



Lumina Adult Promise 2018 Finalist Formal Proposal Form

Adult students' success is critical to the achievement of [Lumina's goal](#) of increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. After all, nearly 40 percent of [today's students](#) are older than 25, more than a quarter are raising children, and 58 percent are working while enrolled. But too many institutional and state systems are not designed to meet their needs. Lumina Foundation is eager to work with a new group of states to address these gaps.

Since 2016, Lumina Foundation has supported the [Adult Promise Initiative](#) through grants to states working to improve postsecondary attainment by making clear financial commitments and providing other supports to adult students. The first cohort of states is supported in partnership with State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and includes Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Washington. These states are pairing a clear financial promise to adult students with communication strategies and student services such as coaching, recognition of prior learning, and guided degree pathways. These statewide campaigns, tailored to their own unique contexts and talent needs, all work towards the common goal of increasing adult postsecondary attainment. We look forward to adding a new cohort of states in 2018 and to engaging with other states through future convenings and other types of support.

Thank you for your interest in applying to join the second cohort of "Adult Promise" states supported by Lumina Foundation – and congratulations on being invited to submit this formal proposal! The formal proposal form starts on the following page.

This form and accompanying budget form should be sent electronically to AdultPromise@luminafoundation.org by 3 pm EDT on August 15, 2018. We expect to make grant awards in September 2018.

Section I: Organization Information

Submission Date: 8/15/2018

Legal Name of Organization/Fiscal Agent (as it appears on the IRS tax-exempt letter): State of Ohio

Mailing Address: 25 South Front Street, Columbus, OH 43215

Common Name of Organization (if different from above): Ohio Department of Higher Education

Requesting Organization (if different from above):

Mailing Address: 25 South Front Street, Columbus, OH 43215

Street Address (if different from above):

Organization IRS-Issued Employer Identification Number (EIN): 311334820

Web site: <https://www.ohiohighered.org/>

Fiscal Agent’s annual operating budget: State of Ohio Fiscal Year 2019 budget \$67,086,725,775

Subsidiary’s annual operating budget (if applicable): ODHE Fiscal Year 2019 budget \$2,648,693,703

Purpose Statement of proposed project (one sentence): Through *Finish for your Future*, ODHE has established a goal to increase the proportion of adults over age 25 in public higher education from the current 27 percent to at least 40 percent by 2025.

Does any portion of this work involve lobbying? Yes No Advocacy? Yes No

Proposed project start date and end date

Total amount requested: \$ 400,000 over 21 months (duration in months)

PROPOSAL CONTACTS

Project Director

Name: Brett Visger

Title: Associate Vice Chancellor, Institutional Collaboration and Completion

Telephone: 614-752-9483

Fax: 614-466-5866

E-mail: bvisger@highered.ohio.gov

Address (if different from above):

Who has legal authority to execute a grant agreement on behalf of your organization?

Name: John Carey

Title: Chancellor

Telephone: 614-995-7754

Fax: 614-466-5866

E-mail: jcarey@highered.ohio.gov

Address (if different from above):

Financial Contact

Name: Dawn Gatterdam

Title: Director, Capital Planning

Telephone: 614-466-2574

Fax: 614-466-5866

E-mail: dgatterdam@highered.ohio.gov

Address (if different from above):

Communication/Public Relations Contact

Name: Jeff Robinson

Title: Director of Communications

Telephone: 614-752-9487

Fax: 614-466-5866

E-mail: jrobinson@highered.ohio.gov

Address (if different from above):

Other Contact, if appropriate:

Name: Stephanie Davidson

Title: Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs

Telephone: 614-728-1904

Fax: 614-466-5866

E-mail: sdavidson@highered.ohio.gov

Address (if different from above):

Section II: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Lumina Foundation is interested in engaging partners and organizations that proactively contribute to the core principles of Lumina’s Equity Imperative and Goal 2025. The ideal partner would demonstrate a commitment to racial and ethnic equity as reflected:

- In values and/or mission;
- In language expressed through organizational products and tools;
- In demonstration of populations or clients served; and
- As evidenced through diversity of the organization’s team and leadership.

Please complete the following information [*using raw numbers, not percentages*] for:

- The parent organization (e.g., college/university, organizational headquarters); and
- Target adult student population in the state that would be served by this grant (estimates are fine)

	Organization*	Target adult student population**
Total number of:		
Women:	52	1650649
Men:	26	1585917
White, Non-Hispanic/Latino:	57	2660457
Black, Non-Hispanic/Latino:	16	417517
Hispanic/Latino:	2	122990
Asian:	3	74441
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander:	0	3237
American Indian or Alaskan Native:	0	9710
Multiracial or other:	0	74441

*Includes Ohio Articulation and Transfer Network controlled by the Chancellor and housed in our offices.

**Difficult to estimate because of multiple activities of the grant, current numbers are statewide from 2016 American Community Survey of adults aged 25 - 64 with Some College, No Degree and HS graduates. Communications efforts will reach a very broad audience, but not necessarily statewide. 5 pilot sites are not yet selected and may vary in size, population, and racial diversity. Effective pools of eligible students likely to be much smaller.

Prefer not to answer

TARGET POPULATIONS SERVED

Please indicate the top three (3) target populations your organization/institution serves. We strongly encourage applicants to target at least one equity population.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults (required) | <input type="checkbox"/> Low-Income | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Returning Adults |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> African Americans | <input type="checkbox"/> Males/Age Unspecified | <input type="checkbox"/> Students –General |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Displaced Workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Military/Veterans | <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer Students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Females/Age Unspecified | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Americans | <input type="checkbox"/> Underserved Students |

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Generation Students | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-track Adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth and Adolescents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latinos | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity Youth | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>(please explain)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrants/New
Comers/Refugees | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor/Economically
Challenged, Indigent,
General | |

Section III: Proposal Narrative

Purpose Statement

Ohio is committed to providing affordable and equitable educational opportunities to adult students; *Finish for your Future* establishes the goal to increase the proportion of adults over age 25 enrolled in public higher education from the current 27 percent to at least 40 percent by 2025.

Interest in serving adult students by applying state organization(s)

Ohio has established an attainment goal that 65 percent of Ohioans, ages 25-64, will have a degree, certificate or other postsecondary workforce credential of value in the workplace by 2025; at present, Ohio is at 44.1%¹. If we are to reach this goal and develop the talent needed by employers, the number of Ohioans earning postsecondary credentials must dramatically increase. Demographic projections estimate that Ohio will face a decline in the number of high school graduates in coming years.² Yet Ohio has 3.7 million adults between the ages of 25 and 64 who do not have a postsecondary credential.³ Ohio must, therefore, implement a strategy to help more adults enroll in – and complete – some form of postsecondary education. Toward that end, Ohio has been promoting adult learner efforts explicitly embedded within a series of tactical initiatives, but views the Adult Promise Initiative as an opportunity to coalesce existing initiatives into a strategic whole. Ohio proposes the launch of *Finish for your Future* to brand efforts and leverage policy and practice improvement to increase credential completion for adult learners.

Of the nearly 470,000 students enrolled in Ohio’s public postsecondary institutions in 2017, close to 27% are adults over age 25. Following the Great Recession, the proportion of adult students enrolling in postsecondary education and training has been in decline; in the five-year period between AY2011 to 2016, adult enrollment has declined by nearly one-third⁴. ODHE is concerned by this enrollment trend among adult learners and is committed to establishing a goal that adults over age 25 will make up at least 40% of public higher education enrollments and completions by 2025. Additionally, Ohio will strive to close the equity gaps between underrepresented minorities and with adults in enrollment and completion. *Finish for your*

¹ Lumina Foundation. 2018. A Stronger Nation, OH report. <http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2018/#state/OH>

² Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. 2013. Knocking at the College Door. <http://www.wiche.edu/info/knocking-8th/profiles/oh.pdf>

³ Note: An estimated 7 percent of the people in Some College, No Degree category have earned a postsecondary certificate with transparent labor market value. These nearly 100,000 students have earned a postsecondary credential, but the current US Census categories don’t reflect that. For purposes of this letter of interest, we changed the totals without postsecondary credentials to reflect those estimates.

⁴ Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2017. Headcount Enrollment by Student Level and Age.

[https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/data/statistical-profiles/enrollment/HC campus by student type%20and%20age_07-16.pdf](https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/data/statistical-profiles/enrollment/HC%20campus%20by%20student%20type%20and%20age_07-16.pdf)

Future will establish this goal and provide the resources to tangibly improve policy and practice in serving adult learners in Ohio.

Finish for Your Future provides an opportunity to build upon established initiatives and create a strategic framework to advance improvement of adult learner outcomes. It will utilize three major components: Engagement; Strategic Communication; and Capacity-Building. The **Engagement Phase** is intended to purposefully launch *Finish for Your Future*; this would involve a convening in fall 2018 to launch the initiative by bringing together stakeholders and public institutions in Ohio to establish our goal, raise awareness of the importance of purposefully serving adults, promote successful models, and engage institutions in self-assessment in their capacity to serve adults. The **Strategic Communication Phase** requires the development of collateral and messaging that can be promoted statewide; messaging would be targeted and strive to serve two purposes: 1) Increase the awareness of the importance of adults returning to earn postsecondary credentials; and 2) Reach adults who would be ideal to pursue postsecondary credentials. The **Capacity-Building Phase** will be a pilot process that works with five public postsecondary institutions or regional collaborative partnerships. Five Capacity-Building grantees will receive a \$50,000 grant that builds on a strength or addresses a capacity gap.

Project Design

1. Financial commitment to adults.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education is demonstrating clear financial commitment to adult learners for the launch of *Finish for your Future* in FY 19 by dedicating \$100,000 of general revenue funds to the initiative infrastructure, \$500,000 as direct need-based scholarship support to adult students in short-term certificate programs that lead to in-demand jobs, as well as in-kind staffing and infrastructure support. The \$500,000 need-based scholarship support for adults in short-term certificate programs will support 500 scholarships of \$1000 and can be applied to remove barriers to adult enrollment and success. This pilot funding will be used as a proof-of-concept and evaluated for expansion in subsequent biennial budgets. These resources will be distributed through institutions participating in the AL 360 evaluation and engagement phase.

In addition to direct support for *Finish for you Future*, Ohio demonstrates significant financial commitment to adults in other budget lines. Ohio's outcomes-based funding formula includes funding weights for key populations to address equity gaps necessary to reach the attainment goal; special weights apply to populations of adults, low-income students, underprepared students, and students of color. In FY17, equity weights resulted in the distribution of \$161 million to Ohio's public colleges and universities.

In an existing adult-focused that operates essentially like a promise program, the Ohio Department of Education has partnered with public community colleges and Ohio Technical Centers to offer the [Adult Diploma Program](#) (ADP); students are awarded a high school diploma AND postsecondary industry credentials aligned to one of Ohio's in-demand jobs. ADP is

available at no cost to the returning adult student. Ohio invested \$2.6 million in this program in FY18.

2. Equity focus.

Closing equity gaps is a critical focus of ODHE's efforts to reach our attainment goal and will also be critical to the success of *Finish for your Future*. ODHE plans to have an equity focus woven throughout all stages of the initiative. The metrics for *Finish for your Future* will include process and outcome measures related to closing equity gaps. During the Engagement Phase of *Finish for your Future*, convenings, technical assistance, and working groups will all support the equity imperative. Strategic communications tools will include messaging, dissemination and focus to engage equity populations. In the Capacity-Building Phase, five sites will be selected for \$50,000 grants each through a competitive RFP process; part of this RFP will require institutions or regional collaboratives to articulate strategies about how they will close equity gaps among adults and measure their success. Finally, the five pilot sites will be required to send teams to participate in an equity forum and training; the purpose of this forum will be to engage institutional representatives in equity issues to improve outcomes. ODHE will use a competitive RFP process to select the facilitators for the equity forum and training.

3. State readiness.

Ohio has long been interested in and committed to promoting access and success for adult learners. To that end, Ohio has built and strengthened several initiatives targeting adult learner success. These include:

- [Adult learners](#) was the topic of the Report on the Condition of Higher Education by the Ohio Board of Regents in 2015 and identified Ohio's strengths in serving adult students as well as made recommendations for future action. This report informed the proposed actions in *Finish for Your Future*.
- More options for high school equivalency to open the path toward postsecondary credentials. ODHE has rebranded and strengthened Adult Basic Education to [Aspire](#). ODE has implemented [ADP](#) mentioned above, the [22 Plus program](#), and authorized more [high school equivalency exams](#).
- [PLA with a Purpose](#) has developed standards and built the capacity of institutions to offer prior learning assessment to returning adults. [FastPathOhio](#) is an online portal for PLA for ten participating institutions.
- Expansion of [competency-based programs](#) at public institutions began with the [Report on the Condition of Higher Education in 2016](#), and includes the introduction of [Western Governors University-Ohio](#).
- [Ohio Values Veterans](#) ensures veterans receive support in pursuing their educational goals.
- Certificates are the most likely postsecondary option that adults will pursue and complete. Ohio has promoted efforts to [strengthen and expand certificate](#) opportunities, including \$5 million to reduce cost of in-demand short-term certificates for low-income students.

- [One-Year Option](#) and [CTAG](#) are two different articulation and transfer processes that provide credit pathways from non-credit certificate programs into degrees.
- [Strong Start to Finish](#) works to increase the percentage of students completing gateway math and English in their first year of postsecondary education, and has explicit efforts to close equity gaps, especially among adult learners.
- [Campus Completion Plans](#) must be updated every two years and explicitly state goals and policies designed to increase the success of adult learners.
- [Credit When It's Due](#) established reverse transfer along with other degree reclamation initiatives at many institutions in Ohio.
- Ohio has a long history of strong local and regional programs supporting postsecondary access and success. Lumina Foundation Talent Hubs in Cincinnati and Dayton, Cradle-to-Career Networks, and Regional Higher Education Compacts with adult-serving components will provide an infrastructure and partnership that will be key to success of individual institutions.
- [CollegeNow of Greater Cleveland](#) will be a core partner and build upon their successful [\(Re\)Connect to College](#) program which re-enrolls stopouts. CollegeNow will provide training and technical assistance resources to the pilot campuses.

The aforementioned initiatives – combined with incentives to serve adults in Ohio’s outcomes-based funding formula – create the conditions that will accelerate and effective implementation of *Finish for your Future*.

4. Barriers to overcome.

Ohio adults face barriers similar to barriers faced in other states; generally speaking, adult students want to know what postsecondary education will cost, how it can fit into their busy lives, and what to expect as a return on investment. Ohio will combine existing resources, new communications tools and outreach, and efforts by five pilot institutions to help students answer the questions necessary to engage in postsecondary education. While Ohio has successfully constrained tuition increases over the past decade, tuition at public institutions remains above the national average. In order to address this, Ohio will also dedicate up to \$500,000 to support adult enrollment in short-term certificate programs in in-demand jobs in Ohio to help address barriers to enrollment.

Through the pilots, Adult Learner Working Group, and scholarship support, ODHE will seek to develop recommendations for scalable solutions to barriers such as:

1. Adult students often owe a debt to their former schools, which prevents them from re-enrolling because the school will not release the student’s official transcript until the debt is paid.
2. The scheduling of classes required for graduation is sometimes inflexible.
3. Lack of available, convenient childcare.
4. Lack of available tutoring for advanced classes.
5. Lack of confidence in academic ability.

5. Stakeholder buy-in.

Purposeful stakeholder engagement is intentionally woven throughout all three proposed phases of *Finish for your Future*; soliciting input and reaching key constituencies will foster ownership of promoting statewide success of adult learners. The Ohio Department of Higher Education is a coordinating board, with each public institution being autonomously governed. As such, Ohio must authentically engage with stakeholders on every initiative to advance efforts. As part of *Finish for Your Future*, ODHE will launch an Adult Learner Working Group that is charged with identifying policy and institutional practice opportunities that can be expanded to better support adult learners. The Adult Learner Working Group will purposefully leverage knowledge developed in all three phases of *Finish for Your Future* to make recommendations for policy and practice improvement that can be implemented statewide. The Adult Learner Working Group will be composed of stakeholders from institutions, business, policymakers, and other state leaders. In addition, ODHE will also deepen the engagement of stakeholders in advancing adult learner completion in a number of existing initiatives mentioned above; Campus Completion Plans, Strong Start to Finish, Ohio Values Veterans, and PLA with a Purpose, to name a few.

During the Engagement Phase of *Finish for your Future*, ODHE will ask interested institutions to invest in the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's (CAEL) AL 360 self-assessment. As a demonstration of interest and investment, institutions will be expected to self-pay the \$7000 assessment to be eligible to apply for the capacity-building grant. ODHE anticipates that 15-20 of the 36 public colleges and universities will elect to participate. The purpose of using CAEL's AL 360 in the Engagement Phase is two-fold; 1) it is a tangible demonstration of institutional interest in serving adults and 2) upon completion of AL360, each institution will have a solid baseline understanding of their capacity to serve adults, regardless if they are participating in the pilot or not.

Project Outcomes

The Ohio Department of Higher Education will track both process and outcome measures for *Finish for your Future*. The ultimate outcome of *Finish for your Future* is an increase in the number and percentage of adults earning postsecondary credentials. Ohio will track baseline data from Fall 2018 on the number and percentage of enrollment of adults over age 25; number and percentage of adults re-enrolling after stopping out for at least 12 months; retention rate of adult students; and completion rate of adult students. Institutions will also disaggregate aforementioned measures by race and ethnicity and socio-economic status. Ohio will report on these measures in June 2020. In addition, process measures include number of institutions self-paying to participate in CAEL AL 360 self-assessment and number of institutions submitting RFPs to participate as pilot sites to be completed by April 2019. ODHE will also track changes in state of Ohio budgetary changes for support of adult-learners in postsecondary.

Five pilot institutions will provide baseline data during the RFP process in Spring 2019 on the number and percentage of enrollment of adults over age 25; number and percentage of adults re-enrolling after stopping out for at least 12 months; retention rate of adult students; and completion rate of adult students. Institutions will also disaggregate aforementioned measures

by race and ethnicity and socio-economic status. Institutions selected to participate in the pilot will report on those measures again in June 2020.

Sustainability

The Engagement, Strategic Communications, and Capacity-Building phases of *Finish for your Future* are all structured to support sustainability of the initiative. The Engagement phase will engage institutions beyond just those in the pilot. Additionally, the Adult Learner Working Group will develop an Ohio-focused report on promising practices for adult learner success, closing the equity gaps, and suggestions for policy improvement. Strategic communication will ideally reach key groups with messaging about the importance of adult learner success. Finally, the Capacity Building phase of the grant will provide technical assistance and supports to the schools implementing *Finish for your Future* to build systemic implementation. Taken together, these strategies will build momentum for the sustainability of the initiative beyond the life of the grant. Additionally, ODHE will work with Ohio's next governor to explore longer term policy solutions to bolster adult learner success.

Communication

The Strategic Communication phase requires the development of a statewide media campaign that includes paid and earned media. Targeted messaging coupled with collateral would serve two purposes by reaching two primary audiences: 1) Increase public awareness of the importance of adults returning to earn postsecondary credentials; and, 2) Reach adults who would be ideal candidates to pursue postsecondary credentials. To increase public awareness of the importance of adults returning to earn postsecondary credentials, ODHE will rely on a concerted earned media strategy that would focus on social media, editorial board outreach, op-eds, and feature stories. To reach prospective adult students, ODHE will develop collateral targeted to the population that can be branded by postsecondary partners for distribution through organic and paid social media. Collaboration with College Now Greater Cleveland will include an emphasis on re-enrolling adult students; College Now has a model program that has led to re-engagement of 7% of targeted adults, a 5% gain from historic re-engagement of the program's partner institution. ODHE will use a combination of in-house communications staff and an RFP process to contract with a strategic communication firm to carry out this phase of the initiative.

Staff

Many ODHE staff will be engaged in the success of *Finish for your Future*. Brett Visger, Associate Vice Chancellor, Institutional Collaboration and Completion will serve as the project director and commit twenty-five (25) percent time to the initiative. Stephanie Davidson, Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs will provide strategic guidance and commit five (5) percent to the initiative. Patty Klein, Executive Assistant, will provide twenty (20) percent time to provide administrative support. Alexis Little, Graduate Student Intern, will provide fifty (50) percent FTE to assist with coordination and implementation. Consultants may be hired to support specific components of the initiative as needed. Additional staff in accounting, legal, communications,

and other departments will support the success of the initiative. ODHE is providing the staffing support as in-kind match.