TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

STATE OF TEXAS AGRICULTURAL RELIEF (STAR)
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT - ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

What is it?
The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is accepting applications for the State of Texas Agriculture Relief (STAR) Fund Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program (Program). Funding for the Program is available through the STAR Fund established to collect monetary contributions from private individuals and entities to fund disaster recovery efforts.

Local firefighters and EMTs serve as a first line of defense when disaster strikes to protect lives and property to the best of their ability. At the direction of Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, the STAR Fund has r broadened eligibility to help replenish resources used by Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) during the 2024 Texas Panhandle wildfires. It is imperative these first responders who provide emergency services have supplies available for the next disaster.

Who is eligible?
An eligible entity is a volunteer fire department located in counties within the disaster declaration area:

Archer, Armstrong, Bailey, Baylor, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Cochran, Collingsworth, Cottle, Crosby, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Dickens, Donley, Fannin, Floyd, Foard, Garza, Gray, Gregg, Hale, Hall, Hansford, Hardeman, Harrison, Hartley, Haskell, Hemphill, Hockley, Hutchinson, Kent, King, Knox, Lamb, Lipscomb, Lubbock, Lynn, Moore, Motley, Nacogdoches, Newton, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Stonewall, Swisher, Terry, Throckmorton, Upshur, Wheeler, Wichita, Wilbarger, Yoakum, and Young Counties.

How does it work?
Submitted applications will be reviewed individually, and eligibility of expenses will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The STAR Fund will provide up to $8,000 for eligible expenses to VFDs within the disaster declaration area. All expenses must be paid by the applicant before reimbursement will be provided.

For each future disaster proclamation, TDA and the Texas Agriculture Commissioner will determine if this Program should be activated, as well as specific details including maximum award amounts.

Deadline
Applications MUST be submitted in TDA-GO! by June 28, 2024 before 11:59 PM.

Applications must be complete and have all required documentation to be considered. TDA reserves the right to request additional information or documentation to determine eligibility. Applications missing documentation or otherwise deemed incomplete will not be considered for funding until sufficient information has been received. TDA reserves the right to deny applications if the applicant is unable to provide required documentation within the deadline provided by TDA when requesting the information. All determinations regarding eligibility of expenses and funding amounts are final.

How to submit?
Applications must be submitted online via TDA-GO!. Click here or copy and paste the following in your internet browser to access TDA-GO!: https://tda-go.intelligrants.com/. *Mailed, faxed, emailed or hand-delivered applications will not be accepted.*

Questions
For questions regarding submission of the application and/or TDA requirements, please contact TDA's Grants Office at 833-380-8282 or by email at Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov.

Allowable Costs	Unallowable Costs	
• Fuel	• Mileage	• Protective clothing
• Foam	• Housing	• Dry-hydrants
• EMT supplies	• Food	• Extractors/dryers for turn-out gear
• Other consumable supplies	• Replacement of Capital Assets	• Computer systems
• Vehicle maintenance and repairs	• Labor costs	• Firefighter training
	• Acquisition of firefighting vehicles, fire and rescue equipment	

TDA-GO! STAR Fund Application Instructions

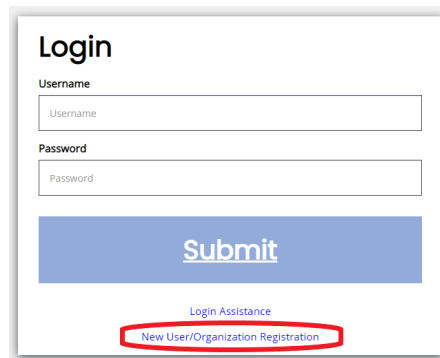## Step 1: Registering a New User in TDA-GO!

The following describes how to access the TDA-GO! online grant system by setting up a new user. The applicant must set up a new user account to access the STAR Fund application. **THIS MUST BE DONE 24-48 HOURS PRIOR TO SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION!**

Steps to Get Started:

- Complete New User Registration
- TDA will approve New User Registration
- New User will receive email of approval
- Once approved, New User can access and complete grant application

To register a New User, complete the following steps:

1) Go to the TDA-GO! website: https://tda-go.intelligrants.com/
2) Click on the **New User/Organization Registration** link found in the Login box on the right side of the webpage.

3) Fill in the required fields and any optional fields desired. See Legend below for specific field instructions. Click on the **Register** button.

Legend

First Name (Required) – the first name of the registering user (applicant).

Middle Name – the middle name of the registering user (applicant).

Last Name (Required) – the last name of the registering user.

SAM&DUNS (Required) – Enter 12 zeros (e.g. 000000000000) in this box.

Organization (Required) – Enter full name of the Volunteer Fire Department (applicant).

Title – Enter "*STAR Fund VFD Applicant*".

Street Address (Required) – the physical street address of the registering user (applicant).

State (Required) – the state drop-down selection for the state of the registering user's address.

County (Required) – the county drop-down selection for the county of the registering user's address.

City (Required) – the name of the city of the registering user's address.

Zip Code (Required) – the zip of the registering user's address.

Email (Required) – the email address of the registering user (applicant).

Phone (Required) – the phone number of the registering user (applicant).

Username (Required) – the username the registering user wishes to register for.

Password/Verify Password (Required) – the password the registering user (applicant) wishes to register for.

3)   Once registered, the registration request for the New User will be approved by TDA-GO! portal staff. You will receive an email indicating approval. After approval, the New User can log on and access the TDA-GO! platform.

> **NOTE: If a user attempts to access the system before they have been approved, the system will show their password as invalid.**

Step 2: Accessing Grant Opportunity

The following describes how to access the application for the grant opportunity via TDA GO!.

Dashboard

After your registration has been submitted and you have received an approval email, you will be able to log into the system and see the Dashboard. After logging in, the User's Dashboard will appear (Figure 1). **My Tasks** are documents/applications that are in process; **Initiate New Application Box** are blank grant applications.
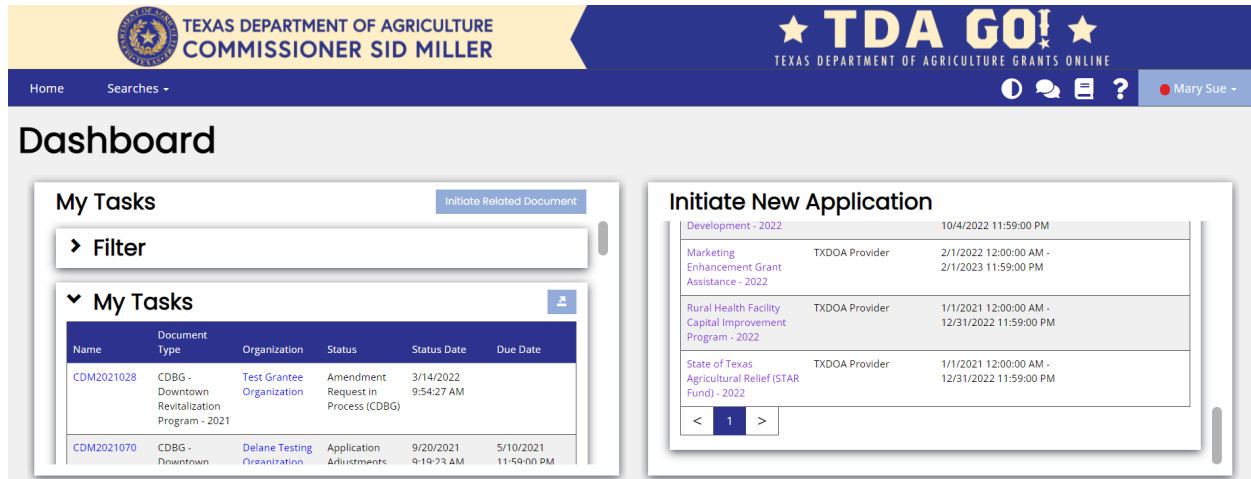

Figure 1. Landing page after logging in

Choose the **STAR Fund - Volunteer Fire Departments** by scrolling down the **Initiate New Application** box and select **STAR Fund - Volunteer Fire Departments** (Figure 2 & 3).
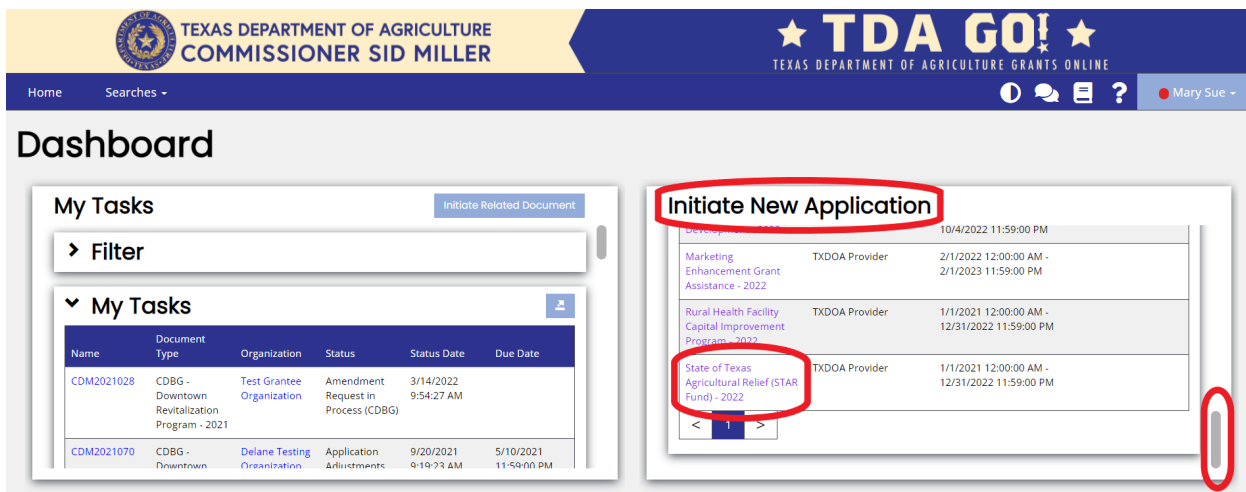
Figure 2. Initiate New Application and location of scrolling tool

Figure 3. Selection for new STAR Fund Application. Please note dates are for testing and example purposes only.

A brief description and agreement language appears (Figure 4). Read and select **Agree**.

Figure 4. Agreement

Document Landing Page

After Agree is selected, the application Document Landing Page will appear (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Document Landing Page

The left column has the Grant Project Identification Number at the top, then four drop down menus: **Forms, Tools, Status Options, and Related Documents.**

- **Forms** is a list of required information that includes Applicant Form, Proposed Project, Budget Form, Required Uploads, and Certification.

- **Tools** include Add/Edit People that can access the application, Status History, Modification Summary, Attachment Repository, Notes and Print Document ability.

- **Status Options** is where the application can be submitted or cancelled.

- **Related Documents** is not applicable to the application submisson process. You will not need this function to submit your application.

Application Form Guidance

The following section provides additional guidance regarding selected sections of the application.

Step 1: Start Application Form

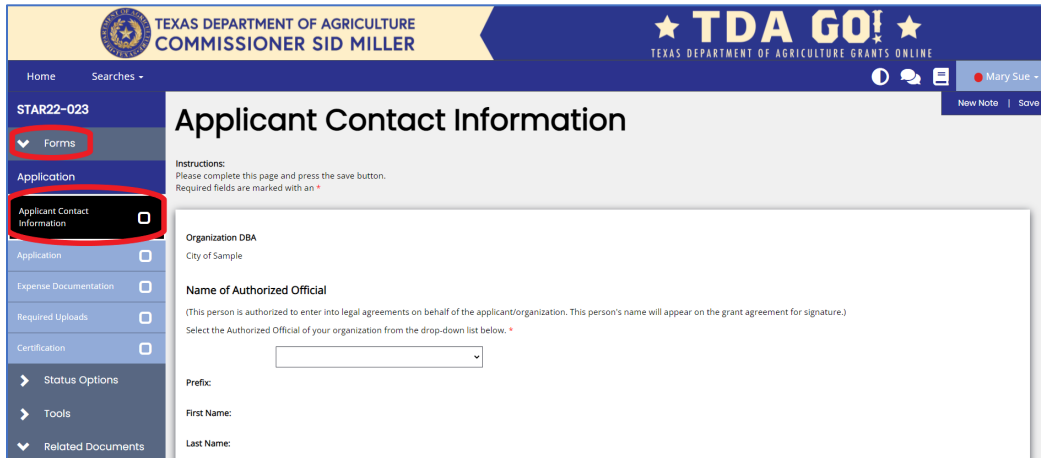Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Application Contact Information** (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Applicant Contact Information Form location

All sections of the Application Form must be completed if applicable. See below for specific instructions.

General Functions:

NOTE: All required fields are marked with a *. An error message will appear and the application may not be submitted if these required fields are not filled out (Figure 7).
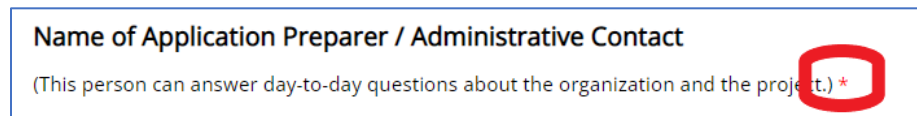

Figure 7. Example of Required Fields

NOTE: If a question has a **Select** button in the answer box, it is necessary to upload the appropriate documentation (Figure 8). Click on the Select Button to open the file selection screen.
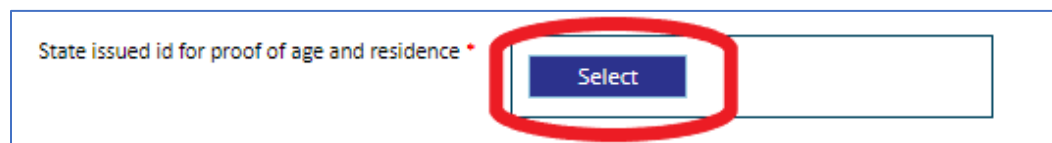

Figure 8. The Select button allows applicant to select and upload the appropriate documentation

NOTE: Any field with a Plus (+) button has the ability to add an additional row (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Add additional rows by clicking the plus (+) button

You can delete additional rows by pressing the red minus (-) button (Figure 10)

Figure 10. Subtract additional rows by clicking the minus (-) button

Note: **Name of Authorized Official:** This person is authorized to enter into legal agreements on behalf of the applicant/organization. This person's name will appear on the grant agreement for signature.
Name of Application Preparer / Administrative Contact: Please leave this blank if not applicable.
Name of Additional Contact: This person may not have a role in the TDA-GO system, but is knowledgeable of your STAR Fund application and can answer questions.

After completing the form, click the **Save** button in the top right hand corner (Figure 11). After clicking the **Save** button, if any required sections are missing, an error message will appear (Figure 12).

Figure 11. Regularly save your work by clicking the save button in the upper right hand corner

Figure 12. Error Message of missing required message

Step 2: Complete Application Form

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Application** (Figure 13).
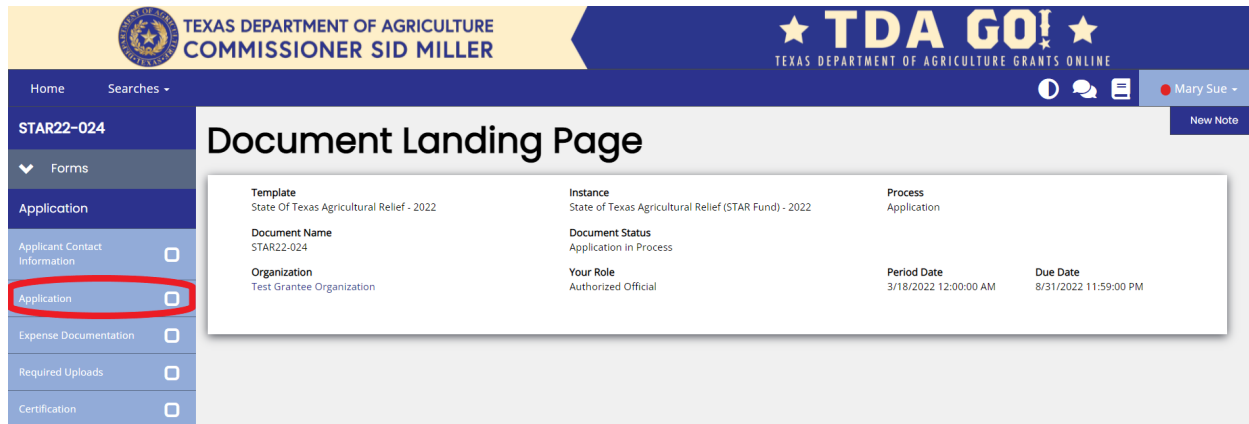

Figure 13. Application Form location

Please see specific guidance on how to USE THE STAR FUND TEMPLATE for Volunteer Fire Departments

Texas Agricultural of Timber Registration Number: Volunteer Fire Deparment should enter "N/A" in this box.

Property Ownership: Enter the name of the **Name** Volunteer Fire Deparment and 0%

Figure 14. List names of property owners. Add additional names by clicking the Plus (+) button

Impacted Property Information: Enter all required information. Please complete table for each Property Tax ID number. Additional properties may be added by clicking the plus (+) button (Figure 16). The Tax Property ID number is found on your property tax records, or you can contact your County Appraisal District.

Please see the following example on how to complete this section

Impacted Property Information

Please complete this table. Use the '+' button to the top right of the table to create a new table for additional pieces of property.

Tax Property ID # * (found on your property tax records)	Primary Purpose of the Property *	
enter property ID from County Apprasial Dist	☐ Crop	
	☐ Livestock	
	☑ Other	Volunteer Fire Department

List the county the VFD is located in.
List the dates that the VFD supported the first responder efforts related to the 2024 Texas Panhandle wildfires.
Input 0 in numbers of acres impacted.

Texas County Property Is Located In *	Date Range Of Disaster * (From - To)		Number of Acres Impacted *
Hemphill County	02/27/2024	03/28/2024	0.00

After completing the Application form, click the **Save** button in the top right hand corner (Figure 11). After clicking the **Save** button, if any required sections are missing, an error message will appear (Figure 12).

Step 3: Expense Documentation Form

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Expense Documentation** (Figure 17).
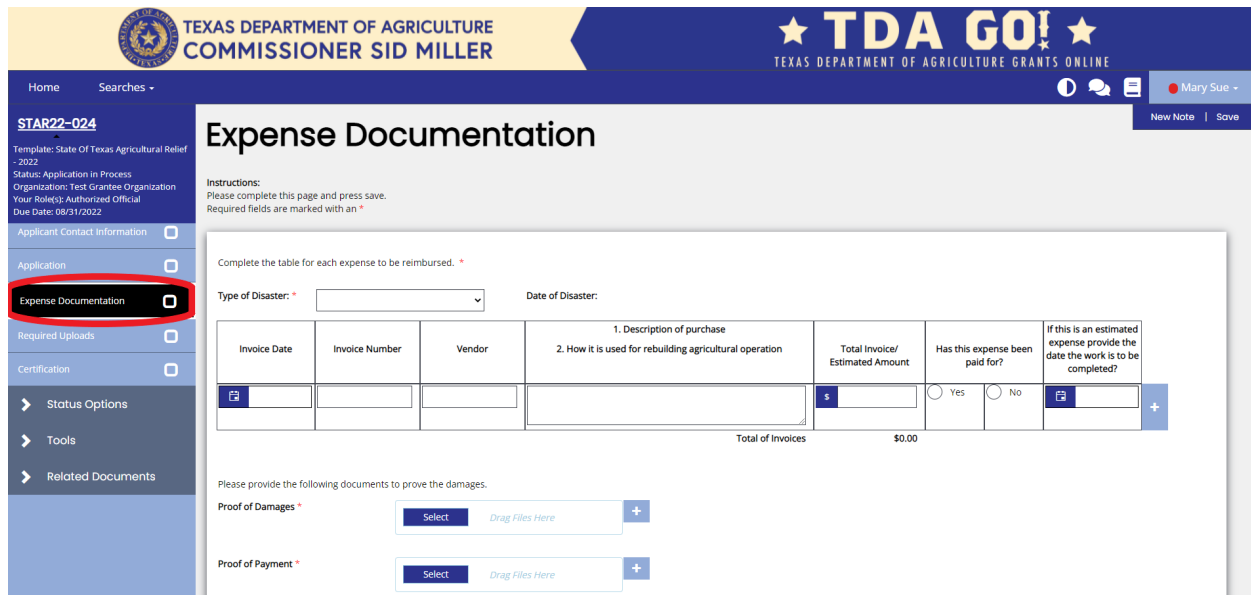

Figure 17. Expense Documentation Form location

Complete all sections of the Expense Documentation Form. All sections are required.

Expense Table (Figure 18): Enter each expense demonstrating costs incurred for recovery of losses due to the disaster. Documentation is required for each expense. Applicant has to demonstrate that all payments have been both paid and cleared. If expense has not yet been paid for, please provide an estimate for the expense and the date of estimated completion. Pre-approved, estimated expenses will not be reimbursed until proof of payment is received.

Documentation includes an itemized invoice plus proof of payment. Acceptable forms of proof of payment are:
- Itemized invoices showing a $0 balance
- Copies of cancelled checks (submit image of front and back)
- Credit Card Statements with account numbers blacked out
- Receipts must show name and contact information of seller, date of purchase, itemized list of items purchased plus cost per item, total paid, and method of payment.

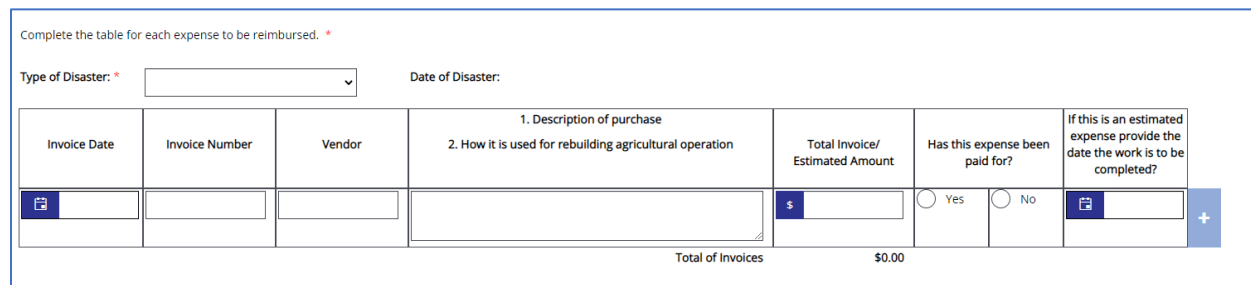Additional expenses may be added by clicking the plus (+) button (Figure 18).
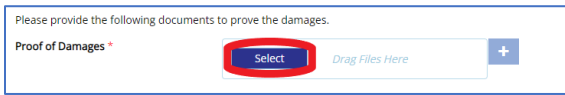

Figure 18. Enter each expense. Add additional expenses by clicking the Plus (+) button

Proof of Damages: Upload Articles of Incorporation or other documentation to show validity of the Volunteer Fire Department versus a regular fire department.

Figure 19. Upload Proof of Damages using the Select button. Add additional pictures/files by clicking the Plus (+) button

Proof of Payment: Upload Proof of Payment for each expense listed in the Expense Table above. Upload proof of payment documentation by clicking the **Select** button (Figure 20). Additional files may be added by clicking the plus (+) button (Figure 20).
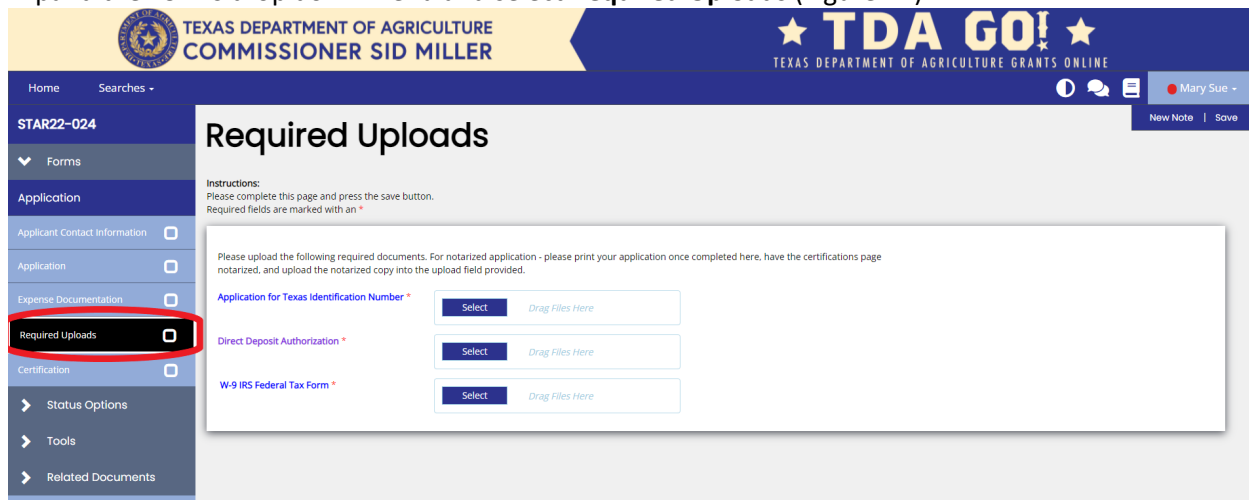

Figure 20. Upload Proof of Payment using the Select button. Add additional files by clicking the Plus (+) button

Letter from Owner, if property is Leased: NOT APPLICABLE No letter is needed for Volunteer Fire Departments.

After completing the Expense Documentation form, click the **Save** button in the top right hand corner (Figure 11). After clicking the **Save** button, if any required sections are missing, an error message will appear (Figure 12).

Step 4: Complete Required Uploads

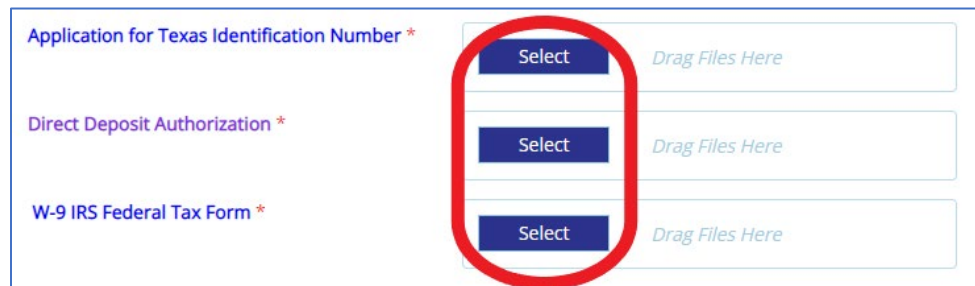Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Required Uploads** (Figure 21).

Figure 21. Required Uploads location

Three (3) additional forms are required to be completed and uploaded for the STAR Fund application: **Application for Texas Identification Number**, **Direct Deposit Authorization**, and **W-9 IRS Federal Tax Form**.

Download the forms by clicking on the name of each form. Be sure to save a copy of the form before filling it out. Please contact the Grants Department at (512) 463-6695 for assistance with these forms.

Upload the completed forms by clicking the **Select** button (Figure 22) in the designated location.

Figure 22. Required Forms Upload

After uploading the required forms, click the **Save** button in the top right hand corner (Figure 11). After clicking the **Save** button, if any required sections are missing, an error message will appear (Figure 12).

Step 5: Complete Review and Certification

Before completing Step 5 Certification, please review application for completeness and accuracy. Once the application is certified and submitted, an applicant *CANNOT* make any additional changes.

Before certifying the application, please go over each section ensuring all information is correct and there are no error messages. If there are no error messages in a section, the section in the drop down menu will have a check next to it (Figure 23).

Figure 23. Completed section with check mark

If there are error messages in a section, the section in the drop down menu will have an exclamation point next to it (Figure 24). Click on the selection in the drop down menu and review and resolve the error messages.
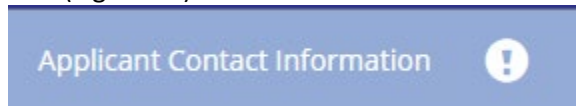

Figure 24. Incomplete section with error messages

Once all error messages are resolved and each section has a check as seen in Figure 23, the application can be certified and submitted.

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Certification** (Figure 25). To certify your application, check the box (Figure 25). The section is then complete. Click **Save** in the top right corner.
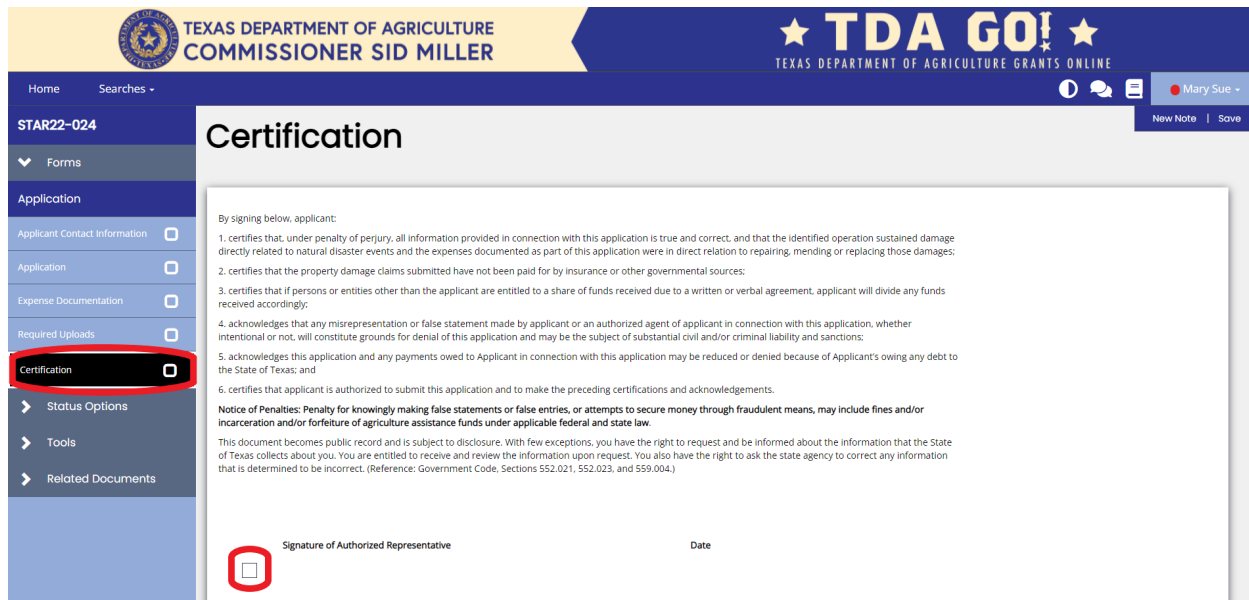

Figure 25. Certification and check box location

Step 6: Application Submission

Once the application is certified and complete, you must <u>submit</u> the application within the TDA-GO! system.

Expand the **Status Options** drop down menu (Figure 26). Select **Submit Application.**
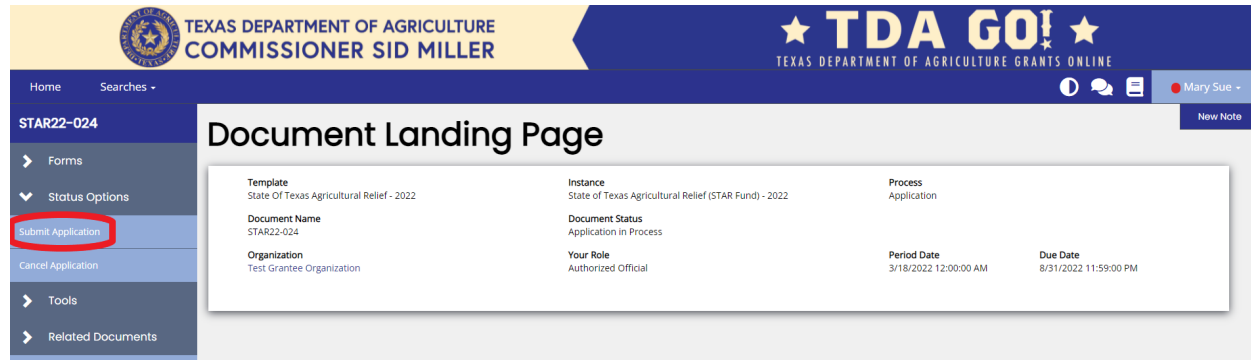

Figure 26. Status Options drop down menu and Submit Application button location

NOTE: If errors remain, an **Errors Present** message will pop up (Figure 27). You may click on each section name to be directed to the errors.
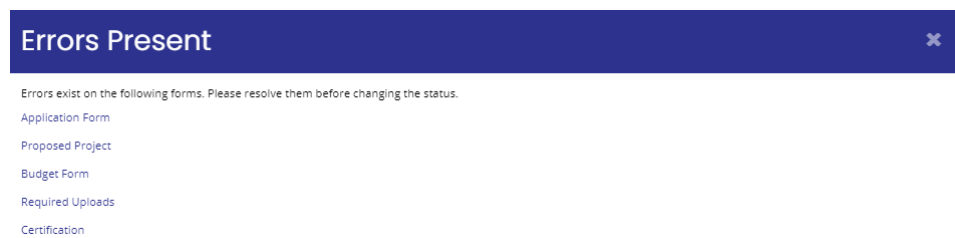

Figure 27. Error message will appear if you try to submit application with errors

If no errors are detected, the system will ask if you are sure. Once you select to submit, you will then be taken back to the **Landing Page** (Figure 28).

Figure 28. After application submission, you will return to the Document Landing Page.

NOTE: Applications must be submitted by the opportunity due date. The online application will no longer be available after that time. Times identified are based on TDA headquarters (Central Standard Time Zone) and are displayed on your TDA-GO! home screen.

Confirmation Email

After submitting your application, you will receive a confirmation email (Figure 29).

From: websites@agatesoftware.com <websites@agatesoftware.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:57 AM

Subject: Application HDM-2021-TGO-00005 Submitted

WARNING: This email originated from outside of the Texas Department of Agriculture email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you expect them from the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you for submitting Application HDM-2021-TGO-00005 for Test Grantee Organization. TDA staff will review and contact the persons identified in the application with any questions or concerns

Figure 29. Example of confirmation email

TDA Grants Office Contact

For questions regarding submission of the application and/or TDA requirements, please contact TDA's Grants Office at (512) 463-6695 or by email at Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov.