

Attachment 1



TEXAS COUNCIL *for*
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

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Mary Durham, Chair
John Morris, Vice Chair
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TO: TCDD Executive Committee
FROM: Joanna Cordry, Planning Coordinator
Sonya Hosey, Grants Management Director
SUBJECT: Summary of Review Panel Recommendations
DATE: July 25, 2012

TCDD staff recently convened a panel consisting of 3 people to review 2 proposals received in response to TCDD's Administrative Support for Project SEARCH® Request for Proposals (RFP).

RFP #2012 – 2 Administrative Support for Project SEARCH®

Purpose: to provide support for school districts, businesses, and/or other entities who wish to contract with Project SEARCH®, and to identify barriers that may impede the establishment of the Project SEARCH® transition program around the state.

Funding Amount and Duration: up to \$175,000 per year, for up to five years

Number of Projects: one

Eligibility for this grant is limited to organizations that:

- Have at least one office located in Texas;
- Demonstrate that they can successfully work with Texas state agencies and schools;
- Agree to refer inquiries about becoming a Project SEARCH® site directly to the Project SEARCH® national office;
- Agree to refer all requests for technical assistance from certified Project SEARCH® sites to the national office;
- Agree to the stipulation that they will not represent Project SEARCH® or use the Project SEARCH® brand without explicit written approval from the national office; and
- Are not, and do not intend to become, a Project SEARCH® site.

Additionally, state agencies that would be expected to work with Project SEARCH® participants, such as the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), were not eligible.

The panel reviewed the proposals received and recommended TCDD award funding to Texas Tech to implement "Tech Works for Texas." The panel's recommendations are summarized in the attached

S:\RFPs and other funded projects\2012 RFPs\Project SEARCH\Review Panel\Review Panel Cover Memo for Exec Committee - Project SEARCH.docx

document. Additionally, the risk assessment used to determine the level of monitoring this project would require has been completed for this proposal and is attached.

Applicant: Texas Tech (Tech Works for Texas)
Project Director: DeAnn Lechtenberger, Ph.D.

Project Area: Statewide

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| TCDD Funds: | \$174,764 | 174,666 | 174,716 | 174,656 | 174,346 |
| Match : | \$58,784 | 58,751 | 58,768 | 58,747 | 58,643 |

Project Abstract: The Burkhart Center at Texas Tech University proposes a statewide initiative entitled TechWorks for Texas (TWT) to facilitate development of newly licensed Project SEARCH sites across Texas. This initiative will collaborate with the national Project SEARCH office, the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD), the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services (DARS), and other state/local agencies to ensure that all available resources are used effectively and efficiently for young adults with developmental disabilities transitioning into the workforce. This project will identify and evaluate the variables that will help Texas communities implement exemplary Project SEARCH sites.

Overall Comments

Strength: There is evidence that persons with disabilities and family members were involved in the development of the proposal. Family members will be involved in the implementation of this proposed activity.

Strength: There is a clear understanding in the proposal that grantee will not provide technical assistance related to implementation of the model unless requested or authorized in writing by the Project SEARCH® national office.

Quality of Plan(s)

Strength: The proposal describes a realistic plan that is based on prior experience in collaboration across multiple markets (hospital, coffee shops, riding stables, etc.) across multiple regions. It appears to be effective use of planning for activity development. **Note:** The exact rate of the roll-out of sites is not included in the proposal, but the proposer indicates they will develop that with Project SEARCH national.

Strength: The proposal clearly states the proposer will:

- develop a marketing plan with strategies to disseminate informational and/or promotional materials to increase awareness and
- assist entities that hope to establish a site with supporting preparatory work:
 - assist to prepare a quality application for becoming a Project SEARCH site;
 - develop an electronic manual of forms/checklists to help communities identify strengths and weaknesses for establishing the necessary collaborative partnerships;
 - provide supports to engage and support involvement of necessary partners;
 - provide support for coordination and/or communication between partners; and
 - arrange and provide funds for site visits and technical assistance from the national office.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Strength: The proposal includes a realistic plan to work with DARS and the Project SEARCH® national office to develop and implement a process to monitor the progress of sites. A secure website will be created where communities can upload information and data about their participation in Project SEARCH. The evaluation team will use multiple types of evaluative tools: forms; checklists; and survey and questionnaire measures to evaluate the degree to which community members feel the program has been successful, to see if stakeholder perceptions of people with DD and their employment opportunities have changed, and to identify other stakeholder concerns. **Note:** The proposal does not identify what measures will be monitored; the proposer intends to work with the national office to determine this.

Weakness: The evaluation plan for years beyond year 1 appears to be a “cut and paste” of year 1. One would expect that the plan would change as the project and sites became established.

Identification of Target Population and Activities to Support Diversity

Strength: The proposer clearly states they will support the development of at least 10 newly certified sites in Texas and also veteran Texas sites located throughout the state. Initially, the outreach will occur throughout the 20 regional areas of the Education Service Centers, regional DARS offices, university campuses, and businesses that may be located in several Texas cities. Good supports are in place.

Strength: The proposer recognizes that communities have their own unique cultures that are shaped by many factors, such as geographic location, population demographics, local businesses that provide employment, terrain, and even local weather.

Relevant Public Policy Issues

Strength: The proposer will develop a “Lessons Learned” executive report about the first 10 programs, providing summary data about the sites, a list of common barriers to success, predictors of success, recommendations for legislative and administrative changes, etc. They will submit a final report to TCDD describing: savings by businesses implementing Project SEARCH; employment outcomes for participants; and information about barriers encountered by Texas communities.

Organizational Structure & Qualifications of Personnel

Strength: Key staff are clearly identified and appear to be qualified to administer the project. Sufficient personnel and resources are in place to effectively manage the project. **Note:** The proposer should examine and explain the benefits and possible drawbacks of having 3 investigators.

Strength: The organization appears able to effectively work with the national Project SEARCH office and to local sites. The organization has experience working collaboratively with Texas state agencies.

Financial Information & Sustainability

Weakness: Would like a clearer breakdown of professional services (ie., how many trips, etc.)

Note: The proposer hopes to influence the vocational training system for individuals with disabilities in Texas and will work with appropriate agencies and/or organizations to inform them of these barriers in order to facilitate opportunities for system change that will support Texas sites.

Applicant: Education Service Center Region XI

Project Area: Tarrant, Johnson, Cooke, Wise, Denton, Parker, Palo Pinto, Hood, Erath, and Somervell

Project Director: Carla Johnson

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| TCDD Funds: | \$175,000 | \$175,000 | \$175,000 | \$175,000 | \$175,000 |
| Match : | \$44,596 | \$45,000 | \$46,000 | \$47,000 | \$48,000 |

Project Abstract: Education Service Center (ESC) Region XI, Fort Worth, Texas is applying for funds to support the development of ten Project SEARCH program sites (hubs) in Texas, In Year One, ESC Region XI will pilot Texas TIDES (Training Individuals with Disabilities for Employment Success) as the state level project hub in North Central Texas and expand regional hubs through the Texas Transition Network at the 20 ESC's. Partnerships will be developed among key stakeholders in participating regions to replicate the Project SEARCH National model program, and develop student internships to build essential employability skills needed to gain and maintain meaningful employment.

Overall Comments

Strength: The proposal reflects the basic value of the right of people with disabilities to be fully included in their community and to practice self-determination. The proposal is written in respectful language throughout.

Weakness: There was no evidence that persons with disabilities or their family members were involved in the development of the proposal or will be involved in the implementation, except that persons with disabilities will be recipients of the model's training, that parents will be educated about TIDES, and that parents will be on the Project Advisory Committee. Would any people with disabilities (or their families) be employed by the grant, and would any self-advocates be on the PAC?

Weakness: Finding the information in the proposal was sometimes difficult, and at times information was inconsistent. For example, it was stated both that Carla Johnson would be the Project Director AND that a Project Director would need to be hired. It was hard to get a good "picture" of what exactly the proposer intended to do.

Weakness: It appears that proposer plans to implement the Project Search model (thus delivering technical assistance related to implementation of the model is likely) as well as provide administrative and fiscal support. It is not clear if they understand no technical assistance about the model may be provided unless requested and approved by the national office.

Quality of Plan(s)

Strength: Various means of communication are listed in this proposal – online, video conferencing, face – to – face, etc. – to support coordination between the entities involved.

Weakness: The information provided did not seem to support their ability to develop new sites more in one area of the state. In addition, the proposer did not take into account that many locations have already been working on starting a PS site and their plan would mean that if those sites need the assistance of the grant, they would have to wait until year two before they could start a program.

Weakness: There are few support letters from education entities (source of student interns) versus support letters from businesses. Also, the proposal states information and promotional materials will be disseminated through local school districts and “at various state conferences,” but examples of state conferences are not provided. If they are all education based conferences, this leaves out the businesses that are hoped to be targeted. Project SEARCH recommends a minimum of 6-8 months to develop a successful collaborative planning team (including community/business partnerships) with meetings once a month. The proposer notes that they plan to establish student internship rotations between 10/2012 and 5/2013; without existing solid support from businesses within the community, this appears very difficult to accomplish.

Weakness: Limited information is provided about how partnerships will be developed and what roles partners will play. It is unclear how DARS will partner with the proposer, outside of simply being on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), and there is limited information about other local and state resources. It appears that the Texas TIDES will identify all partners and resources rather than help future Project SEARCH sites identify available resources for themselves.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Strength: The proposal includes a very clear evaluation plan. Data collected by the state education system will be used. Ongoing formative evaluations will be used to measure progress on project objectives; to determine next steps; to evaluate the impact of teaching materials on student success in the workplace; and to measure agency involvement, as well as satisfaction of program partners.

Note: Additional forms of data collection, such as surveys (including web surveys), number of web page views, length of time viewing web pages, and employer satisfaction measures, might be helpful.

Weakness: The proposal has limited detail about how progress of local sites will be monitored and how that information will be shared with DARS and the Project SEARCH national office. There is no clear plan to address eliminating barriers that might hamper development of Project SEARCH sites in Texas.

Weakness: The proposal states that PAC members will meet for two hours monthly during the first two quarters with follow up meetings during the third and fourth quarters “to evaluate stakeholder efforts” – but it is unclear if the stakeholders in this instance are the PAC members or actual Project SEARCH sites.

Identification of Target Population and Activities to Support Diversity

Strength: Mentorship programs will be developed and implemented as a cost-effective approach that supports individualization of supports provided to the youth served.

Strength: The proposer appears to understand the need to provide individualized transition services and supports in a broader cultural context, and states they intend to enhance this process by involving a diverse PAC whose members can build the capacity of transition-related school personnel, employers and others.

Weakness: Very little information is provided about the demographics of the target population or how diversity will be supported, and it is unclear who exactly is targeted by this proposal. For example, the proposal discusses working with “CLD youth,” but does not specifically state if this refers to youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse or youth who have a cognitive learning disability.

Relevant Public Policy Issues

Strength: Public policy issues are discussed, but the proposal does not explicitly state what experience the proposer has in addressing public policy issues or how they will provide information to TCDD.

Organizational Structure & Qualifications of Personnel

Strength: The organization appears able to effectively work with staff from the national Project SEARCH office and to work effectively with and provide support to local sites. The organization has experience in working collaboratively with Texas state agencies.

Strength: Key staff are identified.

Weakness: Experience in grant administration and qualifications of key staff are not disclosed, and one position has not yet been staffed. The proposal states a Project Director has yet to be hired, however, a Project Director is named elsewhere in the proposal.

Financial Information & Sustainability

Weakness: The proposer does not provide a specific plan to develop sustainability, and it appears the proposer will wait until the final year grant funding to begin developing a plan for sustainability. This is much too late.

Weakness: If the goal of this grant is to support hubs to be self-supporting, then the amount of increased travel from year 3 – 5 may be excessive.

Weakness: It is unclear why 8 of the 12 member PAC would need to travel to Ohio.

Note: Project SEARCH national office travel to ESC XI is mentioned but individual site visits are not addressed in the travel arrangements. However, the amount of funds listed as operations cost for travel in and out of state seem to indicate that funds will be provided.

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR PROJECT SEARCH
06/01/12 – 05/31/13

| Item | Grantee | TCDD Funds | Other Fed Funds | Risk Activity | Risk Code |
|-------------|---|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| A | Texas Tech University (Burkhart Center For Autism Education & Research) | \$174,764 | \$35 mil | 2 | |
| B | Education Service Center Region XI | \$175,000 | \$6mil | 1, 2 | |

KEY

| | |
|--|--|
| | Extensive Risk Management (all levels of control plus audit) |
| | Considerable Risk Management (most levels of control plus independent review by CPA) |
| | Moderate Risk (operating & monitoring controls & agreed upon procedures engagement by CPA) |
| | Monitor or Accept (basic monitoring only) |

**TCDD RISK MATRIX
FY 2012**

| <i>Risk Activities</i> ↓ | <i>Award Amounts</i> → | - \$75,999. | \$76,000. – \$199,999. | \$200,000.- \$499,999. | \$500,000. + |
|---|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 1. New Grantee (i.e., no previous project or no project within 2 year period) | | LH | MH | HH | HH |
| 2. Awards within Award (e.g., consultants, presenters, sub-contractors, etc.) | | LH | MH | HH | HH |
| 3. Funding Issues (e.g., budget/procurement concerns, match, sustainability, etc.) | | LM | LM | MM | HM |
| 4. Compliance Issues (e.g., OMB, UGMS, TCDD policy, oversight issues, etc.) | | LM | LM | MM | HM |
| 5. Performance Issues (e.g., unmet goals, milestones, special conditions, etc.) | | LM | LM | MM | HM |
| 6. Legal Actions | | LL | LL | ML | HL |
| 7. Fiscal Office Located Out-Of-State | | LL | LL | ML | HL |
| 8. No Audit Prior To Grant Award | | LL | LL | ML | HL |

KEY: 1st letter denotes impact; 2nd letter denotes probability.

| | | |
|---|------------|---|
|  | HM, HH | Extensive Risk (all levels of control plus audit) |
|  | MM, MH, HL | Considerable Risk (most levels of control plus independent review by CPA) |
|  | LH, ML | Moderate Risk (operating/monitoring controls + agreed upon procedures by CPA) |
|  | LL, LM | Acceptable Risk (basic monitoring only) |

Use for Risk Management Plan:

-  Audit work performed and the Executive Director performs oversight via quarterly report* provided to ensure supervisory and operating controls are working.
-  Department heads reporting to Executive Director perform oversight functions to ensure supervisory and operating controls are working.
-  Department staff perform oversight functions to ensure supervisory and operating controls are working.
-  Department staff perform basic oversight functions to ensure controls are in place.

Use for Annual Audit Plan:

-  Red indicates areas to be audited by contracted internal audit services provider.
-  Yellow indicates areas to be covered through oversight, supervisory and operating controls with guidance from the contracted internal audit services provider.
-  Green indicates areas to be covered through staff oversight with guidance from the contracted internal audit services provider as needed.
-  Gray indicates areas to be covered through basic staff oversight and reporting.

***Grants Monitoring Exceptions Report provided to E.D. and Council quarterly for review.**
No risk activities means monitoring strategies will be performed at the lowest level under the award amount.
NOTE: Risk Matrix reviewed annually with TCDD staff and Internal Auditor; updated when needed.

**MONITORING STRATEGIES
FY 2012**

STIPENDS (\$6,000. Or less):

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Website instructions | Special Conditions (GMD letter) |
| Technical support (Budget Support Specialist) | Review FROE & other reports submitted |

GRANT PROJECTS:

Level 1 GRAY

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Orientation | Approvals (e.g., equipment, travel, speakers, etc.) |
| Onsite Review = Initial | Project Advisory Committee Meetings |
| Program Performance Review = Annual | Final Program Performance Report |
| RAR Documentation Review | Other as determined necessary (e.g., audit desk review) |

Level 2 GREEN

| | |
|---|---|
| Orientation | Project Advisory Committee Meetings |
| Onsite Review = Initial & 3 rd year | Final Program Performance Report |
| Program Performance Review = Quarterly | Agreed upon Procedures Engagements CPA |
| RAR Documentation Review | Other as determined necessary (e.g., audit desk review) |
| Approvals (e.g., equipment, travel, speakers, etc.) | |

Level 3 YELLOW

| | |
|---|--|
| Orientation | Project Advisory Committee Meetings |
| Onsite Review = Initial & 3 rd & 5 th years | Final Program Performance Report |
| Program Performance Review = Quarterly | Independent Review by CPA = Annual (A-133 Audit at \$500k or more) |
| RAR Documentation Review | Project Staff Meeting (1X per annum) |
| Approvals (e.g., equipment, travel, speakers, etc.) | Other as determined necessary (e.g., audit desk review) |

Level 4 RED

| | |
|---|---|
| Orientation | Final Program Performance Report |
| Onsite Review = Initial & Annual | A-133 Audit = Annual (Independent under \$500k) |
| Program Performance Review = Quarterly | Audit Desk Review = Annual |
| RAR Documentation Review | Project Staff Meeting (2X per annum) |
| Approvals (e.g., equipment, travel, speakers, etc.) | Interim Program Performance Report |
| Project Advisory Committee Meetings | |

ADDITIONAL MONITORING STRATEGIES FOR GRANT PROJECTS

To be selected and implemented on an as needed basis.

- Re-orient
- Add milestones or special conditions
- Move up to the next level of monitoring (see above tables)
- Payment holds (reimbursement only no advance or no reimbursement & no advance)
- Require additional onsite reviews