



COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
2019 -2020 Urban Schools Agricultural Grant  
Request for Application**

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**Please read all materials before preparing and submitting the application.** Failure to follow the instructions and requirements described in this Request for Applications (RFA) may result in the disqualification.. In such case, the application will receive no further consideration for either award or grant funding.

**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 bold 14 point or higher 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

This Request for Applications (RFA) is issued 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 grants to fund agricultural projects designed to foster an understanding and awareness of agriculture in public elementary and middle school students, to be conducted during the period of October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020, from certain Texas urban school districts or nonprofit organizations that partner with these schools. TDA reserves the discretion and authority to make multiple grant awards under the terms of this RFA. TDA further reserves the discretion and authority to make no awards under the terms of this RFA or to cancel or withdraw this RFA at any time.

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 programs or 4-H or FFA clubs. Projects funded must be dedicated to education and/or awareness of agriculture in public elementary and middle school students in certain urban school districts in Texas and should be designed to improve students' understanding and appreciation of agriculture.

Urban School Agricultural Grant funds may be used for projects such as but not limited to:

- School gardens
- Classroom agriculture projects
- Small scale livestock projects
- Field trips
  - Livestock shows
  - Farmers' markets
  - Farms and Ranches
- Guest speakers discussing role in agriculture
- After school projects

*Additional non-comprehensive project ideas and resources can be found in Appendix A.*

## PROJECTED TIMELINE

Application Availability	April 2019
Application Deadline	May 16, 2019
Anticipated Award	June, 2019, (or as soon thereafter as practical)
Anticipated Start Date of Project/Grant	October 1, 2019, (or as soon thereafter as practical)
End Date of Project	September 30, 2020

## ELIGIBILITY

Submitted applications 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 an application with the support of an eligible Texas public elementary or middle school in an eligible district where the project will be administered.

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

Eligible school districts, determined according to the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) 2018-2019 records for such districts are as follows:

Aldine Independent School District;  
Arlington Independent School District;  
Austin Independent School District;  
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;  
Houston Independent School District;  
Katy 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  
Round Rock Independent School District

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

If you have questions about the grant program please contact:

Crystal Ortegon  
Grants Specialist  
Trade and Business Development  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Phone: (512) 463-9932  
Email: [Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov)

Angelica Soriano  
Grants Specialist  
Trade and Business Development  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Phone: (512) 463-7654

## GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Selected applicants (grantees), if any, 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 grant projects, if any under this RFA, will receive funding on a cost-reimbursement basis. **Funds will not be given in advance to grantees. Grantees must have the financial capacity to pay for all costs up front.**

Grant awards, if any, 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 each; a single campus may not receive more than \$2,500. **Please note that beautification projects are not eligible for consideration for purposes of this RFA.**

## TERM OF FUNDING OR DURATION OF PROJECTS

TDA anticipates that a Notice of Grant Award will be made on or around June 2019 or as soon thereafter as practical. All approved grant projects will have an *anticipated* grant term of October 1, 2019, to September 30, 2020.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To be considered, applications must be complete and include all of the information described in this section of this RFA. Application and information can be downloaded from TDA's website at: [www.texasagriculture.gov](http://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 should be completed electronically; boxes will expand for detailed responses. A maximum of six (6) pages may be used to fully answer the project narrative questions.
3. **Letter of commitment.** Non-profit organization and school districts – must submit a letter of commitment from the schools where the program will take place. If you are an individual campus applying in an eligible district, without other campus, a letter of commitment is not required.

## BUDGET INFORMATION

**1. Payment.** Grant funds will be paid to grantees only on a cost reimbursement basis. Grantees will be required to submit payment requests quarterly, but no more frequently than monthly, in order to show significant financial and project progress. Requests for reimbursement must include sufficient documentation detailing each allowable grant project expense. Acceptable documentation may include, but is not limited to: invoices, receipts, and/or detailed information regarding personnel costs. TDA has the sole discretion to determinate the validity of the cost. No in-kind donations or matching funds are required. Reimbursement *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 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 – other direct expenses that do not fall into the above categories and which are directly related to the proposed activities.

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

- a) Alcoholic beverages;
- b) Contributions-charitable or political;
- c) Controlled assets (small equipment) are defined as certain items valued \$500.00 - \$4,999.99 which must also be inventoried, link to [Controlled Property Listing](#). These items include Audio Equipment, Camera( Portable, Digital, SLR) TVs, Video Players/Recorders, Computer, Projectors, Smartphones, Tablets & Other Hand Held Devices
- d) Entertainment;
- e) Equipment – Tangible personal property costing over \$5,000 per unit and having a useful life over one year (freezers, kitchen equipment, etc.);
- 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) Expenses that are not adequately documented or that do not meet the intent of the grant program.
- i) Gift cards;
- j) Indirect Costs;
- k) Tips;
- l) Travel – No reimbursement for transportation, lodging, meals, or any food items related to travel; and

## EVALUATION AND SELECTION INFORMATION

An administrative review will be conducted by TDA agency staff to determine whether the applicant is adequately responsive to the requirements of this RFA. Only those responsive applications and submitted by eligible applicants will be considered and evaluated under this RFA.

Late applications or applicants that do not meet the minimum requirements of this RFA or the grant program will be subject to disqualification and will receive no further consideration for funding.

Based on the requirements set forth above, an evaluation panel appointed by TDA will evaluate those eligible applications received by the deadline set forth in this RFA. The panel will review the applications and make recommendations for award and appropriate funding under this RFA. The panel will consist of: one representative from TDA; one or more experts in elementary and/or middle school curriculum development; one or more experts from the following industries: livestock, specialty crop, row crop and horticulture; and one representative of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. TDA reserves the discretion to appoint one or more technical advisors or experts to the evaluation panel for technical advice only; such panel members, if any, may not score unless substitute evaluation panel participation is necessary.

After receiving the panel's recommendations, TDA will rank the applications based on various

factors, including the criteria set forth below and the project's potential impact on students, to determine which projects may be selected and awarded for funding, if any. **Please note that beautification projects are not eligible for consideration or award under the terms of this RFA.**

Applications 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.
- 6) *Historical Performance/Participation* – TDA may consider the applicant previous historical performance as well as if the applicant has a current open TDA grant. An award is considered open until it has reached the grant end date stated in the agreement.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Selected applicants, if any, will be required to submit periodic performance reports. Reporting timelines will be 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 grant agreement or 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 as prescribed by TDA and is subject to review and final acceptance 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 16, 2019** (*see submission options below*). Applications may not be supplemented after the submission deadline and must be submitted to TDA using one of the three options outlined further below. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the timely receipt of the application and all required materials. **Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances.**

For questions regarding submission of the proposal and/or TDA requirements, please contact TDA's Grants Office at (512) 463-7448, or by email at [Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov).

**There are 2 options for submission: email and hard copy (mail or hand delivery). Please only use ONE method.**  
**(Please note that faxed applications are not accepted.)**

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1. **Preferred. Email submission of complete application packet:**  
[Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov)

The e-mail subject line must reference the RFA title and applicant (**Ex: 2019-2020 Urban Schools Agricultural Grant Program – “Applicant Name”**), and the email must be **received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Thursday, May 16, 2019**. 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.

If you are submitting multiple emails be sure to label your email:

**US 2019 – ABC Organization email 1 of X, 2 of X**

**US 2019 – ABC Organization email 2 of X, etc.**

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 acknowledging the receipt of the application as soon as administratively possible with an application ID number.*

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2. **Hard copy mailed or hand delivered submissions – If not submitted by email**

All applications must be **received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Thursday, May 16, 2019**. TDA will affix or place a date and time stamp on each application it receives via U.S. mail. If Applicant uses U.S. mail for delivery of its application to TDA, the agency strongly recommends that Applicant send their application certified mail, return receipt requested, or equivalent delivery confirmation service provided by USPS.

Applications may be sent to TDA to 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 acknowledging the receipt of the application as soon as administratively possible with an application ID number.*

For questions regarding submission of the application and/or TDA requirements, please contact the Grants Office at (512) 463-7448 or by email at [Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov).

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Selected Applicants will receive a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) letter and an official Grant Agreement from TDA. The NGA is not legally binding until a grant agreement is fully executed.

TDA reserves the right to fund projects partially or fully. TDA reserves the right to negotiate individual elements of any application and to reject any and all applications. Where more than one application is acceptable for funding, TDA may request cooperation between grantees or revisions/adjustments to an application in order to avoid duplication and to realize the maximum benefit to the state. Selected projects will receive funding on a cost-reimbursement basis.

### *Applications*

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, or costs incurred by the applicant prior to the effective date of grant agreement.

### *Right to Amend or Terminate Program*

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.

### *Proprietary Information/Public Information*

The Applicant is responsible for clearly designating any portion of the application that contains proprietary or trade secret information and must state the reason(s) the information is designated as such. Merely making a blanket claim that the entire application is protected from disclosure because it contains proprietary or trade secret information is not acceptable, and may subject the entire application subject to release under the PIA.

In the event that a public information request for the application is received, TDA shall process such request in accordance with §552.305 of the Texas Government Code. 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.

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 disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Government Code.

## GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS

1. Grantee (an applicant who receives a grant under this program) 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 performance of those duties.
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 separate records and a bookkeeping account (with a complete record of all expenditures) for a project. Records shall be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years after the completion of the project, or as otherwise agreed upon with TDA. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action is initiated prior to the expiration of the three-year retention period, then all records and accounts must be retained until their destruction is authorized in writing by 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, including all electronic records, at any time throughout the duration of the agreement until all litigation, claims, negotiations, audits or other action pertaining to a grant is resolved, or until the expiration of the three-year retention period or a final judgment in litigation, whichever is longer. TDA and the SAO shall have access to: all electronic data or records pertaining to the grant project; paper or other tangible documents or records, including the physical location where records are stored; and all 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, any schedules, and the final report or result of such audit.
5. Grantees must comply with Texas Government Code, Chapter 783, Uniform Grant and Contract Management, and the Texas Uniform Grant Management Standards (UGMS), along with 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

## APPENDIX A: PROJECT IDEAS

Many teachers have taken the opportunity to use the Urban Schools Agricultural 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

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](http://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/](http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/)  
**National Cotton Council** - [www.cotton.org/pubs/cottoncounts/resources.cfm](http://www.cotton.org/pubs/cottoncounts/resources.cfm)  
**National Peanut Board** - <http://nationalpeanutboard.org/>  
**Popcorn Board** - [www.popcorn.org](http://www.popcorn.org)  
**Texas 4-H** - <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/>  
**Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association** - [www.tsgra.com/learn.htm](http://www.tsgra.com/learn.htm)  
**Texas Farm Bureau** - <http://texasfarmbureau.org/youth/ag-in-the-classroom/>  
**Texas Farm Fresh** - <http://www.squaremeals.org/FandNResources/TexasFarmFresh.aspx>  
**Texas Beef Council** – [www.beeflovingtexans.com](http://www.beeflovingtexans.com)  
**USDA - Agriculture in the Classroom** - [www.agclassroom.org](http://www.agclassroom.org)