
GLENN HEGAR
TEXAS COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



Guidance and Information for Grant Applicants
Request for Applications (RFA No. BDO-NOFA-008)

for the

TEXAS BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
BUILDING THE TEXAS BROADBAND WORKFORCE GRANT PROGRAM

ESBD POSTING DATE: 06/23/2025
DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: 07/31/2025 AT 2:00 P.M. C.S.T.

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Introduction

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts prepared this guide to assist eligible applicants in preparing their applications for the Building the Texas Broadband Workforce Grant Program (“the Program”). Funding for grants awarded by the program has been allocated to the Broadband Development Office within CPA through state funding from the Broadband Infrastructure Fund. The BDO will administer this program to carry out critical workforce development projects, directly enabling the growth of a skilled and robust Texas broadband industry.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this guide, in the event of an inconsistency between this guide, relevant state statutes, BDO program rules and the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), including any amendments, the following order of precedence will apply:

- [H.J.R. No. 125, Broadband Infrastructure Fund \(BIF\)](#)
- [Texas House Bill 9 \(HB 9\)](#)
- [Building The Texas Broadband Workforce Grant Program](#) NOFA
- Application Guide

If you have any questions about this document, please email our office at bdo.nofa@cpa.texas.gov.

Schedule of Events

06/23/2025	NOFA issued.
06/23/2025	First day to submit an Application.
06/23/2025	First day to submit written questions regarding NOFA/Application.
06/30/2025	Deadline for submitting written questions regarding NOFA/Application.
07/11/2025	Estimated publication of answers to written questions.
07/31/2025	Deadline to submit Applications.
10/01/2025	Anticipated notice of award.

Important Compliance Requirements

Applicants and grant recipients must comply with all applicable state and federal rules and laws that govern the Program. The BDO encourages applicants to review the NOFA, applicable regulations and guidance documents carefully.

Program Guidance

- [Government Code Chapter 490I](#)

Applicants are encouraged to check the BDO’s public website for additional information or resources that may be useful in preparing and applying for funding.

Grant Information and Eligibility Requirements

Available Funding

The NOFA obligates state funds from the BIF totaling up to \$25 million to support training programs that equip individuals with the skills needed to install, maintain and expand fiber optic infrastructure, strengthening Texas' broadband industry.

As required by 34 TAC §16.31, the office has established the minimum and maximum grant awards available for each successful project Application, as follows:

Minimum: \$250,000

Maximum: \$5,000,000

1. Cash Cost Sharing Requirement:

- Optional but encouraged — extra points awarded for minimal reliance on program funds.
- Must be at least 10 percent of the total project cost to receive additional points.
- Only cash cost sharing (direct project-related expenditures) will be considered.
- Applicants must clearly document cost sharing, including funding sources, in their Application.
- Shared expenditures must be necessary, reasonable and occur within the grant's period of performance.

2. In-Kind Contributions:

- In-kind contributions, such as non-cash donations of property, goods or services, will not be considered for the Program and cannot be used to receive preferential consideration.
- Only cash contributions are eligible for cost sharing.
- Non-cash donations do not qualify for additional points in the Application process.
- Applicants should ensure all proposed contributions align with Program guidelines.

Applicant Eligibility

The BDO encourages all eligible applicants that are capable of increasing workforce availability for the broadband industry to apply for funds. Eligible applicants must be located in Texas and may include:

- Political subdivisions of the state, including municipalities, independent school districts, community colleges, technical schools and special purpose districts as defined by [Section 403.0241, Government Code](#).
- Nonprofit entities.
- Commercial entities.

Eligible applicants that propose to work together to build or expand a training program may submit a single Application as co-applicants for that project.

An applicant will not be eligible to participate in the Program if any of the following apply:

- Applicant is on the CPA Debarred Vendors List.
- Applicant is "excluded" on the Federal System of Award Management website.
- Applicant owes a debt to the state or is on warrant or vendor hold.
- Applicant is on any of the CPA Divestment Statute Lists.

- Applicant has a grade below C with the Texas Smart Buy Vendor Performance Tracking System.

Proposed Project Eligibility and Grant Activities

Applicants must carefully review the NOFA to determine whether their proposed project meets project eligibility requirements. The BDO will prioritize programs that include:

- Program development, enrollment and promotion.
- Curriculum alignment with industry standards and certifications.
- Practical, hands-on training with real-world equipment.
- Strong partnerships with industry employers.
- Comprehensive trainee support services and job placement assistance.

Grant Period

The grant term runs from the Effective Date until the project's completion, not exceeding four years. All application materials, including the Budget Narrative and Project Work Plan, must clearly state the proposed project's completion date and other timelines.

Performance Reporting

Successful Applicant(s) are required to submit technical performance reports documenting their and any subcontractor's performance per the Grant Agreement and approved application, including:

- A detailed description of the program and its development, including all collaborating partners.
- Narrative descriptions of all recruiting processes undertaken during the reporting period, specifically those designed to attract diverse program trainees.
- A summary of community engagement activities carried out during the reporting period.
- Number of trainees and detailed demographics such as age, telecommunications background, career history, education level, and veteran status.
- Program outcomes including credentials achieved, Work-Based Learning experiences, job placements, pre/post wages of trainee before receiving certification.
- An overview of the support services accepted by trainees.
- Personal stories and feedback that demonstrate the program's positive impact.

Preparing your Grant Application

Applicants are required to submit Applications electronically and must adhere to the following guidelines:

- The Application must be emailed to bdo.nofa@cpa.texas.gov with return receipt requested.
- The email's subject line must include the applicant's name and the NOFA number for which the Application is being submitted: **{Applicant Name} RFA No. BDO-NOFA-008**.
- All attachments must be in accessible formats for CPA, including Word, Excel and PDF.
- All required forms must be signed digitally or manually with scanned signatures.

Late Applications will not be accepted. For purposes of meeting the 2:00 p.m. Central time delivery deadline, the Issuing Office's electronic receipt date and time will be the final decision in all reports.

For additional information and guidance regarding the Application process, please refer to the BDO's website.

Application Requirements

Application Submission

All required documentation should be attached following the email guidelines and folder naming conventions specified in the NOFA. Applicants shall create and email a zipped file folder marked with **Applicant Name and RFA No. BDO-NOFA-008**.

The folder must include the following files:

- Executive Summary
- Project Application Responses: Compile answers to all Application questions in one document within the page limits. Include a paginated table of contents with hyperlinks to each section.
- Budget Justification Spreadsheet, using the provided template (Attachment C)
- Budget Narrative
- Financial Statements
- Project Work Plan, using the provided template (Attachment B)
- Resumes of key staff (combined into one document)
- Letters of Support (combined into one document)
- Letters of Commitment (if applicable)
- Execution of Application Form (Attachment D, signed)

Applicants must use prescribed templates where indicated. To maximize chances of receiving a high score, each applicant must provide complete, comprehensive and precise responses for all Application sections, as listed in **NOFA Section V. B. Application Submission Requirements**.

Building the Broadband Workforce Application Questions

Project Application responses, which include answers to questions in V. B. 3-5, will be provided in one comprehensive document, limited to 15 pages single-spaced (30 pages double-spaced).

The required sections for the project Application are as follows:

Section 1 – Cover Page and Table of Contents

Section 2 – Executive Summary (Maximum two pages, single-spaced)

Applicants must provide a concise narrative summary of the proposed project, two pages single-spaced or four pages double-spaced. This summary must include:

- An abridged overview of the project.
- Applicant and partnership identification (including specific roles each will play).
- High-level project details, location and beneficial outcomes.
- An outline of proposed training strategies.
- Summary of the total project cost, requested funding and total trainee numbers.
- General milestones and project timeline, as per the NOFA.

Applicants should be aware that CPA may make the Executive Summary public as part of the statutorily mandated Application challenge process. **The BDO will not accept an executive summary that is marked “confidential”.**

Section 3 – Applicant Information (Maximum five pages, single-spaced)

The Application must include the following for each entity that will participate in the proposed project:

a. Applicant’s identifying information:

- Legal name and entity type.
- Identification numbers (FEIN, TPID, UEI and its expiration date).
- Entity information (mailing address and website).
- Primary contact information, including name and email, for communications and tasks related to the Application and award.
- Authorized official name, email and phone number.
- Partnership Application and entity name(s), including names of all partners and subcontractors.

b. Applicant’s qualifications, experience and past performance — must include a narrative containing the following information from the applicant:

- Details regarding the applicant’s operational size and scope, including employee count and years in business.
- Description of previous and similar work, particularly over the last five years.
- Description highlighting relevant training and workforce development efforts, particularly those with public entities such as broadband offices or workforce boards.

c. Technical capacity — the Application must detail the applicant’s ability to successfully execute the project and demonstrate experience in:

- Managing projects of similar scope and complexity.
- Utilizing project management methodologies (planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation).
- Collecting, analyzing and reporting data.
- Operating relevant technology or equipment for training.

d. Financial capacity — applicant must clearly articulate the organization's capacity to effectively manage the project's financial responsibilities and demonstrate professional experience in these areas:

- Operating financial management systems.
- Forecasting and managing cash flow.
- Tracking and reporting on project expenditures.

e. Detailed description of prior experience with public grants

This section must be five pages single-spaced, or 10 pages double-spaced.

Section 4 – Project Implementation and Activities (Maximum ten pages, single-spaced)

Applicants must submit a narrative explanation detailing how the proposed project will be designed to meet the grant activity requirements, as outlined in **Section III.C.**

The narrative must not exceed 10 pages single-spaced, or 20 pages double-spaced, and must address the following:

- a. Project Description
- b. Project Work Plan (Attachment C).
- c. Curriculum and Assessment.
- d. Tuition.
- e. Proposed Trainers.
- f. Support services.
- g. Recruitment and awareness campaigns.
- h. Local coordination.
- i. Apprenticeships and work-based learning.
- j. Employer partnerships and job placement.
- k. Data collection and reporting:
 - Reporting – how an applicant will track and measure effectiveness of their training programs.
 - Project evaluation – applicants will describe how they will evaluate the effectiveness of their training programs.
 - Other data may be collected at the applicant's discretion and as required by the BDO.

Section 5 – Project Sustainability (Maximum one page, single-spaced)

Applicants must describe the project's strategies for ensuring long-term sustainability of the training program beyond the grant period. The Application should clearly outline:

- The expected results and long-term impact of the project, emphasizing the benefits to trainees, ISPs and area residents.
- Implementation strategies to ensure ongoing benefits, including collaboration with key stakeholders and trainees. Additionally, applicants should detail how the project — and, if applicable, its partners — will strengthen the Texas broadband workforce beyond the availability of grant funding.
- Plans for long-term sustainability, covering future funding sources, partnership-building and maintaining industry certifications.

This section must be one (1) page single-spaced, or two (2) pages double-spaced.

Section 6 – Budget Justification (Attachment B) and Budget Narrative (Maximum three pages, single-spaced)

Applicants should include a comprehensive budget package using the template provided by the BDO, to include:

- a. **Budget Justification Spreadsheet:** Applicants must use the provided spreadsheet template (Attachment B) to detail grant fund allocations. The budget must align with the cost categories in the Sample Grant Agreement (Attachment A) and include precise calculations for each item. Each Cost Category tab should justify the necessity of proposed expenditures. The total across all categories must equal the overall grant request, including any cost-share contributions. Additionally, the total funding request and proposed project milestones must be accurately reflected in the spreadsheet.
- b. **Budget Narrative:** Applicants must provide a separate supporting document that outlines how grant funds will be allocated to achieve each project objective, broken down by year of the grant term. This narrative must detail annual grant fund distribution, total program and trainee costs,

alignment of allowable expenses with the project scope, and match funding amounts and uses, if applicable. The narrative should be three pages single-spaced, or six pages double-spaced.

Section 7 – Financial Statements

The Application must include statements for each of the last two years of the applicant's operations and the most recent quarter's financial statements. This section provides additional insight to responses provided in V. 3. d, Financial Capacity.

Section 8 – Resumes and Responsibilities of Key Project Staff

Applicants must submit an organizational chart of project staff and resumes for up to five (5) key personnel. Each resume should be one page and describe each personnel's role, qualifications and relevant experience to demonstrate their ability to support the project's success. All resumes and the organizational chart should be compiled into one document.

Section 9 – Letters of Support (Maximum 1 page each)

Applicants must submit a minimum of one reference letter or a letter of support from key stakeholders or other persons familiar with the applicant's abilities and relevant experience, with preferential scoring for submitting no fewer than three compelling and unique reference letters. All letters of support should be compiled into one document.

Section 10 – Partnerships (if applicable)

Applicants must detail each partner's relevant experience, responsibilities and the benefits of the partnership model. The lead applicant must be identified and authorized by each partner to apply.

- a. **Letters of Commitment (maximum one page each)** – Applicants in a partnership must submit unique letters of commitment from all participating entities, including subcontractors and any organization contributing measurable activities to the success of the applicant's project. Each letter must specify roles, contributions and responsibilities and should not be form-based.

Section 11 – Proposal Format

- a. Include easily legible figures, graphs and images (including landscape orientation).
- b. Minimum of 10-point font size, with smaller font types in visuals remaining legible.
- c. Single or double-spaced.
- d. One-inch margins on all sides.
- e. Portrait orientation (except for figures, graphs and images) with clearly separated paragraphs (double spacing formatting or equivalent).

Refer to **Section V.B** of the NOFA for comprehensive guidelines on all Application requirements, covering Sections 1–11 of the Application Questions.

Grant Funding and Administrative Costs

A. Reimbursement Procedure

The Program operates as a cost reimbursement program. Successful applicants may request reimbursement for eligible, reasonable and necessary project costs incurred during the grant period, up to

the total award in the Grant Agreement. All eligible expenses must comply with Texas Grant Management Standards and this NOFA's allowable expenditure guidelines.

Reimbursement requests are to be submitted no more than once a month via the BDO's online portal and must include:

- Comprehensive documentation, such as proof of payment.
- Align with the successful Applicant's approved Budget Justification and Budget Narrative.

The BDO may provide technical assistance to successful Applicants on the reimbursement submission process post-award. Payment date depends on the BDO's receipt of all required documentation.

Refer to **Section VI. A** of the NOFA for comprehensive details on the Program's reimbursement procedure.

B. Allowable Expenditures

1. **Eligible expenses:** subject to the awarded grant amount and requirements of the Grant Agreement shall include:
 - Costs associated with tuition and registering trainees.
 - Acquisition costs for necessary supplies and equipment solely for the successful implementation of the project and of broadband industry workforce development.
 - Facility costs, including rental or acquisition costs and facility leases.
 - Costs associated with the development of curriculum.
 - Professional service fees related to the project, including project management and communications costs directly related to Program Activities.
 - Travel, training and professional development expenses for staff engaged in workforce development activities.
 - Pre-approved support services.
 - Other pertinent costs directly related to program activities, excluding proposal preparation costs.
 - Indirect costs capped at 15 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC).
 - Salaries and wages for employees working directly on the project, including fringe benefits.
2. **Ineligible expenses:** expenses deemed excessive, unjustified or ineligible will not be reimbursed. Other ineligible expenses include:
 - Pre-award costs or any expense incurred prior to the date of the Grant Award announcement.
 - Indirect costs for equipment, capital expenditures, patient care charges, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships, fellowships and participant support costs.
 - Fundraising activities.
 - Costs related to issuing or awarding subawards.
 - Costs associated with support services to trainees that have not been approved by the BDO.
 - Non-program specific office equipment or equipment not owned or leased by grantee.
 - Payment of debt service and related fees.
 - Obligations from settlements, judgments or debt restructuring.
 - Profits or charges exceeding actual costs incurred by the successful Applicant.

For a complete list of all eligible and ineligible expenses, please refer to **NOFA Section IV. B. 1-2.**

3. **Determination of Eligibility:** The BDO holds the sole discretion on reimbursement eligibility, and Applicants should contact the BDO for uncertain costs before submitting a request.
4. **Pre-award Costs:** Applicants may begin reimbursable work after the award and a Grant Agreement have been executed. However, all costs incurred before the final award are at the applicant's risk and are not guaranteed to be repayable if no award is received.
5. **Advanced Payments:** Requests for advance payments, or payments made to a successful Applicant up front before expenses have been incurred, are not permitted.
6. **Indirect costs:** Applicants may claim a de minimis rate of 15 percent of MTDC, regardless of entity type or existing certified rates. In accordance with TxGMS, MTDC includes direct salaries, wages, fringe benefits, materials, supplies, services and travel, but excludes equipment, capital expenditures, patient care charges, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships, fellowships and participant support costs. Additionally, costs must be consistently classified as direct or indirect and must not be double charged. No documentation is required to justify use of the de minimis rate, and applicants may voluntarily waive or lower the indirect cost rate to allocate more funds to direct program costs.
7. **Funding Restrictions:** No more than 10 percent of the grant amount may be allocated for trainee support services. The Applicant must explain in the Project Budget and Budget Narrative how the 10 percent limit on trainee support services was determined or applied.

Grant Application Review Procedures

Applicants should refer to **NOFA Section VII. Grant Application Review Procedures** for all information regarding the BDO's review process for submitted Applications.

- A. **Preliminary Application Review:** The BDO will screen all Applications to ensure their completeness and that they meet the requirements included in the NOFA.
- B. **Evaluation and Criteria:** Following the application challenge period, BDO and CPA evaluators will score each accepted application out of 100 points. The final score, averaged from all evaluators, is not contestable by applicants.

Grant Agreement and Compliance

Applicants should refer to **NOFA Section VIII. Grant Agreement and Compliance A. and B.** for comprehensive details and requirements regarding the Grant Agreement and Reporting and Compliance measures, including guidelines on all required reports (quarterly status reports, level of effort reports and closeout reports).

Appendices

Appendix A – Acronyms

BDO – Broadband Development Office

BIF – Broadband Infrastructure Fund

CAI – Community Anchor Institutions

CPA – Comptroller of Public Accounts

ESBD – Electronic State Business Daily

FCC – Federal Communications Commission

FEIN – Federal Employer Identification Number

HB – State of Texas House Bill

HSR – House Joint Resolution

HUB – Historically Underutilized Business

ISPs – Internet Service Providers

Mbps – Megabits Per Second

MOU – Memoranda of Understanding

NOFA – Notice of Funding Availability

SAM – System of Award Management

SB – Senate Bill

SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound Activities

TAC – Texas Association of Counties

TDOP – Texas Digital Opportunity Plan

TPID – Texas Taxpayer Identification

TWC – Texas Workforce Commission

TxGMS – Texas Grant Management Standards

UEI – Unique Entity Identifier for SAM.GOV

Appendix B – Checklist for Application Readiness and File Naming Guidelines

Application Section	Instructions	File Naming Guidelines for Email Submissions
Execution of Application Form	<p>Mandatory for all applicants: the file must be signed and provided in a PDF.</p> <p>This document (Attachment D) certifies that the entire application being submitted is complete.</p>	[ApplicantName]-ExecutionofApplicationForm.pdf
Executive Summary	Mandatory for all applicants: the file must be provided in a PDF.	[ApplicantName]-ExecutiveSummary.pdf
Responses to Building the Broadband Workforce Application	<p>Mandatory for all applicants: the file must be provided in a PDF.</p> <p>Applicants must submit a single document that includes responses to all questions from NOFA V. Application Submission Requirements 1 - 5.</p> <p>This document must contain all required sections, from the Cover Page, Table of Contents, and Applicant Information to Project Sustainability, as outlined in the NOFA, <u>except for the Project Work Plan</u>, which will be included as a separate attachment.</p>	[ApplicantName]-ProjectApplicationResponses.pdf
Budget Justification Spreadsheet	<p>Mandatory for all applicants: the attachment must be in an XLSX format.</p> <p>Applicants must use the provided template, Attachment B to complete this section.</p> <p>Refer to the instructions in NOFA V. B. 6.a. and the template for guidance on how to complete it.</p>	[ApplicantName]-BudgetJustification.xlsx
Budget Narrative	<p>Mandatory for all applicants: the attachment must be provided in a PDF.</p> <p>The narrative should be a <u>separate document</u> that aligns with the Budget Justification Spreadsheet (Attachment B).</p>	[ApplicantName]-BudgetNarrative.pdf

Financial Statements	<p>Mandatory for all applicants: must be compiled into one document and in a PDF.</p> <p>Financial Statements will provide additional insight to responses provided for NOFA V. 3.d.</p>	[ApplicantName]-FinancialStatements.pdf
Building the Broadband Workforce Project Work Plan	<p>Mandatory for all applicants: the file must be provided in an XLSX format.</p> <p>Using the Project Work Plan template (Attachment C), Applicants must complete each column of the Project Work Plan, outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Project activities. ii. Project outputs. iii. Activity start date and end date. iv. Activity duration. v. Funding justification. vi. Requested state funds. vii. Amount of cost share. viii. Source of cost share. ix. Total cost of each activity. <p>The Work Plan spreadsheet should also account for all costs associated with each activity.</p> <p>Refer to NOFA V. B. 4.b. for full guidance on the Project Work Plan.</p>	[ApplicantName]-ProjectWorkPlan.xlsx
Resumes of Key Staff	<p>Mandatory for all applicants. Resumes and an organizational chart should be compiled into one PDF.</p> <p>Maximum of five resumes of one page each.</p>	[ApplicantName]-Resumes.pdf
Letters of Support	<p>Mandatory for all applicants. Attach up to three letters demonstrating community support and coordination.</p> <p>Letters should be limited to one page each and compiled into a single PDF.</p>	[ApplicantName]-LettersofSupport.pdf
Documentation Verifying Partnerships	<p>Required <u>only if a partnership exists</u>.</p> <p>Documentation verifying partnerships should be compiled into one PDF.</p>	[ApplicantName]-Partnerships.pdf

Appendix C - Additional Resources

[BDO Website](#)

[BDO Funding](#)

[BDO Broadband Workforce Development Page](#): The BDO drives workforce development for statewide broadband expansion by partnering, promoting training and creating job opportunities. Collaborating with the TWC and stakeholders, the BDO strategizes digital skills training, apprenticeships and broadband career awareness, prioritizing inclusivity for underserved communities.

[Appendix K – Building the Broadband Industry Workforce and Supporting Digital Skills for Texans](#): This whitepaper outlines obstacles to and opportunities for a comprehensive broadband workforce plan, created in collaboration between the BDO and the TWC.

[HB 5 \(87R\)](#): Established the BDO operated within CPA and tasks BDO with fulfilling several broadband expansion mandates, including establishing a broadband development program to award grants. The BOOT Grant Program is the first program established.

[State Broadband Plan](#): Outlines observations from outreach conducted, background on broadband terminology and technology, and areas of focus to close the digital divide in Texas.

[Texas Broadband Development Map](#): Designated areas that are eligible for funding.

[Texas Digital Opportunity Plan](#): The BDO developed this plan through various engagement opportunities, and the NTIA accepted it on March 28, 2024.

[Texas Grant Management Standards](#): Aligns with the federal Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) and is authorized under Government Code Chapter 783 to enhance the efficient use of public funds. It is the successor publication to the Uniform Grant Management Standards.