**Cecile Erwin Young, Executive Commissioner**

**Request for Applications (RFA)**
**for**
**2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network Operations**
**RFA No. HHS0009792**

**Exhibit G – Emergency Services and Escalation Centers Grant Requirements**

# 1 Emergency Services and Escalation Centers Overview

As shown in **Exhibit A, Grant Requirements**, AICs must have the demonstrated capacity to implement and follow the *AIC Emergency Management Protocols* during disasters or other events that have the potential to or have resulted in property damage, deaths, and/or injuries in Texas communities. However, additional capacity is needed to ensure a fully optimized disaster and event response that aligns with the Governor's Homeland Security Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 to provide hazard and emergency information to the public. As a result, HHSC/TIRN will contract with three AICs to serve as Emergency Services and Escalation Centers (ESECs) to provide expanded disaster-related activities that include:

A. Disaster/event monitoring
B. Network communication
C. Resource management
D. Additional human resource capacity for responding to disasters/events
E. Year-round registration assistance enrolling customers into the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)

ESECs play key roles in disaster/event-related situations by quickly ramping up to increase their call handling capacity and to provide 24-hour services. As part of this RFP, additional funding will be awarded to multiple successful Applicants that demonstrate the capacity to conduct the AIC operations described in **Exhibit A, Grant Requirements**, as well as the additional capacity necessary to perform the functions of an ESEC. Applicants that choose to apply to be an ESEC do not have to maintain a 24/7 contact center operation during non-disaster/event periods; however, they must demonstrate the capacity to provide 24/7 services during a disaster/event, as well as the other services set forth in the following sections.

Applicants applying to become an ESEC must create and submit **Attachment B, Narrative Proposal for ESEC**, as well as **Exhibit H-1, Expenditure Proposal Template for Emergency Services and Escalation Centers**, for the proposed ESEC. Applicants applying to become an ESEC must also have applied to become an AIC. ESEC applications received that do not include a separate AIC application will not be evaluated or considered for award. (Note: STEAR assistance is part of the standard ESEC services and involves assisting customers by phone. The additional STEAR assistance includes assisting customers by phone, fax, and email. See Section 2.1.4.1, STEAR Program, for additional information.)

# 2 ESEC OPERATIONS

## 2.1 Infrastructure, Staffing, and Service Provision

ESECs must have the capacity to "ramp-up" to 24-hour operations within a period of time not to exceed four (4) hours or as directed by HHSC/TIRN. This requires expanded infrastructure, staffing, and service capabilities to ensure an effective emergency response. The Applicant must explain in its ESEC plan how it will meet the following requirements.

### 2.1.1 Infrastructure Requirements

The Applicant must describe its qualifications to:

A. Provide physical facilities and necessary technology hardware/software to house a minimum of 20 additional volunteer staff simultaneously at any given point during activation. These volunteer staff are in addition to regular AIC staff.

B. Coordinate with the other ESECs to ramp up to 24-hour operations in four hours or less, or as directed by HHSC/TIRN staff. ESECs must maintain a single shared email address that automatically forwards important information to all Emergency Management Coordinators and active managers.

C. Provide Emergency Management Coordinators and AIC management 24-hour access to email and phone communications.

D. Adhere to *AIC Emergency Management Protocols* and all other manuals and protocols as directed by HHSC/TIRN.

E. Coordinate Federal Emergency Management Agency (**FEMA**) training for new hires and assure completion within 30 business days of hire date.

### 2.1.2 Staffing Requirements

Adequate and trained staff are critical to an ESEC's ability to respond to disaster events. The Successful Applicant must demonstrate the capacity to:

A. Add 240 hours of contact specialist staff time per day, as needed and directed by HHSC. The additional contact specialist capacity must be added within a period of time not to exceed four hours or as directed by HHSC.

B. Maintain a pool of at least 20 trained volunteer staff to take calls during a disaster event. These individuals are in addition to the AIC's regular I&R contact specialist staff and must have the minimal skills necessary to respond to a disaster-related inquiry and accurately record call data as per requirements. Procedures for recruiting and training volunteers must be included in the ESEC plan.

C. Ensure the ESEC's Resource Manager has the training and skills needed to oversee database-wide functions in order assist and support local Resource Managers during a disaster/event. The ESEC must designate at least one resource management backup in the event that key staff are unable to perform the required duties.

D. Maintain compliance with the FEMA guidelines for National Incident Management System (**NIMS**) / Incident Command Structure (ICS) training as shown below. (Note: the ICS-100 and IS-700 training courses are standard requirements for all AICs.)

| Staff Position | Required Training(s) |
|---|---|
| Program Director | IS-700, IS-800, ICS-100, ICS-200, and ICS-300 |
| Contact Center Manager | IS-700, ICS-100, and ICS-200 |
| Emergency Management Coordinator | IS-700, IS-800, ICS-100, ICS-200, ICS-300, IS-42, and IS-244 |
| Resource Manager | IS-700, ICS-100, IS-42, and IS-244 |
| I&R Contact Specialist | ICS-100 |

| Training Course | Description |
|---|---|
| ICS-100 – Introduction to the Incident Command System (Required for all AICs) | Covers the principles and basic structure of ICS, its functional areas, staff roles, and the relationship between ICS and NIMS |
| ICS-200 – Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response | A review of the ICS, including the context for ICS within initial response. Supports higher level ICS training. |
| ICS-300 – Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents | Provides training and resources for personnel who require advanced knowledge and application of the ICS. This course expands upon information covered in the ICS-100 and ICS-200 courses |
| IS-42 – Social Media in Emergency Management | Provides best practices including tools, techniques, and a basic roadmap to build capabilities in the use of social media technologies by emergency management organizations to further their emergency response missions. |
| IS-244 – Developing and Managing Volunteers | Provides strategies for identifying, recruiting, assigning, training, supervising, and motivating volunteers before, during, and after a severe emergency or major disaster. |
| IS-700 – National Incident Management System, An Introduction (Required for all AICs) | Provides an overview of NIMS, including key concepts and principles, resource management, ICS organizational structures, communication standards and formats, interconnectivity of disaster agencies, and emergency operations functions. |
| IS-800 – National Response Framework, An Introduction | Introduces the concepts and principles of the National Response Framework and the ways it is applied in actual response situations. |

### 2.1.3 Emergency Management Staff and Required Partnerships

Grantees must designate two staff who will function as Emergency Management Coordinators during a disaster/event. One coordinator will be designated as primary and the other as back-up, and both must be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Emergency Management Coordinators will coordinate communications between the AIC and HHSC/TIRN, designated AIC ESECs, the statewide AIC network, and local and state emergency management organizations.

Grantees must develop and maintain professional relationships through formal agreements with the following emergency management organizations in the contracted region:

A. Local Offices of Emergency Management (OEM) (contact the city and/or county government offices in the AIC region);
B. Local public health entities; and (see https://www.dshs.texas.gov/regions/lhds.shtm);
C. Disaster District Coordinators (see https://tdem.texas.gov/field-response/);
D. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) (see https://www.txvoad.org/)
E. American Red Cross chapters within the AIC region (see https://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter.html)
F. Other emergency and relief operations partners, as appropriate and/or required by HHSC/TIRN.

Formal agreements with these entities must outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties and be made available to HHSC/TIRN upon request.

### 2.1.4 Service Provision

Please provide in **Attachment B, Narrative Proposal for ESEC** a demonstrated capacity to provide the following services before, during, and after a disaster/emergency event:

A. Emergency management operations on a rotating schedule of 10 days on, 20 days off, in which the ESEC will be on call and available to serve 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as directed by HHSC/TIRN.

B. Statewide weather and disaster/emergency event monitoring and network communication.

C. I&R and resource management functions on behalf of AICs impacted by a disaster/emergency and unable to perform these functions.

D. Oversight for resource database-wide functions for disasters/emergencies, as directed in the *AIC Emergency Management Protocols*.

E. Collection of emergency management-related I&R and dissemination to the network.

F. Year-round registration assistance for the STEAR program. (See the following section for additional detail on this requirement.)

#### 2.1.4.1 STEAR Program

The STEAR program is a free registry that provides additional information to local emergency planners and emergency responders regarding prospective evacuation needs in their communities. The registry is intended for individuals with disabilities and those with access and functional issues that may include:

- Limited mobility
- Communication barriers
- Additional medical assistance needs
- Transportation assistance needs
- Personal care assistance needs

Individuals that choose to register must provide their name, address, phone number, and primary language. To ensure vital information is captured for emergency planners and responders, individuals may be asked additional questions pertaining to:

- Emergency contact information
- Caregiver information
- Pets
- Transportation assistance for home evacuation
- Communication barriers
- Disability, functional or medical needs

Registry in STEAR is voluntary and all information provided by customers is kept completely confidential.

Applicants must indicate in their ESEC plan in **Attachment B, Narrative Proposal for ESEC**, which of the following levels of STEAR service to be offered:

- Standard STEAR Service – Trained I&R Contact Specialists assist individuals over the phone to register in STEAR.
- Enhanced STEAR Service – Trained I&R Contact Specialists assist individuals over the phone to register in STEAR, as well as via fax and email.

Additionally, all ESECs are responsible for ensuring their staff receive STEAR training provided by HHSC/TIRN.