Please read all materials before preparing and submitting the application. Failure to follow the instructions and requirements described in this Request for Application (RFA) may result in the disqualification of the application.
NOTICE REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF CONFIDENTIAL, PROPRIETARY, TRADE SECRET OR PRIVILEGED INFORMATION IN AN APPLICATION

Please take notice of the following:

If it is necessary for Respondent to include proprietary or otherwise confidential information in its application or other submitted information, Respondent must clearly mark and label all confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged material in 14 point or higher bold font on each page as it appears, and identify the specific exception to disclosure in the Texas Public Information Act (PIA) for each specific piece of confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information. Additionally, all confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information must be segregated in a separate and discrete section of the application, which must be able to be conveniently separated and detached from the other sections of the application. Failure to properly label, identify, and segregate any confidential, proprietary, trade secret or other privileged information in the application may result in all such information or material being disclosed as public information. Merely making a blanket claim that the entire application is protected from disclosure because it contains any amount of confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information is not acceptable, and shall make the entire application subject to release under the PIA. In order to initiate the process of seeking an Attorney General opinion on the release of confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information, the specific provisions of the application that are considered by Respondent to be confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged and confidential must be clearly labeled and segregated as described above. Any information which is not clearly identified as confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged shall be deemed to be subject to disclosure pursuant to the PIA.
## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Pursuant to the Texas Agriculture Code, §§48.001-48.005, and Texas Administrative Code, Title 4, Part 1, Chapter 1, §1.800 - §1.804, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) hereby requests applications for agricultural projects designed to foster an understanding and awareness of agriculture in elementary and middle school students, to be conducted during the period of October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, from certain Texas urban school districts or nonprofit organizations that partner with these schools.

Agriculture is defined as the science, art, or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops, raising livestock, and in varying degrees the preparation and marketing of the resulting products. TDA encourages schools to consider partnerships with agricultural organizations such as a local Master Gardener program, 4-H or FFA clubs. Projects funded must be dedicated to education and/or awareness of agriculture in elementary and middle school students in certain urban school districts in Texas and should be designed to improve students’ understanding and appreciation of agriculture.

*A non-comprehensive list of project ideas and resources can be found in Attachment 1.*

## PROJECTED TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Availability</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Deadline</td>
<td>May 25, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Start Date of Project</td>
<td>October 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End Date of Project</td>
<td>September 30, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ELIGIBILITY

Submitted proposals must benefit a Texas public elementary or middle school from an urban school district with an enrollment of at least 49,000 students.

A non-profit organization may also submit a proposal with the support of an eligible Texas public or middle school where the project will be administered.

If your school district is not listed below, and you feel it meets the minimum student enrollment of 49,000, you may attach a TEA verification of enrollment to your application.

Eligible school districts according to Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) October 2015-2016 record:

- Aldine Independent School District; Arlington
- Arlington Independent School District; Austin
- Conroe Independent School District; Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District;
- Dallas Independent School District;
- El Paso Independent School District;
- Fort Bend Independent School District;
- Fort Worth Independent School District; Frisco Independent School District;
- Garland Independent School District;
- Garland Independent School District; Katy Independent School District;
- Houston Independent School District;
- Klein Independent School District; Lewisville Independent School District;
- North East Independent School District;
- Northside Independent School District;
- Pasadena Independent School District; Plano Independent School District; and
- San Antonio Independent School District.
GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Selected applicants (grantees) will be responsible for the conduct of the project supported by the Urban Schools Agricultural Grant Program and for the results achieved. Each grantee shall monitor the day-to-day performance of the grant project to assure adherence to statutes, regulations, and grant terms and conditions. The grantee must carry out the activities described in the approved scope of work.

The grantee will be accountable for documenting the use of grant funds and must ensure funds are used solely for authorized purposes. The grantee must ensure:

- Funds are used only for activities covered by the approved project;
- Funds are not used in violation of the restrictions and prohibitions of applicable statutes; and
- All budget and performance reports are completed in a timely manner.

Each grantee must ensure it has an adequate accounting system in place and good internal controls to ensure expenditures and reimbursements are reported and maintained for three (3) years after the conclusion of the project, or longer if required by TDA.

FUNDING PARAMETERS

Selected projects will receive funding on a cost reimbursement basis. Funds will not be advanced to grantees. Selected applicants must have the financial capacity to pay for all costs up front.

Awards are subject to the availability of funds. If no funds are appropriated or collected for this purpose, applicants will be informed accordingly.

Eligible school districts should submit a single application. The application will require the school district to list participating campus names and the requested amount per campus. School districts and non-profit organizations are limited to a maximum grant award of $10,000; a single campus may not receive more than $2,500. Please note that beautification projects are not eligible.

TERM OF FUNDING OR DURATION OF PROJECTS

A Notice of Grant Award is anticipated to be made by August 2017. All approved projects have an anticipated grant term of October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018.
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To be considered, applications must be complete and include all of the information described in this section. Application and information can be downloaded from TDA’s website at: www.texasagriculture.gov under the Grants & Services Tab.

1. **Application Form GTBD-150. (not counted in your page limit)**
   a) **Applicant organization information.** This is the lead organization that will be the recipient of funds and be held accountable for reporting and project performance.
   b) **Project Manager.** This should be the individual who can answer the day-to-day questions about the project’s activities and performance.
   c) **Authorized official.** This is the person legally able to bind the organization in contracts or agreements.
   d) **Application Certification.** Signature of an individual authorized to execute contracts and/or agreements on behalf of the applicant.

2. **Project Proposal.** Provide detailed responses to each section. The form is designed to be completed electronically and boxes will expand. A maximum of six (6) pages may be used to fully answer the project narrative questions.

   **Note:** If you are a non-profit organization, please include a letter of commitment from the schools where the program you are applying for will take place.

BUDGET INFORMATION

1. **Payment.** *Grant funds will be paid on a cost reimbursement basis.* Grantees will be required to submit payment requests at least quarterly, but no more frequently than monthly, in order to show significant financial and programmatic progress. Payment requests must include sufficient documentation that details each expense. Acceptable documentation may include, but is not limited to, invoices, receipts, or detailed information regarding personnel costs, as determined by TDA, in its sole discretion. No in-kind donations or matching funds are required. *Payment requests shall only be submitted by the grantee to TDA for reimbursement after the grantee purchases the approved budget item.*

2. **Payment Schedule.** Upon timely receipt of payment requests and documentation, approved reimbursement of up to 90% of the total grant award will be paid prior to submission of the Final Performance Report.

   The remaining 10% will only be disbursed once all reporting requirements have been met, including, but not limited to, the final periodic report (if applicable) and the Final Performance Report.

3. **Eligible Expenses.** Generally, expenses that are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient performance and administration directly related to the project are eligible. Grant funds may not be used to supplant normal business costs but instead must be used to cover the costs incurred for the approved proposed activities. Examples of eligible expenditures are:
a) Personnel costs – both salary and benefits directly related to project implementation;
b) Supplies and direct operating expenses – items that cost less than $5,000 per unit with a useful life of less than one year, office supplies, postage, telecommunications, printing, etc. that are directly related to the project activities;
c) Contracts – agreements made with educational institutions or private parties to perform a portion of the award;
d) Other direct expenses – any expenses that do not fall into the above categories directly related to the proposed activities.
e) Controlled assets are defined as certain items valued $500.00 - $4,999.99 which must also be inventoried, link to Controlled Property Listing.

4. Ineligible Expenses. Certain expenses may be prohibited by state or federal law or determined to be ineligible by program guidelines. Examples of these expenditures include, but are not limited to the following:

   a) Alcoholic beverages;
   b) Entertainment;
   c) Tips;
   d) Contributions, charitable or political;
   e) Indirect Costs;
   f) Expenses falling outside of the contract period;
   g) Expenses for items not listed in the project budget or that fail to meet the intent of the program;
   h) Equipment – Tangible personal property costing over $5,000 per unit and having a useful life over one year (freezers, kitchen equipment, etc.);
   i) Travel – NO transportation, lodging, meals, or any food items related to travel; and
   j) Expenses that are not adequately documented or that do not meet the intent of the grant program.

**EVALUATION AND SELECTION INFORMATION**

An administrative review will be conducted by agency staff to determine whether the applicant was adequately responsive to the requirements of this Request for Application.

Late submissions and/or those that do not meet the program requirements will not be reviewed for funding consideration.

Based on the requirements set forth above, a panel appointed by TDA will evaluate applications. The panel will review the applications and make funding recommendations. The panel will consist of: one representative from TDA; experts in elementary and/or middle school curriculum development; experts from the following industries: livestock, specialty crop, row crop and horticulture; and one representative of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

After receiving the panel’s recommendations, TDA will rank the applications based on various factors, including the project’s potential impact on students, to determine which projects will be
selected for funding.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Agricultural education component** – The project’s ability to increase the students’ understanding of agriculture and the role it plays in their daily lives.
2. **Achievability of the proposed project and objectives** - Whether the project will feasibly meet anticipated project results that support the project’s purpose and program objectives.
3. **Reach** - Number of students exposed to agriculture through the project and quantity of time.
4. **Project Budget** – Reasonable budget request and allocation to support the students’ education through the project.
5. **Sustainability and Longevity of the project** – Whether the applicant can sustain project benefits long-term, and whether the project will provide lasting benefits to the students.

Please note that beautification projects are not eligible.

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Approved applicants will be required to submit periodic performance reports. Reporting timelines are incorporated into the grant agreement. As part of TDA's ongoing monitoring of grant funds, grantees must demonstrate progress toward achieving project goals. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in the withholding of requests for reimbursement and/or termination of the award.

*Performance Reports* must be in a narrative format, no more than three (3) pages in length, and detail the accomplishments of the project objectives for that period.

The *Final Performance Report* is due thirty (30) days after project completion, or termination of the Grant Agreement, whichever occurs first. This report must be in a narrative format prescribed by TDA.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS**

**LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Applicants must submit one complete, signed application. The application packet, including the signed application must be **received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Thursday, May 25, 2017 (see submission options below)**. Applications may not be supplemented after the submission deadline. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure the timely delivery of all required materials.

For questions regarding submission of the proposal and/or TDA requirements, please contact TDA’s Grants Office at (512) 475-0366, or by email at Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov.
There are 3 options for submission: online, email and mail. Please only use ONE method.

1. **Online Form – Preferred.**

If using the online format, the submittal must be received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Thursday, May 25, 2017. The online system will date stamp the submission for receipt documentation purposes. Please visit the following webpage to find the online submission link:

An automated receipt email will be sent from the online system indicating the application has been received. TDA program staff will also send a separate email as soon as administratively possible with an application ID number.

2. **Email submission of complete application packet:**

   Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov

The e-mail subject line must reference the RFA title and applicant (Ex: 2017 E3E-Learning Center Organization), and the email must be received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Thursday, May 25, 2017. The applicant is solely responsible for ensuring that their complete application, regardless of method of delivery, is sent to, and actually received by, TDA in a timely manner and at the proper destination server, including all attachments. TDA will send a confirmation email after the application has been received.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** TDA recommends a limit on the attachments to 10MB each. This may require applicants to submit one application in multiple e-mails so that all required attachments may be to ensure receipt without exceeding TDA’s 10 MB attachment limit. Applicants must make sure that each email subject line references the RFA title and applicant. Unreadable submissions may be deemed unresponsive and will not be reviewed for funding consideration.

TDA takes no responsibility for electronic submissions that are captured, blocked, filtered, quarantined or otherwise prevented from reaching the proper destination server by any TDA anti-virus or other security software.

*TDA program staff will send an email receipt acknowledged receipt of the application as soon as administratively possible with an application ID number.*
3. **Hard copy mailed submissions – not submitted by Options 1 or 2**

Any mailed applications must be **received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Thursday, May 25, 2017.** Applications will be documented with a date/time stamp for receipt documentation purposes.

Applications may be sent to TDA at either of the following addresses:

**By U.S. Mail:**
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Trade & Business Development- Grants  
P.O. Box 12847  
Austin, TX 78711

**By Overnight or Hand Delivery**
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Trade & Business Development- Grants  
1700 North Congress, 11th Floor  
Austin, Texas 78701

*TDA program staff will send an email receipt acknowledged receipt of the application as soon as administratively possible with an application ID number.*

## GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Grant Awards.**
   a. The announcement of grant awards will be made by the date outlined above. Selected applicants will receive a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) letter and the Grant Agreement from TDA. The NGA is not legally binding and a grant agreement must be fully executed.
   b. All grant awards are subject to the availability of appropriations and authorizations by the Texas Legislature.
   c. TDA reserves the right to fund projects partially or fully. TDA reserves the right to negotiate individual elements of any proposal and to reject any and all proposals. Where more than one proposal is acceptable for funding, TDA may request cooperation between grantees or revisions/adjustments to a proposal in order to avoid duplication and to realize the maximum benefit to the state.

2. **Applications.**
   a. TDA reserves the right to reject all applications and is not liable for costs incurred by the Applicant in the development, submission, or review of the application; costs incurred by the Applicant prior to the effective date of grant agreement.
   b. TDA reserves the right to alter, amend, or clarify any provisions, terms, or conditions of this program or any grant awarded as a result thereof, or to terminate this program at any time prior to the execution of an agreement, if TDA deems any such action to be in the best interest of TDA and of the State of Texas. The decision of TDA will be administratively final in this regard.

3. **Public Information.**
a. All applications submitted under this program are subject to release as public information, unless the application or specific parts of any such application can be shown to be exempt from the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Government Code.

b. The Applicant is responsible for clearly designating any portion of the application that contains proprietary information and must state the reason(s) the information is designated as such. Failure to mark any information as proprietary or confidential will result in the release of information on the assumption that the Applicant has deemed that it is non-proprietary. In the event that a public information request for the application is received, TDA shall review the information deemed proprietary, provide notice to the Applicant, and submit a request for opinion to the Office of the Attorney General for determination in accord with the Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. TDA shall take no position on the issue and it is the Applicant’s responsibility to file a brief supporting the request for opinion to withhold the proprietary or confidential information. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel regarding disclosure issues and to take appropriate precautions to safeguard trade secrets or any other proprietary information.

4. Conflict of Interest. The Applicant is required to disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest relative to this grant program. Failure to disclose any such relationship may result in the Applicant’s disqualification or termination of agreement.

GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS

1. Grantees must comply with TDA’s reporting requirements and financial procedures outlined in the grant agreement. Any delegation by the Grantee to a subcontractor regarding any duties and responsibilities imposed by the grant award must be approved in advance by TDA and shall not relieve the Grantee of its responsibilities to TDA for their performance.

2. Grantees must remain in full compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Non-compliance may result in termination of the grant or ineligibility for reimbursement of expenses.

3. Grantees must keep a separate bookkeeping account with a complete record of all expenditures relating to the project. Records shall be maintained for three (3) years after the completion of the project, or as otherwise agreed upon with TDA. TDA and the Texas State Auditor’s Office (SAO) reserve the right to examine all books, documents, records, and accounts relating to the project at any time throughout the duration of the agreement and for three years immediately following completion of the project. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action is initiated prior to the expiration of the retention period, then the records must be retained until authorized by TDA. TDA and the SAO shall have access to the physical locations related to project activities.

4. If the Grantee has a financial audit performed during the time the Grantee is receiving funds from TDA, upon request, TDA shall have access to information about the audit, including the audit transmittal letter, management letter, and any schedules in which the Grantee’s funds are included.

5. Grantees must comply with Texas Government Code, Chapter 783, Uniform Grant and Contract Management, the Uniform Grant Management Standards (UGMS), 2 CFR Part 200, if applicable.
ATTACHMENT 1

Definition of Agriculture
Agriculture is defined as the science, art, or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops, raising livestock, and in varying degrees, the preparation and marketing of the resulting products.

If the students in your classroom were asked where hamburger meat, milk, carrots, ham, bread or cereal came from, how would they answer? Would they know that all food comes from farms and ranches or would they answer, “the grocery store?”

Project Examples include, but are not limited to:
• School gardens (grow vegetables to be used in recipes)
• Classroom projects (plant an herb garden, class lessons such as, “A Day Without Agriculture,” small scale livestock project)
• Field trips (Livestock shows, Farmers’ Markets, farms and ranches)
• Guest speakers discussing their role in agriculture
• After school projects

Please consider using the following suggested online resources to enhance the agriculture emphasis in your project. This list is also located on TDA’s website (www.TexasAgriculture.gov) by clicking the “Grants & Services” tab, “Grants Office” link, then “Urban Schools Agricultural Grant Program.” TDA strives to provide the most up to date information and periodically updates this information, as needed.

GO TEXAN - http://www.gotexan.org/
National 4-H - www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/
National Cotton Council - www.cotton.org/pubs/cottoncounts/resources.cfm
National Peanut Board - http://nationalpeanutboard.org/
Popcorn Board - www.popcorn.org
Texas 4-H - http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/
Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association - www.tsgra.com/learn.htm
Texas Farm Bureau http://texasfarmbureau.org/youth/ag-in-the-classroom/
USDA - Agriculture in the Classroom - www.agclassroom.org
Texas Beef Council – www.beeflovingtexans.com

Many teachers have taken the opportunity to use the Urban Schools Agriculture Grant Program to teach TEKS in new, exciting and hands-on ways. The following list is not exhaustive, but rather an assimilation of general ideas that you may tailor to your needs or use as a starting point for your own unique ideas.

Animal Care – Students could select a livestock project and become responsible for that animal’s care around the clock. This includes duty schedules during weekends and holidays, identifying costs and budget, record maintenance and preparing the animals for a livestock show or similar event. As part of the project, they could prepare photographs, video, etc. that identify the project and lessons learned. The documentation may include visits to farms and ranches to review the scope of large
operations and to find lessons that apply to the school project.

- **Agriculture and the Environment** – Students may request permission to work on school property where soil quality, drainage, topsoil, pollution and/or litter problems exist. They can develop and implement a planting project (vegetables, fruit trees, etc.) that will mitigate or improve the existing problem to help make the land productive again. They can study the impact of poor land management, urbanization and pollution, and then suggest improvements.

- **School Gardens and Land Management** – Students may request permission to plant and maintain a garden on school grounds. They could include “test” areas to measure the effects of proper land management, drainage, drought, etc. on their produce. Based upon the size and output of the garden, the students could serve the “fruits of their labors” at a school function, as part of a cafeteria meal or donate it to a food bank or other community outlet. If the students do a horticulture project, they could share the plants and flowers with nursing homes, hospital, or find other special uses to display them. *Beautification projects are not permitted.*

- **Texas Products** – Using resources such as GO TEXAN, students can study the school cafeteria menu to identify whether Texas agriculture products are used. The students can work to identify local sources for the ingredients and create artistic and informative displays about Texas