

**Request for Proposals**  
**Trauma-Informed Approaches to Behavior in Schools**

**Registration Deadline: 11:59 p.m. Central Time, Thursday, April 30th, 2015**  
**Proposal Due Date: 11:59 p.m. Central Time, Wednesday, May 6th, 2015**

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health invites eligible organizations in Texas to respond to this request for proposals (RFP) to fund programs that employ evidence-based or promising emerging practices to move school-based discipline programs away from exclusionary, punitive models and towards equity-driven, trauma-informed proactive models that improve behavioral and educational outcomes.

Depending on the quality of proposals received, the foundation plans to award grants of \$10,000–\$50,000 apiece to one to three public schools, charter schools, or school partnerships over a one-year period. Individual schools can apply for grants ranging from \$10,000–25,000. Partnerships consisting of two or more schools can apply for up to \$50,000.

Please read the following information carefully before submitting your proposal. Any additional information about the RFP will be posted on the foundation’s website at [www.hogg.utexas.edu](http://www.hogg.utexas.edu). It is the respondent’s responsibility to refer to the website for the most current information.

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## A. DUE DATES AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

### 1. Due Dates

In order to submit a proposal, applicants must first register with the Hogg Foundation's grants management system. Please go to <https://hogg.fluxx.io> and follow the instructions on the right side of the screen. If you think you already have an account with Hogg's grant management system, enter your user name and password to be sure you have access. If you are successful, that means that you are already registered with the system and do not need to register again in order to submit a proposal under this RFP. If you do not have an account, create a new account to register with the system. The registration deadline is 11:59 p.m. Central Time on Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Completed proposals must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### 2. Submission Process

All proposals must be submitted online at <https://hogg.fluxx.io>. See *Section E: Instructions for Grant Proposal* for a list of required information and documents.

A federal tax identification number must be entered to begin the online submission process. Respondents will be instructed to upload the required documents as separate files. The system will notify respondents if their documents were not successfully uploaded.

Respondents will receive email notification within three working days that their proposal was received and is complete. If the proposal is incomplete, the respondent will be notified and expected to complete the proposal immediately.

For technical assistance with the online submission process, please contact grants management staff at (512) 471-5041 or [hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu).

### 3. Teleconference for Potential Respondents

The foundation will host an informational teleconference for potential respondents from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. central time on Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Please register online on the RFP webpage in advance of the teleconference. Dial-in instructions will be provided to registrants prior to the teleconference.

Please email questions for the teleconference in advance to [hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu) by 5:00 p.m. central time on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Information provided during the teleconference will be posted as questions and answers on the RFP webpage by Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### 4. Inquiries

The foundation's communication with potential respondents is limited to the teleconference, email correspondence and the website. The foundation will not accept phone calls regarding the RFP except for questions related to technical issues with the online submission process. For technical inquiries, call grants management staff at (512) 471-5041.

Questions about the RFP may be emailed to [hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu). Responses that may be relevant to other potential respondents will be posted on the foundation's website. Check the RFP webpage often for updated questions and answers.

#### **5. Award Notification**

Notice of awards will be made in June 2015.

### **B. BACKGROUND**

The Hogg Foundation advances recovery and wellness in Texas by funding mental health services, policy analysis, research and public education. The foundation was created in 1940 by the children of former Texas Governor James S. Hogg and is part of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin.

The Hogg Foundation has over a decade of experience examining the impact of untreated trauma in school children, particularly related to school discipline. In 2005, the Hogg Foundation conducted preliminary research and published a brief analysis titled *School Discipline and Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances*. The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data indicated some racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline as well as disparities by special education status. In addition, beginning in 2011, a senior foundation official has taught a graduate seminar at the University of Texas at Austin on the school-to-prison pipeline.

Students enter school with pre-existing trauma and differences in opportunity. Childhood trauma can result from acute traumatic events (e.g. natural disasters, accidents, physical or sexual assault, witnessing a death) or chronic traumatic situations (e.g. physical or sexual abuse, domestic violence, war, emotional abuse and neglect) (Gerrity & Folcarelli, 2008). Every year in the United States, half of children ages two to 17 are victims of physical assault, one of every eight experiences child maltreatment, one in three is exposed to domestic violence, and one in twelve experiences sexual victimization (Finkelhor et al., 2005). From a neurobiological perspective, early life stress and traumatic events can have long-term consequences on the brain leading to increased stress responsiveness including development of anxiety and depression (Heim & Nemeroff, 2001). Some children are at higher risk of exposure to trauma. Lower socioeconomic status is connected with a higher likelihood of exposure to undesirable life events (USDHHS, 1999). Ethnic and racial minority groups are more highly represented among low-income earners and therefore may be more likely to be exposed to traumatic events.

Unrecognized and untreated trauma may lead to negative outcomes and behavioral issues in school. Children who experience trauma are significantly more likely to demonstrate higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems (Aviles, Anderson, & Davila, 2006). Physical abuse can lead to impaired social functioning, insecure attachment, PTSD, ADHD, conduct disorder, and depression (USDHHS, 1999). Psychological maltreatment is associated with delinquency, conduct disorder, depression, and negatively impacts cognitive and social functioning (USDHHS, 1999). Being a witness to or experiencing violence is associated with problems in school including higher numbers of school absences, lower grades, and greater rates of dropout and expulsion (Hurt et al, 2001; Putnam, 2006).

A student's behavioral issues in school may lead to the use of exclusionary discipline. Exclusionary discipline includes disciplinary practices such as expulsion and suspension that remove the student from the learning environment. In Texas, almost six of every 10 students attending public school was expelled or suspended once or more between seventh and twelfth grade (Fabelo et al., 2011). Significant disparities also exist in who experiences exclusionary discipline in schools. Nationally, African American and Latino students are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school than their peers for the same behaviors (Skiba et al., 2011). The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights found that non-white students, while making up only 39 percent of the nation's public school population, comprised 75 percent of law enforcement referrals and 79 percent of arrests in schools (2014).

In Texas, the *Breaking Schools' Rules* report, a groundbreaking statewide longitudinal study by the Council of State Governments (CSG), found that African American students and children in special education coded as having an emotional disturbance were disciplined through removal from the classroom at disproportionate rates to their classmates (Fabelo et al., 2011). For example, the study found that African American students were 31 percent more likely to be the subjects of a disciplinary action. Students who qualified for special education were also found to be suspended and expelled at disproportionately high rates, particularly if they were coded as having an emotional disturbance. Discipline disparities are higher when the level of subjectivity about the infraction is greater (e.g. interpreting a comment) compared to more objective indicators (e.g. violent contact with another student) (Skiba, Michael, Naredo, & Peterson, 2002). The CSG study found that only 3 percent of disciplinary actions involved conduct that the state mandates result in suspension or expulsion; the remaining 97 percent of actions are discretionary (Fabelo et al., 2011). A 2015 report by Texas Appleseed found similar disparities in school districts that criminalize truancy rather than intervening with troubled youth through effective school or court-based truancy programs (Fowler, Schmid Mergler, Johnson, & Craven, 2015).

Exclusionary discipline has been shown to lead to negative educational and social outcomes for students. Consequences may include alienation and weakened student-school bond (Skiba et al., 2011) as well as increased risk of dropping out and lower academic success (Indiana University, 2014). Exclusionary practices may also contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline where there is increased juvenile justice involvement following an expulsion or suspension (Darensbourg, Perez, & Blake, 2010; Losen, 2011). Ford et al. (2006) found that over 75 percent of young people in the juvenile justice system are victims of trauma.

There are clear connections between unmet trauma, behavioral issues in schools, and exclusionary discipline. This grant initiative seeks to advance recovery and wellness in Texas by starting at the root of the issue and meeting the trauma needs of students to improve behavioral and educational outcomes in schools.

Evidence-based and promising emerging interventions can be employed as tools to address childhood trauma and potentially reduce exclusionary discipline in schools. Examples of such interventions include (but are not limited to) Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL), the Good Behavior Game, Restorative Discipline, and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). Resources and trainings for teachers and educators are also important in the identification and treatment of trauma. For example, the

National Child Traumatic Stress Network has developed a *Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators* (2008). The development of collaborative discipline teams which include school-based mental health professionals is another potential means of recognizing child trauma needs and minimizing removal from the classroom (Darensbourg, Perez, Blake, 2010).

There has been a growing interest in reducing disciplinary disparities in particular. As a result, proposed models for incorporating student-level interventions with prevention-focused discipline policy changes and increased student and family involvement have been developed (Barton & Nishloka, 2014; Gregory, Bell, & Pollock, 2014). The *School Discipline Consensus Report* is a rich resource to keep students engaged in classrooms rather than prosecuted in courtrooms (Morgan, Salomon, Plotkin, & Cohen, 2014).

### C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Hogg Foundation is launching this initiative to fund programs that employ evidence-based or promising emerging practices to move school-based discipline programs away from exclusionary, punitive models and towards equity-driven, trauma-informed models. Depending on the quality of proposals received, the foundation plans to award grants of \$10,000–\$50,000 apiece to one to three public schools, charter schools, or school partnerships over a one-year period. Individual schools can apply for grants ranging from \$10,000–25,000. Partnerships consisting of two or more schools can apply for up to \$50,000.

The desired outcomes of this initiative include:

#### Short Term

- School personnel (including administrators, teachers, counselors, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other school staff) can recognize and articulate the connection between experiencing trauma and externalizing behaviors.
- Administrators use their understanding of trauma to inform discipline decisions.
- Schools are able to use existing data and tools to understand the evolving nature of their disciplinary practices.

#### Long Term

- School personnel have access to needed support for addressing externalizing behaviors that result from trauma.
- School personnel are able to use discipline data to develop strategies to reduce exclusionary discipline.
- There is a reduction in exclusionary discipline as demonstrated by PEIMS or other data.
- Administrators share their strategies and data outcomes with other schools to improve district outcomes.
- Schools proactively plan to meet trauma needs of children.

The foundation is particularly interested in funding public or charter schools where the following is true:

- There are high levels of exclusionary discipline as demonstrated by school data.
- There is a need for more trauma-informed interventions to address behavior.

- There is a demonstrated interest in and/or commitment to improving behavioral and educational outcomes through trauma-informed approaches and a reduction in exclusionary discipline. This commitment may still be in preliminary planning stages or a school may have existing programs that are working to address these issues.

Program activities may include (but are not limited to):

- Data collection and analysis.
- Trainings.
- Implementation of evidence-based or promising emerging practices.
- Re-design of school discipline policies.
- Meaningful involvement of students and their families.

This initiative is designed to positively impact students with unmet trauma needs as well as the educators and other school professionals working with these children. It is also important that schools partner with students, families, and staff to the greatest extent possible in program design, implementation, and evaluation. Grantees should also take whatever steps are necessary to learn about and address the cultural and linguistic needs of students and families.

While the initial scope of the initiative is limited to 1-3 grantees, one desired outcome is that resulting implementation models, if successful, would be replicated by other organizations across the state. Evaluation of key data points will help to determine the success of the programs. A subsequent year of funding for selected grantees is also possible based upon strong evidence of progress towards identified outcomes and a continued need for funding to reach project goals.

## **D. PROGRAM DETAILS**

### **1. Eligible Organizations**

Public schools, charter schools, and school partnerships in Texas are eligible to submit proposals. A school partnership is a group of two or more schools that apply for the funding as a group.

Proposals submitted as a collaborative project between multiple entities are welcome, but the lead applicant must be a public or charter school based in Texas and the role of each entity must be clearly defined in the proposal.

Schools can partner with outside organizations or individuals for support in areas such as technical assistance, training, service delivery, and evaluation support. However, schools are not permitted to contract out the whole grant amount.

### **2. Review and Selection Process**

Foundation staff will use a rating instrument to evaluate the merits of the proposals and select grant recipients. The foundation also may use external reviewers to evaluate proposals. While all proposal sections will be considered in the review process, the project narrative section will be weighed most heavily.

Factors that will be used to evaluate proposals for this RFP include:

- Demonstration of a need for the project in the school(s).
- Evidence for existing commitment to reduce exclusionary discipline AND/OR identification of barriers to change.
- Evidence for existing commitment to address trauma needs AND/OR identification of barriers to change.
- Proposed methods to address behavior and trauma needs (including tools and activities).
- Goals of the proposed project are clearly aligned with the goals of the initiative
- Key individuals have the skills sets and experience to successfully champion activities related to the grant program.
- Emerging strategies for evaluation are likely to assist in determining progress towards reaching project goals.
- Expenses are justified

Preference will be given for projects that include students and their families in the design, planning and implementation of programs, policies and services and/or address cultural and linguistic needs specific to the school's student and family demographics.

If all required sections are not included in the proposal, the proposal will be considered ineligible for review and funding. See *Section E: Instructions for Grant Proposal* for a list of required documents and information.

### **3. Grant Term**

The grant term is one year and is expected to begin in August 2015.

### **4. Reporting Requirements**

The reporting requirements and due dates will be clearly stated in the statement of agreement between the grantee and the foundation. The grantee will be required to submit narrative and fiscal reports describing the implementation of the project during the designated grant period. The narrative reports must also include a project summary and evaluation of outcomes.

### **5. Evaluation**

Grantees will be asked to report on the development and implementation of their projects. Schools are encouraged to seek sustainable ways to use existing staff and data sources to better understand and learn from the impacts of programmatic activities. Grantees should report specific activities and services related to the grant and provide output data when applicable, such as the number of training participants or events. Grantees also should report outcomes or results that show the effects of grant-funded activities. Changes in the rates of exclusionary discipline may also be established with existing sources such as PEIMS or other data. Grantees may also provide stories from staff, service recipients, community members, and other stakeholders that illustrate the grant's impact.

## **E. INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRANT PROPOSALS**

Completed proposals must be submitted online. A federal tax identification number must be entered to begin the online submission process.

The proposal must include the following elements:

1. Proposal Cover Letter
2. Project Narrative
3. Project Timeline
4. Project Budget
5. Project Staff
6. Letters of Support from Partner Organizations (if applicable)
7. Charter Schools Only: Required Fiscal Documents

### **1. Proposal Cover Letter**

A signed cover letter must be submitted as part of the proposal. The cover letter must be submitted on the responding organization's letterhead and must include the following information:

- A brief summary of the project narrative.
- The total amount of funding requested.
- The name of any partnering organizations.
- The primary contact information for this grant project.
- The name, title, address and signature of the school's signature authority (the superintendent, director of development, or other party legally authorized to sign contracts for the school).

### **2. Project Narrative**

The proposal must be described in full in the project narrative section. The narrative may not exceed 2000 words and should include the following information:

#### **PART 1: Project summary (maximum 250 words of 2000 total).**

#### **PART 2: School background and identification of the issue**

- Brief background information about your organization including leadership, mission, and students served.
- Current disciplinary practices with a focus on levels of exclusionary discipline within the school and any identified disparities.
  - See Appendix 1 as an example of how to use PEIMS data to look at exclusionary discipline. Other data sources and techniques are also appropriate. Reflect in particular upon discretionary exclusionary discipline numbers, if available.
- Also provide a brief narrative description based on observation and anecdotal information.
- Briefly discuss what discipline disparities might exist, particularly for students of color and those in special education.

#### **PART 3: Current efforts**

- Current efforts and demonstrated commitment to addressing exclusionary discipline.



- This commitment may be demonstrated through district or campus improvement plans, prior or continued trainings or partnerships, or other relevant activities.
- If a low amount of effort has been made in this area, describe the barriers to initiating change.
- Current efforts and demonstrated commitment to meeting trauma needs of students.
  - If specific tools or approaches have been utilized, please describe these tools and reflect upon successes and challenges.
  - If a low amount of effort has been made in this area, describe the barriers to initiating change.
  - Other evidence of the need for trauma-informed trainings and services, particularly as they relate to behavior in school.

#### **PART 4: Detailed project description**

- List the goals of the project.
- Describe specific tools to be used to address behavior and trauma needs.
  - Describe the evidence base for the tool(s) selected or provide justification for utilizing a promising emerging practice.
  - Detail other activities, events, etc. needed to reach identified goals.
- Identify specific individuals in your school who will champion these efforts.
  - Include names, job titles, and responsibilities as they relate to this initiative.
- Describe any proposed strategies for involvement of students, families, and staff throughout the duration of the project.
- Briefly describe how cultural and linguistic needs will be considered and addressed.

#### **PART 5: Evaluation**

- Briefly describe emerging strategies for evaluating implementation and results of grant-funded activities and determining if the organization has been successful in achieving its goals.
- If possible, identify data to be used or collected and the staff person or consultant potentially responsible for supporting evaluation efforts.

### **3. Project Timeline**

Identify major project milestones and due dates. Identify individual employees who will be responsible for carrying out project tasks and describe their current role in the school.

### **4. Project Budget**

Submit a detailed budget using the Excel budget template provided on the RFP webpage. Depending on the quality of proposals received, the foundation plans to award grants of \$10,000–\$50,000 apiece to one to three public schools, charter schools, or school partnerships over a one-year period. Individual schools can apply for grants ranging from \$10,000–25,000. Partnerships consisting of two or more schools can apply for up to \$50,000.

- a. **Personnel:** Identify each requested position, core duties and percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE). List the requested salary and fringe benefits for each position. If the position is to be filled by an existing staff person, include the person’s name. If the project

includes more than one organization, include personnel costs related to the grant for each partner entity.

- b. Contractors/Consultants:** If use of a contractor or consultant is proposed, specify the name of the individual or firm and the requested funding. Describe the scope of work and the method used to calculate payment (hourly, by task, etc.).
  - c. Meetings and Events:** List costs for meetings and events related to the project, such as room rental, food, equipment rental, speaker expenses and stipends to support consumer, youth and family participation, if applicable. Explain the cost basis for listed expenses.
  - d. Travel:** List costs for staff travel, such as airfare, car rental, mileage, taxi, parking, hotel and per diem if applicable. Identify the purpose of travel and show the cost basis for each travel expense category (e.g. number of travelers, mileage rate, per diem rate). Justify any variation from Texas state rates for state employee travel:  
<https://fmx.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php>.
  - e. Supplies and Equipment:** List costs for supplies and equipment that are necessary for the project, including communications materials such as brochures. Detail the purpose of each item. For equipment, justify the need to purchase for this project.
  - f. OPTIONAL: Other** (use only for items that do not fit in listed categories)
  - g. Subtotal** (add lines a – f)
  - h. Overhead:** Do not enter information in this section. The budget worksheet will autopopulate the Overhead field. Overhead will be calculated at 10% of the grant budget.
  - i. Total** (add Subtotal and Overhead)
- 5. Project Staff**  
Describe all key project staff, including personnel and potential contractors and consultants, and list primary duties. Upload resumes for each key position or, if vacant, upload a position description.
- 6. Letters of Support from Partner Organizations (if applicable)**  
Respondents with proposals involving collaborations or partnerships with other organizations must submit signed letters of support from those organizations. The letters must be on the partner organization’s letterhead and must be signed by the head of the organization, such as the executive director, president, or CEO.
- 7. Charter Schools Only: Required Fiscal Documents**  
Charter schools must submit the following fiscal documents to assist the foundation in assessing the organization’s fiscal soundness:

- Statement of activities (income statements) – past three years
- Statement of financial position (balance sheets) – past three years
- Current operating budget

Additional fiscal or operational documents may be required during review.

**F: Appendix 1: Example of how to use PEIMS data to understand exclusionary discipline levels compared to regional or district averages.**

**Step 1:** Request campus-level PEIMS discipline data from the Texas Education Agency Research and Analysis Division via email to [adhocrpt@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:adhocrpt@tea.state.tx.us) or by calling (512) 463-9234. Download the appropriate region or district report for comparison from: [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/Disciplinary\\_Data\\_Products/Disciplinary\\_Reports.html](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/Disciplinary_Reports.html)

**Step 2:** Input PEIMS data into the charts below. NOTE: Numbers in parentheses (e.g. A01) refer to specific rows within the PEIMS data reports. Reports from smaller schools/ districts may have slightly different numbering, in which case data can be placed based on matching row titles. Also, some data may be unavailable depending on the school/district, in which case alternative data sources may be explored.

**Step 3:** Make comparisons across data to describe the exclusionary discipline levels of the school. For example, compare the number of total discretionary exclusionary discipline removals to the overall discipline record count for both the campus and the region/district.

**Step 4:** If applicable, compare to other analyses completed on school data, for example examining discipline disparities based on race and special education status.

	Cumulative Year End Enrollment (A01)	Discipline Population (A02)	Discipline Record Count* (A03)
<b>Campus</b>			
<b>Region or District</b>			

<b>Mandatory Exclusionary Discipline Instances</b>				
	Mandatory Expulsions to JJAEP (B02)	Mandatory Expulsions (B05)	Mandatory DAEP Removals (B08)	Total
<b>Campus</b>				
<b>Region or District</b>				

<b>Discretionary Exclusionary Discipline Instances</b>						
	Discretionary Expulsions to JJAEP (B03)	Discretionary Expulsions (B06)	Discretionary DAEP Removals (B09)	In School Suspension (B10)	Out of School Suspension (B11)	Total
<b>Campus</b>						
<b>Region or District</b>						

\*Refers to disciplinary instances.