

New Instructional Facility Allotment (NIFA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1) What is the New Instructional Facility Allotment (NIFA) program?	1
2) What is the difference between the NIFA & IFA programs?	1
3) When can a district apply for NIFA assistance?	2
4) What are the application requirements?	2
5) What constitutes an acceptable legal document?.....	3
6) Where can I receive NIFA training?.....	3
7) The pre-populated fields in my application are incorrect; can I change them?.....	3
8) An error message says my County District Number (CDN) is not recognized; what should I do?.....	3
9) When trying to apply, an error message says my County District Number (CDN) is not recognized; what should I do?.....	3
10) How much assistance does a campus qualify for under the NIFA program?.....	4
11) How long can a district receive NIFA assistance? Can a campus apply if it missed the first year’s deadline?.....	4
12) Does an approved campus have to reapply for NIFA in its second year?.....	4
13) What should I do if I need to update my campus number or enrollment information?	4
14) When will the award be available?.....	5
15) Are there are spending requirements?.....	5
16) Why is the award different than the estimate that was provided?	5
17) After receiving funding, what else is required?	5

1) What is the New Instructional Facility Allotment (NIFA) program?

The New Instructional Facility Allotment (NIFA) is provided for operational expenses associated with the opening of a new instructional facility (campus) and is available to all public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools (hereafter “districts”) that construct new instructional facilities that meet the requirements of the statute and rules.

The TEC, §42.158, enacted by Senate Bill 4 of the 76th Texas Legislature, 1999, created the NIFA for public school districts. The legislature did not provide funding under this allotment for the 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 school years. However, funding has been made available for the 2015–2016 through 2024–2025 school years. The 85th and 86th Legislatures made changes to the statute in House Bills 1081 and 3, respectively, that are included in this document. Former section 42.158 was transferred to TEC, §48.152 via HB 3, 86th Legislature. The 88th Legislature made changes to the appropriation enacted by Senate Bill 1, which is included in this document.

2) What is the difference between the NIFA & IFA programs?

The NIFA was established by the Texas Legislature to help districts pay for the cost of equipping and furnishing new campuses. A new instructional facility is a facility that includes:

- a newly constructed instructional facility, which is a new instructional campus built from the ground up;
- a repurposed instructional facility, which is a facility that has been renovated to become an instructional facility for the first time for the applying district; or
- a leased facility operating for the first time as an instructional facility for the applying

district with a minimum lease term of not less than 10 years. The lease must not be a continuation of or renegotiation of an existing lease for an instructional facility

It cannot be used for additions to, or renovations of, an existing campus.

The Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) program provides assistance with the payment of debt for the purchase, construction, renovation, and expansion of instructional facilities. A district uses this funding to make debt service payments on qualifying bonds and lease-purchase agreements.

3) When can a district apply for NIFA assistance?

Your district can apply for the upcoming school year in the summer before a new campus opens. The deadline by rule is July 15th of each year or the next business day if July 15th falls on a weekend or holiday.

4) What are the application requirements?

The NIFA application is available online through the Foundation School Program (FSP) Payment System. All NIFA applications must be submitted through this system. A Texas Education Agency Login (TEAL) user ID and password are required to access the FSP Payment System. Announcements are sent via the State Funding Listserv when the NIFA online application becomes active. In addition, announcements are available in the NIFA module to all FSP NIFA users.

To be eligible for the NIFA the facility for which funds are requested must qualify as an instructional facility, an instructional campus, and as a new instructional facility as defined in the Commissioner's Rules. It must be used for teaching the curriculum required by Chapter 28 of the Education Code and must:

- be a newly constructed instructional facility,
- be a repurposed instructional facility, or
- be a leased facility operating for the first time as an instructional facility with a minimum lease term of not less than 10 years.

The new facility must :

- have its own unique campus ID number as designated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), an assigned administrator, enrolled students, and assigned instructional staff.
- receive federal and/or state and/or local funds as its primary support.
- be physically separate from other existing school structures; however, a covered walkway may connect the new facility to another building.

Applicants must provide information about the number of instructional days for the district, the number of instructional days for the eligible campus, the projected enrollment of the eligible campus, and the expected first and last days of instruction at the eligible campus.

In addition, applicants must submit certain required documentation with the application. Required documentation includes an actual photograph of the new campus (preferably an aerial photo of the campus or construction; NOT an architectural rendering), a copy of a legal document clearly showing the nature and dates of construction or a copy of the applicable lease, an updated site plan, a floor plan of the new campus, and, if applicable, a demolition plan

of the old campus.

5) What constitutes an acceptable legal document?

Examples of acceptable legal documents include a signed contract with the construction company or architect, a certificate of substantial completion, or a certificate of project compliance.

For leased facilities, please include an executed copy of the applicable lease.

Certificates of Occupancy, building permits, and fire inspection reports are NOT considered acceptable legal documents.

6) Where can I receive NIFA training?

For NIFA training, please visit the four-part NIFA Training Module online at:

https://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/State_Funding/Foundation_School_Program/Foundation_School_Program_System_Online_Training .

7) The pre-populated fields in my application are incorrect; can I change them?

No, these are estimates only. The actual amounts will be updated according to PEIMS data during the settle-up process.

8) An error message says my County District Number (CDN) is not recognized; what should I do?

Occasionally when an applicant inputs contact information using their web browser's Autofill function, the pre-populated CDN field is overwritten by accident. Once your application is ready, please check to make sure that the CDN in the top right corner is not overwritten before submitting.

9) What do the different statuses refer to?

In the top left corner of your application, there is a [blue link](#) after the word "Status" that users can click on. This new pop-up box displays the history of your application's status as it has progressed through the system.

There are several application statuses which denote what stage of the application process your campus is in:

- **Saved** – the application is in process at the district level or has been submitted to the District Approver for approval (Please note: the NIFA Program Administrator cannot see an application in Saved status)
- **Submitted** – the application has been submitted to TEA in FSP, and the NIFA Program Administrator can now see the application
- **Returned** – the application has been returned to the district with a request in the comment box for follow-up information to be provided

- **Returned Saved** – the NIFA User has re-submitted the application to the District Approver for approval (Please note that the District Approver still has to re-approve the application for it to be Submitted to TEA)
- **In Review** – the application is currently pending review by the NIFA Program Administrator
- **Approved** – the application has been approved for NIFA
- **Rejected** – the application has been rejected due to not meeting program requirements and should include comments explaining the reasons for rejection

10) How much assistance does a campus qualify for under the NIFA program?

For the first school year in which students occupy a new instructional facility, a district is entitled to an allotment of \$1,000 for each student in average daily attendance (ADA) at the facility. For the second school year in which students occupy that instructional facility, a district is entitled to an allotment of \$1,000 for each additional student in average daily attendance at the facility.

For purposes of this program, the number of additional students in average daily attendance at a facility is the difference between the number of students in average daily attendance in the current year at that facility and the number of students in average daily attendance at that facility in the preceding year.

11) How long can a campus receive NIFA assistance? Can a campus apply if it missed the first year's deadline?

A campus is eligible for NIFA for the first two school years it is operational. Unfortunately, there is no retroactive funding. If the deadline has passed for a campus opening this school year, it is still eligible to apply for the next year using a One-Year application type. A One-Year application allows the campus to receive funding for all the students in ADA during the second year of operation at that campus.

12) Does a district have to reapply for NIFA for an approved campus's second year?

Yes, to be considered for a second year of funding, the district must re-apply for NIFA for the campus. There is no requirement that the district must re-apply if there is no desire for further funding. However, it is strongly encouraged that districts for which initial applications are approved also re-apply before the second year of occupation, even if they are not expecting increased enrollment. The reason for this is twofold: the Follow-up application is simpler and submitting a Follow-up preserves a campus's ability to receive NIFA.

If an unforeseen event brings increased enrollment to a new campus, that campus will only be considered for NIFA if the district submitted a Follow-up application. Many campuses receive a \$0 initial estimate for their second year of operation due to a forecast of little to no enrollment growth. However, many of these same campuses also end up receiving some funding based on an increase in ADA during the second year of operation.

13) What should I do if I need to update my campus number or enrollment information?

If your application has already been processed, you should wait to update this information on the Days of Instruction Survey. If the application has not been processed yet, please reach out to the program administrator to ask if the application can still be returned to the district so that

information can be updated.

14) When will the award be available?

Once all applications have been reviewed and a determination of eligibility has been made for each, allotments will have been automatically calculated in FSP and then submitted to the Summary of Finance, usually sometime during the fall of the school year for which awards are being applied.

Awards will be distributed according to the Schedule of Monthly Foundation School Fund Transfers located in Section 48.273 of the Texas Education Code. Awards are distributed as part of the Tier I Allotment and are not separately issued payments. The NIFA award amount can be found in the Summary of Finance, line 35.

15) Are there are any spending requirements?

There are no spending requirements associated with the NIFA program. Since this allotment is intended to reimburse start-up costs incurred by districts who open new campuses, the spending of the awards is left up to the discretion of the awardee.

16) Why is the award different than the estimate that was provided?

When a district applies for NIFA funding during the summer before occupation, the allotment is based on estimates. The initial Estimated Campus Allotment is a system calculation based on prior year LPE data as well as inputs provided by the applicant such as the expected number of campus instructional days and projected campus enrollment. You may click on the Estimated Campus Allotment (blue hyperlink amount) in your application for a breakdown of this calculation.

If the total amount requested by all approved applicants does not exceed the available appropriation, allotments will be awarded at the full requested amount of \$1,000 per student in ADA (or \$1,000 per additional student in ADA for follow-up applications).

If the total amount requested by all approved applicants exceeds the available appropriation, allotments will be automatically prorated by the FSP system on an equal basis.

17) After receiving funding, what else is required?

For all districts receiving the NIFA, a settle-up amount is determined when final counts of ADA as reported through the PEIMS are available for each campus. Districts will be required to complete a Days of Instruction Survey in the fall following each school year that NIFA funding is received. This survey is used to determine final allotments and is used in conjunction with actual PEIMS ADA numbers to determine the final allotments earned.