CHOOSE OHIO FIRST – FY2023 RFP

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a webinar or additional information about this RFP available?
A webinar is scheduled for 1:30 PM on September 13, 2022. The link to access the meeting, and the recording of the presentation will be posted with the Grantee Resources on the Choose Ohio First Website: https://www.ohiohighered.org/cof/resources.

This is our college's first application but there are other units in our university that have applied and will reapply this year. Do we submit our applications together or separately?
Only one application from each institution will be considered for funding. Colleges and departments within the institution must work together to develop a unified application.

May an institution that received a previous Choose Ohio First award submit a proposal?
Yes, an institution that received a previous award is eligible to apply for the FY23 Choose Ohio First (COF) program. The FY23 COF program expands the commitment of the Governor and Chancellor to develop Ohio’s STEM talent pipeline.

Would a proposal for the FY23 RFP need to contain different CIP codes than other COF grants at the same institution from previous funding rounds?
No.

Is an applicant able to resubmit a large portion of our proposal from a past proposal with some modifications?
The RFP provides instructions for what is required in each proposal. It is up the institution to determine how the information in the proposal is developed and presented. ODHE encourages previous applicants to review, reflect, and revise previous materials to ensure the institution prepares a competitive and complete proposal based on this RFP, current conditions, lessons learned from previous COF programs, and data.

Please note: section VII Proposal Review Process and Timeline in the RFP specifies the requirements of a complete proposal. Incomplete proposals may delay the review process or result in the proposal not being reviewed.

Should a proposal identify various individuals who will lead specific efforts associated with the proposal? Should resumes or contact information be included?
The names and titles of the individuals leading the recruitment and enrollment efforts and the student support efforts should be included in the respective narrative sections and as an attachment as noted in the RFP. The narrative section should also provide information about the strategy and coordination of these efforts across the institution and in coordination with the institution’s Choose Ohio First program leaders. Resumes do not need to be included.

Each applicant must also complete tabs 2-4 in the FY23 RFP Excel Application Form. There are three pages in this workbook, one of which is a contact list for your Choose Ohio First program. Please refer to the instructions for more information.
Could you explain the types of data and demographic information you’re looking for in the recruitment section?
The COF program emphasizes recruitment of underrepresented populations in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics or science, technology, engineering, or STEM education. A complete response may include data and demographic information about goals the institution has for recruiting underrepresented populations in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields and STEM education and how successful the institution has been in meeting those goals. It may also complement campus enrollment strategies and outreach underway to connect the institution to traditional and non-traditional students as well as locations and secondary schools the institution plans to target for potential Choose Ohio First students. The selected data would help ODHE understand how the institution developed its COF recruiting plan and goals.

Is a school able to start the FY23 program in the summer semester?
Yes. The summer semester is the beginning of the academic year for the Choose Ohio First program. If your institution is awarded funds from the FY23 round, it can recruit scholars to start in the summer after Controlling Board approval.

Is it a requirement to start to welcome recruited students for summer or fall 2023?
Yes, ODHE expects grantees to award COF funds each academic year beginning with 2023-24, starting in either summer or fall per the institution’s recruitment cycle and academic programs. Proposals should provide information to support this schedule. Applicants may use COF dollars to recruit incoming or transfer students (such as students who have not declared a major or students majoring in non-STEM fields) into STEM programs. If institutions do not award scholarships in the first academic year of the grant, the annual allocation for that academic year will go unutilized, as it does not carry over across academic years.

Could you please provide a definition of a work-based learning experience?
The passage of House Bill 110 resulted in several changes to the Choose Ohio First (COF) program, effective September 30, 2021. The most notable change is that work-based learning (WBL) is now required for all Choose Ohio First Scholars, as indicated in ORC 3333.64, “All students receiving a Choose Ohio First scholarship shall be involved in work-based learning through a co-op; internship; experience in a university, college, or private laboratory; or other work-based learning experience.” The legislation requires work-based learning not only for future COF Scholars, but also for current Scholars receiving funding through previously awarded grants, including the FY22 Grant, the FY21 Grant, the FY19 Computer Science Grant, and continuing students in the FY16 Completion Grants.

The inclusion of other work-based learning experiences as eligible experiences affords institutions the flexibility to devise WBL experiences that complement the Scholar’s academic program and professional experience. as interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with a given career field. The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) recognizes the work-based experiences will vary by institution and program, and possibly by student. COF WBL experiences should be:
• Distinct – A specific activity with outcomes
• Complementary – Helps students build on their coursework and move toward a career
• Supplementary – Occurs outside regular coursework and assignments
• Documented – Grantee documents the experience

Do work-based experiences need to be new, or can we use existing experiences that our university already uses?  
Work based learning experiences can be those already in place at the university or college.

Two of our STEM programs (bioscience and graphic design) have co-op/internship experiences built into their curriculum. The student has to take these courses in order to graduate. Would this count as work-based learning?  
Yes, co-op/internship experiences meet the work-based learning requirement.

Does clinical time count for work-based learning?  
Yes. The types of allowable work-based learning experiences include clinical experiences in healthcare fields as well as student teaching.

Programs that intend to use clinical experiences to satisfy the work-based learning requirement are encouraged to also provide Scholars with opportunities to develop career skills that can occur prior to clinicals. Examples include:

• Volunteering in a healthcare setting
• Part-time employment during academic breaks in a variety of healthcare settings
• Multiple informational interviews of professionals in the chosen field
• Job shadowing administrative functions within a healthcare system or a school

Can students complete the work-based learning experience at any time before they graduate?  
Yes, the work-based learning experience may occur any time before a Choose Ohio First (COF) student graduates.

If a COF student is working full time while in school, is a work-based learning experience at their current place of employment acceptable or will they need to work at another site?  
A student’s current employment may meet the work-based learning experience if the employer and student, with institutional support and approval, can create a distinct opportunity that complements their program of study, degree, or certificate. The opportunity would have learning outcomes and be able to be documented by the institution.

Can the time spent on reporting and data maintenance count towards in-kind match?  
Yes, staff time, salary, and benefits, spent on reporting and documented may count towards in-kind match.

Is it permitted for the same academic program to appear in both a lead application and in a collaboration proposal?
Yes, an institution may submit the same academic program as a part of its own proposal and as a collaboration with other colleges and universities.

When and how did graduate students become eligible for Choose Ohio First scholarships?
Effective September 30, 2021, ORC 3333.61 states, “The Choose Ohio First scholarship program shall assign a number of scholarships to state universities and colleges to recruit Ohio residents as undergraduate or graduate students in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, or in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics education.”

Can you describe how to utilize the CIP list provided by ODHE?
The COF CIP list categorizes majors by either “All Levels,” which means institutions can provide scholarships to students of all levels such as certificates and all degree programs, or “Graduate and Above,” which means only graduate-level programs are eligible for COF scholarships.

Where can I learn more about student eligibility and reporting requirements?

Where can I learn more about Choose Ohio First’s cohort model?
The Cohort Model Guidance Memo and a webinar recording explaining the guidance in that memo are available on our Grantee Resources page: https://www.ohiohighered.org/cof/resources.