve data.
- **Grantee Evaluator:** The independent evaluator can export and view program data, such as enrollment, demographic, attendance, and activity information.
- **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 are ready for final approval. For each of these users, applicants must indicate their center.
- **Family Engagement Specialists:** FES' 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 Texas ACE TX21st Student Tracking System is one of many data applications TEA maintains. The system is used to collect data from all Texas ACE programs. TEA's primary secure environment is TEA Login (**TEAL**), but many TX21st users will access the system through another secure environment called **TEASE**. You can find the latest information about the status of all applications here:

[http://tea.texas.gov/About TEA/Other Services/Secure Applications/TEA Secure Applications Information/](http://tea.texas.gov/About%20TEA/Other%20Services/Secure%20Applications/TEA%20Secure%20Applications%20Information/).

You can access both of the TEASE and TEAL applications from the TEA website at <http://tea.texas.gov/>, and click on the **TEASE** or **TEAL** button in the upper-right navigation bar.

Any staff member in need of TX21st access must submit a request specifically for the TX21st Student Tracking System to TEA upon receipt of their Notification of Grant Award (NOGA) to ensure that their grant is set up and data are entered on a timely basis. See **Appendix 23** for a workflow to help you access the online and paper forms for requesting access to TX21st. User maintenance is required to ensure the timely entry of data as well as its confidentiality. When a staff member or contracted personnel no longer requires access to TX21st, it is required that the grantee act to remove their access to the TX21st system in a timely manner. For school districts, the superintendent/or designee can remove the individual's access through their TEASE/TEAL

account. For non-profits and CBOs, complete the Non-Profit User Request for Access form and send the form to 21stCentury@tea.texas.gov and request the individual's access to be removed.

Important Notes / Common Errors:

- **Each request for access must be approved locally** by the superintendent of the district(s) where their students are being served or by the executive director of the non-profit/CBO.
- **School Districts, Regional Education Service Centers, and Communities In Schools:** If the grantee is a school district, Regional Education Service Center, or Communities in Schools they must request access for each identified staff member directly online by following the link to the TX21st online access request link outlined in **Appendix 23**.
- **Non-Profits and CBOs:** If the grantee is a non-profit or CBO, they are required to submit a TX21st Access Request Paper form to TEA with the required signatures, which can be downloaded. For instructions on how to access the form, please see **Appendix 23**.
- **Incorrect NOGA:** When requesting access to TX21st, be sure to 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 CIS and ESCs grantees:

- CIS and ESC executive directors and their designees have the ability to request TEASE 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 TEASE 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 Tracking System. Lack of knowledge about the system is not considered an excuse for late, missing, or inaccurate data. Please access the MyTexasACE website to discover resources to help access and use the TX21st system. Look for the Data Collection and Reporting topic in the Resources section. The TX21st system also has embedded video tutorials to help guide you along the way.

Working Across the Grant's Centers to Set-Up Activities

Grantees may have the same activity titles at different centers. While each campus may have different needs, many of the activities offered will be similar. Assigning only one or two designated staff to input activities into TX21st will ensure consistency in reporting. Once activities are entered,

the site coordinator will set up sessions specific to their center within the activities set-up screen. Using the same titles at all centers in the Grant will allow the project director to monitor activities in a more uniform manner, and the independent evaluator to more easily understand the activities that were provided.

ACQUIRING ADDITIONAL REQUIRED STUDENT DATA

In addition to grant staff, it is also important to involve several district staff from the beginning to discuss data that will be needed to comply with reporting requirements. Upon receiving your NOGA, 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 template for a written agreement with the District/PEIMS Coordinator is in **Appendix 24**.

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 45 or more program days), and suspect/missing data. These reports and exports are instrumental in creating Progress Reports to communicate program success and 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 approval/submission is required at the end of each term (see the TX21st Checklist and Calendar in **Appendix 25** for deadlines).
- Analyze Year-End Data to report to TEA in the Final Yearly Report (FYR) and share yearly progress with stakeholders, staff, and administrators, and inform program adjustments.

FINAL YEARLY REPORT

Each grantee is required to complete a 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 components and its impact on the program;
- Performance measures specific to the grant application;
- Technical assistance and tools that TEA and its contractors received; and
- Program sustainability in future years.

SECTION C: FISCAL REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS

■ Required

Requirement	Cycle 9
Task 6: 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 conference and other technical assistance trainings as requested by TEA	■
Financial reports (i.e., end of month grant expenditures, drawdown 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 provide for accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the grant project	■
Submit grant amendment when appropriate	■
SSA documentation, if applicable	■

TASK 6: FISCAL PLANNING AND INTERNAL MONITORING

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXAS ACE GRANT

Texas ACE programs are funded by the TEA through grants from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program administered by the ED (www2.ed.gov/programs/21stccclc/). Applying for funding under this grant is a competitive process where applications are submitted by eligible prospective grantees (local education agencies and non-profit organizations, etc.) and awarded based on the scores given by peer application reviewers. Grantees apply for non-competitive annual continuation awards for each subsequent year. Grants may be awarded no less than 3 and not more than 5 years. 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 TEA;
- 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
- Grantees must follow all federal and state grant requirements as outlined in the RFA and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). New EDGAR that encompasses the regulations previously published in OMB Circulars. Learn more at [http://tea.texas.gov/Finance and Grants/Grants/Administering a Grant/The New EDGAR/](http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Grants/Administering_a_Grant/The_New_EDGAR/)

It is important for project directors, site coordinators, and grantee staff responsible for managing the fiscal duties to understand the following:

- The New EDGAR;
- Allowable and unallowable costs;
- Reasonable and necessary costs;
- Expenditure reporting;
- Program income;
- Donations and fundraising;
- Community service activities;
- Time and effort maintenance;
- Budget amendments; and
- Continuation of application processes.

TEA strongly recommends reviewing detailed explanations regarding the points above in the RFA. Additionally, consider how you will document compliance with all General and Fiscal Guidelines.

RESOURCES FOR FISCAL REQUIREMENTS

There is 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 specialists, administrative assistant, etc.);
- Financial system (including forms and processes);
- External auditor; and
- Expenditure Reporting System – Grants Administration Division from the TEA.

It is imperative that the project director act as the facilitator and manager of grant funds with support from the fiscal agent resources, and coordinates 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 delay or disrupt grant programming.

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. 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 adhere to what was proposed in your grant application as well as document supplemental funding sources. See **Appendix 26** for a Direct Costs Funding Workbook that may 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 including students AND families; the necessary materials/equipment, staff, and number of hours for activity delivery; and activity total cost. See **Appendix 27** 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 staff including regular staff meetings.
- **Plan for expenses related to family engagement activities at each center.** Page 32 of the Cycle 9 Program Guidelines notes that activities promoting “active and meaningful engagement for immediate family members (e.g., parents, legal guardians) of students participating...including opportunities for literacy and related educational development” are allowable costs, as are the related supplies and materials.
- **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 or budget portions that apply to supplies/materials and site contracts. Site

coordinators should know about the monthly expenses that are incurred and order materials and supplies using the appropriate forms and procedures set by the fiscal agent and project director. See **Appendix 28** for a sample Budget Expenditures Tracking Form and Supply Request Form.

- **Schedule monthly budget updates.** The project director should update the program budget on a regular basis by understanding center budgets, and documenting grant level expenses. See **Appendix 29** for a sample Monthly Budget Update by Center Worksheet.
- **Expenditure reviews.** Each month TEA reviews a drawdown report that indicates the percentage of grant funds that each of his/her grantees has expended. If needed, TEA will discuss the drawdown timing with the project director if the fiscal agent is not drawing down funds in a timely manner.

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 using grant funds. Costs associated with training on fundraising or grant writing are not allowable using grant funds. Because grant funds cannot be used to solicit financial support, enlist community members, volunteers, Community Advisory Council members, and anyone who is not paid with grant funds to engage in these activities on behalf of the program. Grantees may fund the full-time project director, family engagement specialist, and site coordinator positions with 90 percent of their time and effort from the ACE program, and 10 percent from local funds to allow this person to participate in and coordinate fundraising activities. Any fundraising time and effort, including both salary and benefits, must be charged to another funding source.

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 federal, state, and district/organizational requirements for many functions of the grant. In general, grant-related documentation must be retained for five (5) years. Four aspects of documentation are discussed in more detail:

- Procuring equipment and supplies and maintaining an accurate inventory;
- Payroll and time and effort documentation;
- Travel policy; and
- Shared services agreements and documentation.

Procuring Equipment & Supplies and Maintaining an Accurate Inventory

Ensure that you are following district/organizational requirements and guidelines when purchasing equipment and supplies. The process used by many districts and organizations may vary and could include the following 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;
- Cost sharing requirements for supplies/equipment that are used during the school day and in the Texas ACE program;
- 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 are documented in grant budget.

Payroll and Time & Effort Documentation

Fiscal grant requirements include documenting time and effort of all grant staff. For the most current information regarding documenting time and effort, please see the guidance related to Grants Administration here:

[http://tea.texas.gov/Finance and Grants/Grants/Administering a Grant/Substitute System of Time and Effort Reporting/](http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Grants/Administering_a_Grant/Substitute_System_of_Time_and_Effort_Reporting/) and
[http://tea.texas.gov/Finance and Grants/Administering a Grant.aspx](http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Administering_a_Grant.aspx).

Also, see the new EDGAR regulations and the most current FAQ also located on the Administering a Grant website.

Travel Policy

Funds, including staff time and relevant travel expenses, must be budgeted for appropriate staff to attend required training. When budgeting for any travel expenses, grantees should use the current per diem rates for the areas in which they are traveling as outlined either by the "New EDGAR" incorporated into general federal regulation on December 26, 2014, ([http://tea.texas.gov/Finance and Grants/Grants/Administering a Grant/The New EDGAR/](http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Grants/Administering_a_Grant/The_New_EDGAR/) or local policy, whichever is more restrictive.

Additional travel guidance can also be found here:

[http://tea.texas.gov/Finance and Grants/Grants/Administering a Grant/Travel Information and Guidance/](http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Grants/Administering_a_Grant/Travel_Information_and_Guidance/). Grantees should be conscientious of the proper use of funds when traveling for conferences, and conference attendees will share information learned at the conference with staff and provide necessary training to implement new practices.

Shared Services Agreements

Grantees who have a Shared Services Agreement (SSA) as part of their grant application. For guidance on SSA see

http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Grants/Federal_Fiscal_Compliance_and_Reporting/IDEA_Fiscal_Compliance/Shared_Services_Arrangement_Procedures/.

AMENDMENTS

If a grantee needs to make certain changes in the approved budget in the NOGA, an amendment must be submitted to TEA for approval. See the “When to Amend the Application” document and other references posted here:

http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Administering_a_Grant.aspx. The schedules that must be completed as part of an amendment are located in the Standard Application System of all active RFAs.

Please note that approval of grant applications does not necessarily constitute full program compliance. There are some situations that don’t require an amendment, but necessitate program approval from TEA. Please refer to Task 4: Operation and Talent Management for a detailed description of these topics.

CONTINUATION APPLICATION

Texas ACE grantees are expected to submit an application each year for continued funding. During continuation years, grantees must maintain or increase the scope and level of program services to students and adults as outlined in the approved Year 1 grant agreement. When drafting the continuation application, project directors should involve site coordinators, family engagement specialists, the community advisory group, 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 out-of-school time;
- Creating center project plans that merge new opportunities with lessons learned and best practices; and
- Planning the next year’s budget.

Because these grants are awarded on a competitive basis, changing the scope of the grant during continuation years will not be permitted. 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. (Note: Grantees may increase hours, days, or weeks of programming at any time, but once approved, the goals must be met during that grant year.) Decreasing the number of program hours or days per week, weeks per year, and students or adult/family participants served, are examples of changes that reduce the scope of the grant and are not allowed.

FUNDING REDUCTION

Continuation funding will gradually be reduced over the course of the grant based on the number of years awarded. For grants eligible to be funded for a total of 3 years, continuation funding will be reduced in the following manner:

- Funding in Year 2 will be reduced by 3% of the initial award; and
- Funding in Year 3 will be decreased by 5% of the previous award.

For grants that are eligible to be funded for up to a total of 5 years, continuation funding will be reduced in the following manner:

- Funding in Years 2 and 3 will be reduced by 3% of the previous award; and
- Funding in Years 4 and 5 will be decreased by 5% of the previous award.

See **Appendix 30** for student service funding reductions for Cycle 8 grantees. A similar policy will be applied for Cycle 9. Funding levels may be further reduced in subsequent continuation grant period when a grantee:

- Serves fewer than the number of regular students (attending 45 days or more) and adult family members;
- Fails to fulfill the operational requirements (number of hours, days, and weeks);
- Makes unsatisfactory progress from previous years' objectives; or
- Fails to adhere to program-specific requirements.

TEA GUIDANCE FOR THE SINGLE AUDIT

Grantees that expend \$750,000 or more in federal grant funds in a fiscal year may be required to complete a single audit as defined by the requirements given in the new EDGAR and the single audit requirements here:

http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Grants/Federal_Fiscal_Monitoring/Monitoring_of_Single-Audit_Findings/.

SECTION D: QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS

■ Required

□ Recommended/Best-Practice

Requirement	Cycle 9
Task 7: Sustainability Planning	
Sustainability Logic Model	□
Evidence of community involvement and planning	■
Task 8: Evaluation	
Interim Report 1	□
Interim Report 2	□
Final Report	■
Task 9: Quality Assurance Tools	
Internal monitoring	■
Key task assessment	■
Statewide evaluation	■
Task 10: Develop and Implement Logic Models	
Logic model(s)	■

TASK 7: SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

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 as seed money and not relied upon as an ongoing funding source. Grantees who 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.

Sustainability goals for each grantee may be different, but community support, partnerships, and local buy-in are essential to the success of a self-sustaining program. Grantees can use Texas ACE funds to build or expand a systemic infrastructure of expanded learning opportunities to replicate across their district once funding ends. Therefore, grantees, along with their community stakeholders, must develop a sustainability plan that is unique to their needs and resources and demonstrate how and to what degree these programs will sustain. Grantees and community stakeholders must help gather resources to work toward their vision of sustainability throughout the life of the grant so that when funding ends, the grantee is equipped to meet the needs of the community as set forth in their sustainability plan.

To accomplish this, five steps can guide your planning.

- **Determine the sustainability or growth outcome/target.** When creating an enduring program, it is important to focus on the end goal. What impact are you trying to achieve? Is this impact reflected in the needs of the community and campus(s) you serve? Consider also that, at the conclusion of grant funding, you are no longer bound by the same requirements on grant activities. For example, perhaps a school campus needs 10 hours a week for academic tutoring and supporting extracurricular activities cultivated during the grant period. ACE leaders should focus on what aspects to sustain of the program, which are most needed and provide the biggest impact on student outcomes.
- **Determine the service model(s) needed to accomplish the state outcome/target.** Throughout the grant period you will notice some components are more highly attended than others. Observe these differences and note what works best for the students you are serving. Options may include: large group activities, small group activities, case-managed activities, etc.
- **Determine the resources needed to support the stated service models.** By beginning the sustainability planning process at the onset of your grant, you have the opportunity to cultivate diverse resources that may continue to support your program at the conclusion of the grant period. Consider resources such as: in-kind, fee for service, fundraising (while NOT on federal grant time, of course), grants in the form of donations, and grants from various local, state, and federal sources. Many of these resources are competitive and rely on strong relationships. One popular way to view this is the saying “You must FRIENDraise before you FUNDrise.”

- **Develop of theory of action that links resources to service models to outcome/target.** How are you going to use your resources to fuel your service model and link to the outcomes/targets you are looking for?
- **Develop logic model to operationalize the theory of action.** Synthesize all the gathered information into a model to guide further planning and developing.

There are many opportunities available for project directors and other grantee staff to explore when seeking out additional funding streams. ACE program staff should:

- Connect with other local/national funding sources;
- Use members of the task force or other volunteers to seek funding and other resources; and
- Create partnerships with other programs with similar goals in your community.

TASK 8: EVALUATION

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

TEA requires that each Texas ACE grant program work with an independent evaluator to conduct an annual program evaluation that is intended to measure progress toward program goals. Specifically, a local program evaluation provides program description and student outcome data that demonstrate accountability and can inform program improvement decisions.

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 guide you in identifying and working collaboratively with an appropriate independent evaluator.

TEA developed the *Texas ACE Independent Evaluation Guide*, see **Appendix 31** to help project directors and independent evaluators accomplish this grant requirement. 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. Highlights include:

- A focus on using a logic model as a fundamental evaluation tool (see Task 10: Develop and Implement Logic Model(s));
- A set of defined research questions designed to ask important questions about program practices and outcomes;
- References to data reports from TX21st and the ACE Key Task Assessment so that grantees do not recreate program documentation during the program assessment/evaluation process; and
- Sample templates for interim and final reports.

As part of the evaluation process, grantees are expected to use data to inform their programming reflections and planning for subsequent terms and years. Data can serve as a focal point for discussion with grantee staff to address the evaluation questions laid out in the *Independent Evaluation Guide*. There are eight reports in TX21st that are especially useful for ongoing review

that grantees should utilize as part of the evaluation process throughout the year:

1. Activity Attendance Percentage
2. Activity Average Daily Attendance
3. Activity Description Detail
4. Participant Activity Attendance Detail
5. Participant Attendance
6. Student Attendance Percentage - Grantee Level
7. Year End Summary
8. Student Export

Each school year, there are two recommended activities and one deliverable that all grantees must submit to meet the evaluation requirements:

1. Recommended: Interim Report 1 - Implementation Practices: School Program Alignment
2. Recommended: Interim Report 2 - Outputs: Activities and Participation
3. Required: Executive Summary of the Final Evaluation Report—to be submitted to TEA via Texas ACE Help Desk

TASK 9: QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLS

INTERNAL MONITORING

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

- Programming (i.e., student 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. There are several tools available or grantees can create their own to fit local program needs. A few of the nationally recognized program quality tools include the Assessment of Program Practices (APT) tool from the National Institute of Out-of-School Time and the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool from the Weikart Center. The Forum for Youth Investment publish a comparison of these options and more at http://forumfyi.org/files/MeasuringYouthProgramQuality_2ndEd.pdf.

Additionally, the Texas Partnership for Out of School Time (TXPOST) developed an assessment tool to align with the Texas Standards of High Quality Afterschool, Summer, and Expanded Learning Programs (<https://www.txpost.org/quality/>). Regardless of the tool selected, a systematic approach that all staff can be trained in and document will lead to improved quality assurance and ensure compliance with all relevant grant, safety, and programmatic standards.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT—ACE KEY TASK ASSESSMENT

Grantees will be required to participate in annual assessment and monitoring processes based on the ACE Key Task Assessment. The goal of the monitoring is to ensure grantees are in compliance with all TEA program requirements and are on track to implement high-quality programming. The results of the monitoring are used to develop TEA's training and ongoing technical assistance plan for each grantee.

Each grantee that is identified for a monitoring visit will be required to review the protocol, gather the required documentation, host a monitor for an on-site visit, review the results of the assessment process with the person who conducts the visit, and implement the corresponding recommendations for performance improvement (including the development of a program improvement plan when necessary). The ACE Key Task Assessment Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM) can be found in **Appendix 32**.

Following the completed monitoring process, each grantee will receive a monitoring report. The report will include the results of the monitoring and will allow for grantees to provide action plans to address recommendations for improvement.

STATEWIDE EVALUATION

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

- Collecting student-level data;
- Providing responses to surveys (staff/students);
- Participating in telephone interviews;
- Administering pre- and post-assessments;
- Hosting site visits while maintaining normal operations;
- Participating in advisory capacity; and/or
- Providing additional data or documentation to TEA or its evaluator.

TASK 10: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT LOGIC MODEL(S)

A logic model is a visual representation of a program. It depicts the key components of a program and shows the relationships among the resources, activities, and short- and long-term expected outcomes. A logic model portrays the theory of change behind the program and is the foundation of programming planning, evaluation, program management, and communications.

Grantees must submit a completed logic model for each center by the conclusion of the fall term and update the logic models each year. TEA, through its technical assistance contractor, will provide detailed training and technical assistance to help each grantee create meaningful logic models and learn how the logic model can be used as a program implementation tracking tool, as well as a tool for continuous program improvement. A logic model template is available in **Appendix 33**. Examples of Texas ACE logic models, as well as information on logic model development, is available on MyTexasACE.org.

Grantees will work at the site level to develop individual logic models for each center. Each center is likely to serve a distinct population with unique assets, challenges, and resources. A center-level

logic model is a tool that can help site coordinators and front-line staff benefit from the logic model's value as a program implementation tracking tool, as well as a tool for continuous program improvement.

You should expect that each center logic model will be different because of differing resources and student needs, which in turn would require different activities to meet those needs. Each center offers a unique program solution as it aligns its services with differing regular school day instructional strategies at each school site.

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

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COACH (TAC)

The 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 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 grantees.

ACE HELP DESK

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. You can reach the ACE Help Desk by emailing HelpDesk@TexasACE21.org. Multiple team members are copied on each request/email to ensure you receive a prompt and appropriate response.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY CONTACTS

Issue Area	Name and Title	Email Address	Phone Number
Programming	Christine McCormick, State Coordinator	christine.mccormick@tea.texas.gov	512.463.2334
Grants & Fiscal Issues	Eleanor Blais, Grant Manager	eleanor.blais@tea.texas.gov	512.463.8525

To find answers to frequently asked questions about grants in general, access the Grants Management Resource page at

http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Administering_a_Grant.aspx.

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 Conference

TEA may hold a statewide conference during the summer. When held, the conference is an important event that 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.

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 a Find a Program map feature information for prospective grantees.

MYTEXASACE – WWW.MYTEXASACE.ORG

The MyTexasACE.org portal is accessible to all ACE grantees and provides access to a collection of resources and forms as well as the most current TEA updates and training through webinars, podcasts, regional meetings, etc.

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 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 out-of-school time programs:

Statewide Network: TXPOST

TXPOST - <http://www.txpost.org/> is a statewide resource for all out of school time programs with a mission to increase the quality and availability of out of school time programs in the state of Texas. TXPOST supports the development of local, regional and statewide partnerships, advocates for policies that secure resources to sustain new and existing out of school time programs, and develops statewide systems to ensure programs are of high quality.

TXPOST supports many regional networks of out-of-school time program providers. See their website at <https://www.txpost.org/partnerships/> to learn about joining or creating a network in your area. Contact TXPOST to get involved!

Texas Expanded Learning Opportunities Council

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Council (ELO Council) was established by the 83rd Texas Legislature's Senate Bill 503 and codified in Texas Education Code Chapter §33.251-260 (<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.33.htm>). The ELO Council authorizes the study of issues that relate to expanding learning opportunities and reviewing programs outside of the regular school day. This 13-member council developed a comprehensive statewide action plan that focused on increasing the opportunities for students to participate in innovative, hands-on learning approaches that complement current school curriculum.

See TEA's website for more information about the council, its members, and their important work: [http://tea.texas.gov/Texas Schools/Support for At-Risk Schools and Students/After School Programs/After- or Extended-School Programs/](http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/Support_for_At-Risk_Schools_and_Students/After_School_Programs/After- or_Extended-School_Programs/).

National Groups/Networks

- You 4 Youth Website supported by the ED - 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>

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