



**Request for Proposals**  
**Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium Fund at the Austin**  
**Community Foundation**  
**High School Pathways Advocacy Project**

**Background**

The Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium is a geographically and politically diverse consortium of 35 private, corporate, and community foundations from across Texas working together to promote, protect and improve public education. The Consortium's members guide its work and determine its public policy priorities.

In 2014 the Consortium examined the capacity of high school counselors to serve a growing student population amid budget cuts and changing laws. In 2016 the Consortium's membership followed up on its counselor study and drilled deep into the implementation of changes to the high school curriculum and graduation requirements in Texas.

The Consortium partnered with the George H.W. Bush School for Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University to research how House Bill 5 – passed during the 2013 Texas Legislature – was being implemented. The introduction of “Guided Pathways” required massive outreach efforts to school districts and parents at a time when public schools were absorbing cuts approved by the Legislature in 2011.

The Bush School researchers offered a unique glimpse into how school districts are implementing the “new shape of Texas high school education.” While some school districts are emerging as clear models for assisting students’ transition from high school into the real world, other districts are struggling to implement even the most basic components of the legislation. The full report is available at <http://www.tegac.org/research/20162017finalresearchreports.php>.

Three key concerns emerged from research into the implementation of House Bill 5:

- **Decentralization vs. State Guidance:** Most school districts are comfortable with the legislative intent behind HB5, but many are frustrated by a perceived lack of state guidance for implementation decisions.
- **Strains on Counselors:** Counselors are integral to carrying out requirements of HB5, but most districts report that counselors have limited time and multiple responsibilities. Many districts feel they do not have enough counselors to adequately communicate the new requirements to students.
- **Challenges of Industry Partnerships:** Nearly all districts have at least one industry partnership in place, in accordance with HB5 focus on career readiness, but many districts report barriers to forming new industry partnerships, including lack of Career and Technical Education teachers and cost of specialized facilities and equipment.

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide objective and non-partisan data on public education in Texas, the Consortium is immediately seeking proposals from organizations to assist with dissemination of these research findings to the general public, media, and policymakers.



### **Details and Required Activities**

The Consortium will award grants to nonprofit organizations, public entities, or for-profit organizations with demonstrated experience and capacity to engage diverse audiences, including public school students, media, school districts, industry associations, counselors and counselor organizations, teachers, parents of public school students and parent organizations, and others. Each organization may only submit one proposal. Proposals that include outreach in English and Spanish will be prioritized. Proposals should include a full budget not to exceed \$15,000. No funds may be used for lobbying as defined by the IRS.

Grant recipients must agree to:

- Conduct outreach to diverse audiences in rural communities, border communities, and at least three large metropolitan areas (Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and/or San Antonio) to parents, students, and community members to increase awareness of endorsements and their connection to future college and career opportunities.
- Engage stakeholders in the implementation of HB 5 and Guided Pathways. Priority will be given to proposals focused on engagement of public school students, parents of public school students, and/or industrial trade associations.
- Participate in regularly scheduled conference calls and select Consortium meetings over the course of the grant period.
- Produce a brief report outlining successes and challenges of selected outreach strategies at the conclusion of the grant period.
- Partner with the Consortium to engage and educate relevant policymakers and members of the media about the research findings leading up to and through the 2017 Texas Legislative Session.
- Provide all handouts, documents and presentation materials used for outreach in editable formats for reuse by TEGAC and its partners.

### **Application Process**

The application deadline is September 23, 2016, and selections determined by the Consortium will be announced by October 7, 2016. The grant period will begin November 1, 2016 and end on July 1, 2017. Applicants should submit proposals via email to Jennifer Esterline, TEGAC Executive Director, at [jennifermesterline@gmail.com](mailto:jennifermesterline@gmail.com) All proposals should include:

- Cover letter on organization's letterhead and signed by director
- Executive summary
- Narrative with project description, goals, activities, timeline, budget, key staff, & plan to measure results
- Organization background
- If the applicant is a nonprofit organization:
  - IRS determination letter and 990
  - List of Board of Directors and officers
  - Organization operating budget