

TEXAS COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Request for Proposals 2012-2

Administrative Support for Project SEARCH® Sites in Texas

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) is established by and funded under federal and state law. TCDD's mission is to create change so that all people with disabilities are fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives. The Council is responsible for developing a State Plan and approving activities to carry out objectives in the State Plan. This Request for Proposals (RFP) announces the intention of TCDD to award funds for one (1) project to provide support for school districts, businesses, and/or other entities who wish to contract with Project SEARCH®. TCDD has made available \$175,000 per year, for up to 5 years for this project.

Ineligible applicants: To avoid conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest, organizations that are, or that hope to be, an existing Project SEARCH® site, may *not* apply. In addition, state agencies that would be expected to work with Project SEARCH® participants, such as the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), are not eligible to apply.

To be eligible to receive a grant under this Announcement, an organization must:

- Have at least one office located in Texas;
- Demonstrate that they can successfully work with Texas state agencies and schools;
- Agree to refer inquiries about becoming a Project SEARCH® site directly to the Project SEARCH® national office;
- Agree to refer all requests for technical assistance from certified Project SEARCH® sites to the national office;
- Agree to the stipulation that the entity receiving this grant will not represent Project SEARCH® or use the Project SEARCH® brand without explicit written approval from the national office.

Deadlines and Submission Process

1. **Download or request an application.** The online application packet for this RFP is available on the TCDD website at http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/grants_projects/rfp.asp or may be requested **in writing** by U.S. mail, fax, or e-mail. Send written requests for application packets to Jeri Barnard, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, 6201 E. Oltorf, Suite 600, Austin, TX 78741-7509; fax (512) 437-5434; or e-mail Jerianne.Barnard@tcdd.state.tx.us.
2. **Complete the application.** Review the application, the RFP, and the Frequently Asked Questions on TCDD's website. If you wish to know more about TCDD grants management policies, please see the [TCDD Grants Manual](#). Submit any additional questions about the RFP and/or the application **in writing**, to Joanna.Cordry@tcdd.state.tx.us by the deadline noted in the Timeline and Important Dates section below. Submitted questions and answers will be posted on TCDD's website. *Please review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) before submitting additional questions.*

TCDD will hold optional telephone conferences to help potential applicants understand the grant application process and the requirements of this particular RFP. You do not have to participate in telephone conferences to apply for this grant. If you would like to participate, please sign up on the TCDD website at http://txddc.state.tx.us/grants_projects/rfp_announcements.asp. The schedule for telephone conferences for this RFP is noted in the timeline below.

3. **Submit the application no later than 4:00 pm Central Time, Wednesday, June 27, 2012.** One hard copy, with original signatures, and one electronic copy must be submitted to Jeri Barnard, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, 6201 E. Oltorf, Suite 600, Austin, TX 78741-7509; fax (512) 437-5434; or e-mail Jerianne.Barnard@tcdd.state.tx.us. **Both the electronic and hard copies are due to TCDD by the due date.** Only information specifically allowed by the RFP and/or the application will be considered during the review process. Please note:

- If the hard copy is mailed, it must be postmarked prior to midnight on the date due.
- If the hard copy is hand-carried, it must be received by TCDD staff by 4:00 pm Central Time on the date due.
- Electronic copies should be provided in PDF or MS Word format and submitted electronically to Jerianne.Barnard@tcdd.state.tx.us. The email containing the electronic copy must be time and date stamped indicating it was sent prior to 4:00 pm Central Time on the date due.
- Any information submitted after the application deadline will not be considered during the review process.
- **Faxed proposals will not be accepted.**

Timeline and Important Dates

Dates may be subject to change; any changes will be announced on the TCDD website.

ACTIVITY	DATE
RFP Released	April 20, 2012 <i>(Friday)</i>
Telephone Bidders Conference #1	May 16, 1-2 pm Central Time <i>(Wednesday)</i>
Telephone Bidders Conference #2	May 23, 9-10 am Central Time <i>(Wednesday)</i>
Last date to submit questions	June 1, 2012, by 4 pm Central Time <i>(Friday)</i>
Proposals Due to TCDD	June 20, 2012, by 4 pm Central Time <i>(Wednesday)</i>
Proposals Reviewed by Independent Panel	Completed by July 13, 2012
TCDD Executive Committee Makes Decision	July 25, 2012 <i>(Wednesday)</i>
Applicants Notified of Decision	July 30, 2012 – August 3, 2012
Earliest Expected Project Start Date	September 4, 2012 <i>(Tuesday)</i>

Background

Texasans with developmental disabilities continue to experience higher unemployment rates than Texasans who do not have disabilities. Parents of youth who have developmental disabilities also report that the transition from high school to a career is a particularly difficult and confusing process. Project SEARCH®, a

business-led school-to-work transition model, has demonstrated success in developing internships for students with developmental disabilities that lead to integrated employment that pays the prevailing wage for a given job. Since it started in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1996, Project SEARCH® has approved over 150 programs in 42 states and 4 countries. Sites in various stages of implementation are currently located in Texas; individuals and businesses across the state have indicated a strong interest in establishing more sites.

The Project SEARCH® model requires a partnership between multiple state agencies (representing education, vocational rehabilitation, the agency that provides long-term supports to individuals with IDD, and a community rehabilitation provider) as well as businesses and families. The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) has actively supported the development of Project SEARCH® sites across Texas for several years in addition to participating at the local level in the sites. DARS staff maintains contact with the Project SEARCH® national office and provides information to Texas businesses about the program. Through this effort, DARS has been able to gather information about emerging barriers and identify possible opportunities for sites to share resources and/or coordinate activities.

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities intends to facilitate a more rapid expansion of Project SEARCH® in Texas by awarding a grant to an organization to provide administrative and fiscal support for specific activities related to expansion, and to continue to gather information about emerging barriers and opportunities.

TCDD State Plan Goal and Objective

Goal 2, Objective 3: Partner with other organizations to expand and evaluate the impact of Project SEARCH® in Texas, by 9/30/2016.

Expected Outcome

The grantee will be expected to gather information from sites to report to TCDD quarterly on progress and to provide information on the following Federal Outcome Measures:

1. Number of adults who have jobs of their choice through Council efforts.
2. Number of employment programs/policies were created/improved.
3. Number of students transitioned from school to community and jobs.

Project Description

The selected grantee will be expected to work closely, in a supportive role, with staff from the Project SEARCH® national office, Texas state agencies such as DARS and DADS, and local sites. The selected grantee will be expected to:

- Disseminate informational and/or promotional materials approved by the Project SEARCH® national office to increase awareness of the benefits of the Project SEARCH® model and to develop interest in developing sites across the state;
- Assist entities across the state that hope to establish a Project SEARCH® site to contact and receive technical assistance from Project SEARCH® national;

- Provide support to potential Project SEARCH® sites to engage and support involvement of necessary partners, such as local schools, local businesses, DARS, DADS, and other providers of services to individuals with developmental disabilities;
- Provide support to both existing and potential Project SEARCH® sites to identify available resources;
- Arrange and provide funds for individual site visits and technical assistance from the national office according to timelines established by the sites and the national office;
- Work with DARS and the Project SEARCH® national office to develop and implement a process to monitor the progress of sites;
- Provide administrative support for coordination and/or communication between the Project SEARCH® national office, Project SEARCH® sites in Texas, DARS, and other relevant state agencies; and
- Gather information about barriers and opportunities; work with the appropriate agency or organization to remove these barriers; and summarize this information for TCDD.

The grantee will be expected to support the development of at least 10 new certified sites in Texas by the end of year 4. In addition, the grantee will provide a final report to TCDD that describes any savings achieved by businesses implementing Project SEARCH®; the employment outcomes of the students who participated in Project SEARCH®; and information about barriers encountered. **The grantee shall not provide technical assistance related to implementation of the model unless requested or authorized in writing by the Project SEARCH® national office.**

Eligibility

Eligible grant applicants are organizations that are public agencies, private not-for-profit agencies, private for-profit organizations, universities, colleges, or other organizations *that can demonstrate in their completed application that they meet the additional eligibility requirements specified on page 1 of this RFP.* Grant applicants shall be the organization that will provide the administrative functions for the grants and will receive, disburse, and account for grant funds. Individuals are not eligible to apply for grants under this Announcement.

Terms

- Applicants must disclose any conflicts of interest between themselves and Council members, employees, or their immediate families, and between themselves and the Project SEARCH® national office or employees.
- Applicants are required to use People First Language in all written materials.
- All printed material must be available in accessible formats including electronic formats and Spanish, as well as in Braille or large print when appropriate.
- Any video/DVD products must be captioned. Video/DVD products, teleconferencing, and distance learning activities must be fully accessible.
- TCDD will retain all rights to all products created using funding awarded through this RFP. Pre-existing materials and/or materials created by Project SEARCH® national are excluded from this term.
- TCDD reserves the right not to fund any proposal under this Announcement.

- TCDD staff will approve a Project Advisory Committee of 8-12 key stakeholders.
- Application information received by TCDD is subject to release consistent with provisions of the Texas Public Information Act.

Nonfederal Match

A nonfederal matching contribution of at least 25 percent of the total project costs is required. The nonfederal match may consist of “in-kind” valued items and/or designated nonfederal cash contributions. Match contributions cannot be used as match to other federal funds. Project activities located in counties that are designated federal poverty areas require a minimum of 10 percent matching resources (resource information regarding the poverty status of counties is provided in the application). An increasing match in subsequent years is requested and will be negotiated with TCDD.

Match requirements may be calculated as follows:

For non-poverty areas:

$(\text{Amount of Federal Funds received}) / 3 = \text{Amount of Match required}$

For poverty areas:

$(\text{Amount of Federal Funds Received}) / 9 = \text{Amount of Match required}$

Continuation Funding

The Project funded under this RFP is eligible for continuation funding for up to four continuation years, for five years total. However, continuation funding is not automatic each year, and funds may be terminated prior to the ending date originally intended. Continuation funding will be based on a review of the project’s accomplishments, progress towards stated goals and objectives, financial management of funds, compliance with reporting requirements, review of the most recent program audit, review of findings of TCDD’s onsite reviews, development of alternative funding, and the availability of TCDD funds.

NOTE: If the original application is approved by TCDD, all annual funding estimates noted in that application *for all years of the project* will be considered accurate estimates of the funds needed for each of those years. TCDD will expect that applications for continuations years will not request funding that exceeds the amount budgeted in the original application.