

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
Request for Proposal Reviewer Summary

RFP: # 2011-1R Higher Education for People with Developmental Disabilities

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| Applicant Organization: | Texas A&M University (College Station) |
| Key Project Staff: | Dr. Dalun Zhang (Project Director) Eric Roberts (Project Coordinator) |
| Project Location (counties): | Statewide |

Project Abstract:

From the proposal: The Center on Disability and Development at TAMU will develop an inclusive postsecondary education program that has the necessary supports to ensure access, participation and successful performance by individuals with developmental disabilities. The purpose of this program is to provide people with disabilities an inclusive postsecondary certificate program that considers individual needs and is based on their career choice. This program will provide two semester of training, which includes a supervised field-based practicum leading to certificate and job placement. The certificate program will provide students with a wide range of choices to pursue employment in human service.

Year 1 Budget

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| Funding amount requested: | \$225,000 |
| Match: | \$ 80,476 |
| Total Project Cost: | \$305,476 |

Strengths:

- There is good parent and youth representation.
- The goals, objectives and activities are well thought out and all points in the RFP are covered. The description of the major milestones covers everything well.
- The team members are identified, and their roles are clearly defined.
- The sustainability plan is promising.
- The plan includes good usage of assistive technology in both school and workplace.
- The products produced should be beneficial.
- The Project Director is one of the leading researchers in the developmental disability field.

Needs (to be addressed):

- The evaluation plan should include businesses – what are their needs to be able to do a better job of hiring people with developmental disabilities?
- There needs to be a better description of what exactly the funding for student living support will cover.

Questions/Concerns:

- The narrow field of study (health and human services) will limit the application pool (of students).
- The proposal would have been stronger with more involvement of youth/family members in the proposal development.

Final Recommendation: Fundable

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RFP: # 2011-1R Higher Education for People with Developmental Disabilities

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| Applicant Organization: | Texas Tech-Burkhart Center for Autism Education (Lubbock) |
| Key Project Staff: | DeAnn Lechtenberger, Ph.D (Project Director) Dave Richman, Ph.D (Co-Investigator) |
| Project Location (counties): | Statewide |

Project Abstract:

From the proposal: Connections for Academic Success and Employment is a rural collaborative partnership of the Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research (the Burkhart Center); Texas Tech University (TTU), a 4 year university; South Plains College (SPC), a regional community college; Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS); and local community business partners. This proposed project will bring together the collective resources from each of these partnering entities to help identify, recruit, and retain students with developmental disabilities, ages 18-25, who are interested in furthering their education beyond high school and in exploring career pathways and pursuing meaningful employment.

Year 1 Budget

Funding amount requested: \$208,909
Match: \$ 78,465
Total Project Cost: \$287,374

Strengths:

- The applicant did a focus group of people with developmental disabilities to develop the proposal.
- The wrap-around process is well-described, and the applicant has experience with wrap around.
- Strong likelihood the project will be sustainable after the grant ends.
- They have a good plan to address the need for cultural diversity in the membership of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC).
- There is a good plan for using/accessing assistive technology.
- Some of the project activities will take place in rural areas that are underserved.
- The applicant utilizes every aspect of their program to be able to provide exposure to and training for a wide range of careers.
- They will serve people on 3 different campuses.
- The proposal includes a plan to follow-up after the program.

Needs:

- More business/community contacts should be developed.
- More people with disabilities should be included as project staff and/or leaders in the implementation of the project.

- The public policy statement focuses on empowering students to ask for more money for services; it would be more appropriate to focus on working more globally to change perceptions and eliminate other barriers to employment.
- The plan is to merge the program with Project SEARCH; however, Project SEARCH does not have the strong educational component evident in this program. Will the educational component be lost?
- There should be more focus on producing systems change in the business arena.
- The proposal addresses the need for diversity on the PAC, but does not address the same need in the student population.
- The recruitment plan is not clear.
- There is a plan to provide individual assistance around employment, but it is not clear what that assistance will be.
- The large difference in learning specialists' salary needs to be explained.
- The applicant needs to provide more information about the amount of money being paid for consultant services.

Final Recommendation: Fundable

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RFP: # 2011-1R Higher Education for People with Developmental Disabilities

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| Applicant Organization: | Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) |
| Key Project Staff: | Laura Villarreal (Project Director); Leigh Ann Godinez, Linda Leal (Co-Coordiators) |
| Project Location (counties): | Hidalgo County (Rio Grande Valley Region) |

Project Abstract:

From the proposal: **PROJECT HIRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)** is an innovative program to support individuals with severe developmental disabilities to complete post-secondary education at South Texas College. Through this initiative, the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) will supplement the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) with wrap-around services not currently provided by VR to assist participants with one-on-one supports such as educational coaches, individual and family support, and college/employment readiness. These services are unprecedented in Hidalgo County. The wrap-around services provide the intervention necessary to help participants succeed in post-secondary education, job training, and ultimately achieve employment.

Year 1 Budget

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| Funding amount requested: | \$225,000 |
| Match: | \$ 28,620 |
| Total Project Cost: | \$253,620 |

Strengths:

- The majority of funds will be used directly on student support.
- There is a strong emphasis on including businesses.
- Goals and objectives are very well developed.
- The recruitment plan is comprehensive.
- The organization appears to have the experience to be able to do everything planned.
- They plan to implement activities in an under-served area.
- This proposal is one of the few that specifically states people with severe disabilities would be served.

Needs:

- The evaluation component is weak; there doesn't appear to be much information about developing profiles or case studies, and it is unclear what data will be collected.
- The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) does not have a strong role, and a faculty person who can provide expertise on curriculum development and modification should be on the PAC.
- There isn't much "systems change" envisioned for community partners.

Questions/Concerns: An agency the size of DARS should be able to attract/include a national expert, and this would make the proposal stronger.

Final Recommendation: Fundable