

Philanthropy Advocates

formerly Texas Education Grantmaker Advocacy Consortium (TEGAC)

RFP for Advocacy Grants, Effective Teaching Policy Work Group

Introduction

Philanthropy Advocates, formerly the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium (TEGAC), is a geographically and politically diverse consortium of 54 private, corporate, and community foundations from across Texas working together to promote, protect and improve public and higher education.

Research, innovation, seeding best practices, and rapid response form the foundation of what Texas philanthropy provides to state lawmakers and policymakers. Since 2012, Philanthropy Advocates has engaged the philanthropic sector to participate in research and advocacy around important public and higher education policy issues. Philanthropy Advocates is committed to serving as a trusted, non-partisan resource to Texas lawmakers that provides fact-based data on Texas public schools and post-secondary institutions. In 2019, we joined Educate Texas, housed at the Communities Foundation of Texas, to further our impact.

With our members' guidance, Philanthropy Advocates concentrates on public and higher education policy issues that have the greatest impact on student outcomes, including early grade success, pathways to college and career, effective teaching, and school finance.

Philanthropy Advocates has supported research and advocacy around statewide early effective teaching policy for close to a decade. You can learn more about our past work in Effective Teaching here: <https://www.edtx.org/philanthropy-advocates/research/effective-teaching>. In 2019, Philanthropy Advocates' membership decided to build on our work in effective teaching to deeply focus on effective teacher preparation policies. After COVID-19 hit this past spring, it became even more critical for Philanthropy Advocates members to focus our policy efforts on supporting the teaching profession during this crisis. At no point in our history has the work of teachers been more critical, and at no point in our history have they needed our support more in order to minimize the effects of the pandemic on students and families, particularly students who are low-income, students of color, immigrants, and students with special needs or learning differences.

In Spring 2020, Philanthropy Advocates commissioned its longtime research and advocacy partner, Teach Plus Texas, to identify key data and best practices on both teacher preparation and support in light of COVID-19. Philanthropy Advocates is partnering with Teach Plus Texas to conduct research and teacher focus groups that will result in two

policy papers to answer the following policy research questions ahead of the 2021 Texas Legislative Session:

On Teacher Preparation: What are the key components of an effective clinical teaching experience? What competencies are the most essential for clinical experiences to build in teaching candidates? What would it take to ensure that students have access to well-

prepared teachers, especially in light of school closures? How do we clear the path to help candidates access and complete high quality programs? This will build upon previous Teach Plus research, which focused on what data regarding EPP quality should be made public, and what programs should be held accountable for.

On Education During and After Covid-19: What policy and practice issues (such as professional development, access to technology, structure of the school day and school year, use of formative assessments, and strategies for blended learning) do teachers believe need to be addressed now, and what do they foresee being critical when schools begin to re-open? How should districts prioritize investing their resources, including federal stimulus funds? What can the Texas education system learn from the pandemic, and how might we leverage that learning on issues such as blended learning, access to technology and the internet, and student mental health to improve the school system going forward?

Details and Required Activities

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide objective and non-partisan data on public education in Texas, Philanthropy Advocates is immediately seeking proposals from organizations to assist and coordinate with Philanthropy Advocates to disseminate these research findings to the general public, media, and policymakers leading up to and through the 2021 Texas Legislative Session.

Philanthropy Advocates will award grants to nonprofit organizations with demonstrated experience and capacity to engage diverse audiences in important education issues. Each organization may only submit one proposal. Proposals should include a full budget and request should not exceed \$25,000.

Grant recipients must agree to:

- Participate and coordinate with Philanthropy Advocates and Teach Plus Texas in a strategic advocacy campaign to engage and educate policymakers and members of the media about critical effective teaching issues leading up to and through the 2021 Texas Legislative Session.
- Participate in regularly scheduled conference calls and select Philanthropy Advocates/Educate Texas meetings over the course of the grant period.

- Produce a brief report outlining successes and challenges of the project at the conclusion of the grant period.
- Acknowledge funds granted under a grant agreement must be used for advocacy activities only and should not be used for direct or grassroots lobbying.

Application Process

The application deadline is Thursday, September 10, 2020. Grant awards will be announced by Friday, September 25, 2020. The grant period will begin October 1, 2020 with a mandatory orientation session in the fall and end on September 30, 2021.

Applicants should submit proposals via email to Becky Calahan at bcalahan@cftexas.org.

All proposals should include:

- Cover letter on organization's letterhead and signed by director
- Executive summary
- Narrative (no more than 5 pages) with project description, goals, activities, timeline, budget, key staff, & plan to measure results
- Proposed budget
- Previous examples of media outreach and/or outreach with grassroots organizations
- Organization background
- Proof of nonprofit status:
 - W-9
 - Current list of Board of Directors
 - FY 2019 Financial Statement

Background Information

The state of Texas has a long way to go to ensure that all students are receiving an equitable education. Even before only the COVID-19 pandemic began to exacerbate opportunity gaps statewide, Teach Plus Policy Fellow Jen Rabat states that 43 percent of third graders were reading on grade level, with 30 percent of at a press conference at the Texas Capitol Black students and 32 percent of Hispanic students reading on grade level in Texas.

The unique needs of our diverse learners continues to grow. Before the crisis, six out of ten students were economically disadvantaged, and half of our student population was considered at risk for dropping out of school. Only 70 percent of all Texas students were graduating from high school. Those numbers were even lower for our Black (62 percent) and Hispanic (63 percent) students. Only 37 percent of our students were graduating college ready. Following

the crisis, we anticipate poverty levels to rise and achievement gaps to widen, leaving millions of students even more vulnerable than they were before.

The most important in-school factor in a student’s learning is his/her teacher – yet many teachers enter the teaching profession unprepared for the challenge. Over half of new teachers in Texas come through alternative certification routes, many of which require no clinical teaching experience at all before a candidate’s first day as a teacher of record. Low-income students and students of color are more likely than their higher income and white counterparts to be taught by a first year teacher. What’s more, the COVID-19 crisis has interrupted the clinical experiences of thousands of aspiring educators. Well-prepared and supported teachers are more important than ever.