

Short-Term Certificate Grant Program – Application

Short-Term Certificate Grant Program Application Release: August 20, 2021 Application Due: September 20, 2021

I. Program Purpose

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) will distribute award funding for need-based financial aid students who are enrolled in a state supported community college, state community college, technical college, or an Ohio Technical Center in a program that may be completed in less than one year and for which a certificate or industry-recognized credential is awarded in an in-demand job as determined by a local and regional needs assessment.

The investments will support the ability of the state of Ohio to retain and expand existing businesses, attract new investments and talent, and further entrepreneurship.

II. Eligible Applicants, Certificates, Students, and Expenses

- A. ODHE will distribute funds to a state supported community college, state community college, technical college, or an Ohio Technical Center.
 - 1. Awards will be issued directly to the institutions. Institutions will credit funds to the student's account.
 - 2. The funds must be used by the institution to make grant awards to eligible students.
 - 3. Eligible students are students enrolled in a qualifying short-term certificate program who meet need-based financial aid criterion.
 - 4. The funds must be used only to support awards to eligible in-state students.
- B. Qualifying short-term certificates can be earned in less than one year (less than 30 semester hours or less than 900 clock hours) that leads to a credential (e.g. certificate, certification or license) required to qualify for an in-demand job in the institution's region.
 - 1. Courses are required for the short-term certificate.
- C. Qualifying short-term certificates can be Pell eligible.
- D. Grant funds cover tuition and approved fees only.
 - 1. Fees – those already in place where the amount charged relates to the costs of services for the approved short-term certificate.
- E. Maximum award – up to \$2,000 per short-term certificate.
 - 1. A student may receive up to 3 awards for different short-term certificates. The student must successfully complete one short-term certificate before receiving an award for another short-term certificate.

III. Project Term

The work covered by the grant will begin in January 2022 and continue through December 30, 2023, with a final grant and expense report due in June 2024. A desk and/or site audit will occur prior to the final closeout of the grant (24 months).

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IV. Anticipated Institutional Awards

The funds will support awards made by eligible institutions to eligible students completing a qualifying short-term certificate for an in-demand job. ODHE will make final award allocation determinations based on the number of community colleges and OTCs that submit eligible applications. ODHE will take into consideration applicant's past performance with the Short-Term Certificate Grant Program, as applicable. The source of funding for this program is House Bill 110 of the 134th General Assembly.

V. Proposal Review Process and Timeline

ODHE staff will initially screen proposals for completeness. Any deficiencies must be addressed by the applicant within a time set by the Chancellor's staff.

- A. Accepted proposals will be evaluated by ODHE following the rubric approved by the Chancellor.
- B. The schedule below may be revised by the Chancellor due to circumstances; any changes will be communicated to the applicants.
 - 1. Release of Application – August 20, 2021
 - 2. Proposals Due – September 20, 2021
 - 3. Review & Evaluation of Proposals – September-October 2021
 - 4. Chancellor's Award Decisions – November 2021
 - 5. Grant Agreement Preparation and Execution – November-December 2021
 - 6. Funds Disbursed to Applicants – December 2021-January 2022
 - 7. Grant starts – January 2022
 - 8. Grant ends – December 30, 2023

NOTE: ODHE staff will host a webinar shortly after the release of the application to walk through the RFP.

VI. Proposal Submission

Applicants are responsible for timely submissions of proposals. Proposals become property of the Chancellor and are subject to public record laws of the state. Proposals containing all the required elements will receive careful consideration but cannot be guaranteed funding. The Chancellor will provide an opportunity for potential applicants to seek assistance regarding their application through the submittal of questions to shortterm@highered.ohio.gov by September 13, 2021. Responses to questions will be posted online at <https://www.ohiohighered.org/short-term-certificate-grant-program> to provide the information to interested parties. Additional assistance may be requested from ODHE via phone or e-mail.

- A. Proposals must be received by 3:00pm on September 20, 2021 and must be submitted in the following manner:
 - 1. One electronic PDF file sent electronically to shortterm@highered.ohio.gov.

VII. Proposal Contact

Any questions or concerns regarding this application should be sent to Dr. Lauri White, Associate Vice Chancellor, Workforce Engagement, at 614-644-5888 or lwhite@highered.ohio.gov.

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VIII. Proposal Format

A. Proposals must include the following elements:

1. Maximum length is 10 pages, including cover letter, executive summary, regional needs, and marketing plan. Arial font – 10-point minimum, double spaced is allowed.
 - a. **Cover Letter (one page):** Identify the primary contact who will oversee and administer the program by name, title, address, phone number, and email address. Identify the fiscal agent by name, title, phone number and email address.
 - b. **Executive Summary (one page maximum):** Explain how the proposed short-term certificate(s) address the program goals as outlined in Section I, Program Purpose.
 - c. **Regional Needs:** Include a 2-3 page regional needs statement with data referencing how the proposed short-term certificate(s) supports local in-demand jobs.
 - d. **Short-Term Certificate Program Information:** Complete the Short-Term Certificate Program Information Excel worksheet for all short-term certificate(s) seeking assistance.
 - i. Template available at <https://www.ohiohighered.org/short-term-certificate-grant-program>.
 - e. **Marketing Plan:** Describe how the institution will market this scholarship opportunity to current and prospective students. Supportive documentation may include screenshots or links to social media, copies of collateral, outreach plans to specific locations and groups, visuals or informational brochures, and alumni engagement. Identify efforts that the institution will take to retain and complete students. Please identify staff that will lead this marketing effort.
 - f. **Exhibits:** (All forms can be found at <https://www.ohiohighered.org/short-term-certificate-grant-program>)
 - i. Cover page and snapshot; list of certificates and program cost.
 - g. **For existing Short-Term Certificate grantees:** Please report current fund balance as of August 20, 2021 for any of the following short-term certificate grants received, as applicable.
 - i. Short-Term Certificate
 - ii. Foster Youth Grant
 - iii. Finish for Your Future Adult Learner Grant

IX. Reporting Requirements

ODHE will monitor each initiative for which an award is granted to ensure that there is fiscal accountability, operating progress, and that the desired outcomes are achieved. Regular reports will be required from all awardees. All awardees will submit the required data and metrics, expenditures, and briefings of project milestones and success stories.

- A. Describe how the institution plans to gather and analyze program data.
- B. Identify what, if any, additional data points will be monitored and how that data will be used.
- C. Discuss how any challenges that emerge will be (a) identified and (b) addressed.

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- D. Data for the following reports will be collected:
1. Fund Balance Updates – Due quarterly.
 2. Semi-Annual Metrics
 3. Annual Metrics.
- E. Metrics and financials to be collected and reported by an institution will include the following.
1. Fiscal Report.
 2. Description of activities and achievements for each short-term certificate receiving grant support.
 - a. Number of students receiving assistance.
 - i. Total dollars provided to students.
 - ii. Demographic data.
 - Such as age, race, sex, and residency status.
 - b. Number of students completing each short-term certificate program.
 - i. Demographic data.
 3. Other metrics as determined by the Chancellor.
 4. Additional narrative questions.

X. Legal Notices

The applicant understands that if its application is accepted by the State, the applicant shall enter into an agreement with the State governing the use of the awarded funds. Such funding will not be provided until all statutory provisions under the Ohio Revised Code, including Section 126.07, have been complied with and until such time as all necessary funds are made available and forthcoming from appropriate state agencies. The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the conduct of the work hereunder.

The State reserves the right to fund any application in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to require new applications from interested parties, to reject any or all applications responding to this announcement, or to reissue the announcement if it is determined that it is in the best interest of the State of Ohio. Issuing this announcement does not bind the State to making any awards. The State reserves the right to adjust the dates for this announcement for whatever reasons are deemed appropriate. The State reserves the right to waive any non-substantive infractions made by an applicant, provided that the applicant cures such infraction upon request.

All costs incurred in preparation of an application shall be borne by the applicant. Application preparation costs are not recoverable under an award. The State of Ohio shall not contribute in any way to recovering the costs of application preparation.

The funding decisions are final. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application(s) at the conclusion of the review process.

The applicant understands that the information provided herein is intended solely to assist the applicant in submittal preparation. To the best of the State's knowledge, the information provided is accurate. However, the State does not warrant such accuracy, and any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this solicitation. Interested parties bear the sole responsibility of obtaining the necessary information to submit a qualifying application. The State retains the right to modify or

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withdraw this solicitation at any time. By submitting an application, applicants expressly agree to these terms.

XI. Trade Secrets

All applicants are strongly discouraged from including in a proposal any information that the applicant considers to be a “trade secret,” as that term is defined in Section 1333.61(D) of the Ohio Revised Code. All information submitted in response to this application is public information unless a statutory exception exists that exempts it from public release under the Ohio Public Records Act in Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code.

If any information in the proposal is to be treated as a trade secret, the proposal must:

- a. Identify each and every occurrence of the information within the proposal with an asterisk before and after each line containing trade secret information and underline the trade secret information itself;
- b. Identify that the proposal contains trade secret information in the cover letter; and
- c. Include a summary page immediately after the cover letter that lists each page in the proposal that includes trade secret information and the number of occurrences of trade secret information on that page.
- d. To determine what qualifies as trade secret information, refer to the definition of “trade secret” in the Ohio Revised Code at 1333.61(D), which is reproduced below for reference:
(D) “Trade Secret” means information, including the whole or any portion or phase of any scientific or technical information, design, process, procedure, formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or improvement, or any business information or plans, financial information, or listing of names, addresses, or telephone numbers that satisfies both of the following:
 - (1) It derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use.
 - (2) It is the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy.
- a. The Ohio Department of Higher Education requires non-disclosure agreements from all non-ODHE individuals who may have access to proposals containing trade secret information, including evaluators.