



**Regionally Aligned Priorities in Delivering Skills (RAPIDS)
Request for Proposals
Submission September 20 – October 4, 2019**

I. Program Purpose

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) will make strategic regional investments in equipment and facilities to develop and support postsecondary institutions' workforce development projects that enhance the economic growth of students and businesses. The investments will directly impact the ability of the state of Ohio to retain and expand existing businesses, attract new enterprises, and further entrepreneurship by addressing regional talent and workforce needs. These regional investments (in a total of seven regions – map available at https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/rapids/rapids-map_jobsohio-regions_011415.pdf) will address regionally identified industry-specific occupation and skill requirements. Successful proposals will:

- A. Use state-level data to identify one to three targeted regional industries with in-demand occupations. Areas of investment with the opportunity to impact Ohio's economy broadly include additive manufacturing, robotics, and cybersecurity.
- B. Provide sufficient documents demonstrating business/industry support for the proposed program(s).
- C. Develop a plan to address gaps in workforce preparation related to the selected industries and in-demand occupations.
- D. Identify equipment that must be purchased to support the plan.
- E. Clearly explain how equipment will enable a variety of students to acquire career skills through credit and/or non-credit courses and programs.

II. Eligible Applicants

Applications will be submitted by a regional collaborative. Regional proposals may have multiple fiscal leads/agents (public community college or university) and must include a university (public and/or private), community college, Ohio technical center, local economic development partner, and a minimum of seven business support letters from the corresponding industry.

III. Anticipated Awards

Seven regional awards of \$975,000 will be made and the Northeast Ohio region will receive \$2,150,000, equally divided among three areas, found below. If a region does not submit a RAPIDS proposal within the timeframe that receives approval, the funds may be reallocated to other regions.

A. Northeast Ohio/East:

Eligible fiscal agents: Youngstown State University, Eastern Gateway Community College

Potential career center partners: Mahoning County Career Center, Trumbull County Career and Technical Center, Columbiana County Career & Technical Center, Choffin Career & Technical Center, and Ashtabula County Technical and Career Center

B. Northeast Ohio/Central:

Eligible fiscal agents: University of Akron, Kent State University, Northeast Ohio Medical University, Lakeland Community College, Stark State College

Potential career center partners: Auburn Career Center, Portage Lakes Career Center, Akron City Schools, Alliance City Schools, Canton City Schools, Willoughby-Eastlake City School, Maplewood Career Center, Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center, Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools, Buckeye Career Center, and Wayne County Schools Career Center

C. Northeast Ohio/West:

Eligible fiscal agents: Cleveland State University, Cuyahoga Community College, Lorain County Community College, North Central State College

Potential career center partners: Cuyahoga Valley Career Center, Lorain County JVS, Polaris Career Center, Medina County Career Center, EHOVE Career Center, Sandusky City Schools, Madison Adult Career Center, and Pioneer Career & Technology Center

IV. Eligible Expenses and Project Term

Grant funds are to be expended for the purposes set forth in House Bill 529 of the 132nd as amended by Amended Substitute House Bill No. 166, 133rd General Assembly, and must be used for eligible capital expenses; see Section X, page 10 for details of how funds may be used. The source of the fund is Higher Education Bonds, Fund 7034. Careful consideration will be given to the entire proposed budget, including other sources of funds. Strong preference will be given to proposals that request funds for specific well-defined equipment purchases.

A project may purchase equipment that can be placed at an Ohio Technical Center or private institution for education and training purposes. Access to the equipment by the participating

institutions and students would be provided through a lease agreement. These funds may not be used to make permanent improvements at the OTC. All grant expenditures must be properly procured following Ohio Revised Code and Administrative rules.

Investments in curriculum development, faculty development, marketing, and other related costs are not eligible expenses under this RFP.

It is anticipated that the work covered by the RFP will begin February 1, 2020 and continue through June 30, 2022, with a final expense report due September 30, 2022 to the Ohio Department of Higher Education. A desk and or site audit will occur prior to the final closeout of the grant. Additional data on project outcomes may be solicited until June, 2025.

V. Award Recommendations

The Chancellor, after considering the recommendations of internal and external reviewers, shall make the final determination about which proposals, if any, shall be recommended for funding to the Controlling Board. ODHE shall determine the amount of recommended funding for each applicant and the nature of any conditions on funding. All recommendations of ODHE are subject to Controlling Board approval. If requested, fiscal agents must attend the Controlling Board meeting when proposals are considered for funding. All fiscal agents on behalf of consortia will be notified of the outcome of their proposal after the Chancellor makes funding decisions.

VI. Proposal Review Process and Timeline

Proposals can be submitted beginning September 20, 2019 and are due no later than October 4, 2019. They must be submitted in the following manner:

- A. One electronic PDF file sent to RAPIDS@highered.ohio.gov.
- B. Applicants are responsible for timely submissions of proposals. Proposals become property of ODHE 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. Accepted proposals will be evaluated by a review team that will be composed of representatives from several state agencies and other stakeholders, following the rubric approved by ODHE. The Chancellor will make final decisions based upon the quality of the proposal in addressing the RFP criteria and its required elements. The schedule below may be revised by ODHE due to circumstances and any changes will be communicated to the applicants via e-mail and posted on the RAPIDS web page, https://www.ohiohighered.org/content/rapids_home.

Request for Proposals Released	July 22, 2019
Proposals Submission Window	September 20-October 4, 2019

Proposal Review begins

October 2019

Notification of Awarded Proposals

Beginning November 2019

*ODHE anticipates awarding all of the allocated funds by January 31, 2020. Funds will be transferred to institutions after Controlling Board approval and execution of a grant agreement with ODHE. Institutions will request a release of funds from Controlling Board after completing appropriate procurement procedures. Unallocated dollars as of February 3, 2020 may be reallocated to other workforce development and equipment investments.

Please note that the funds covered by the RFP are authorized by House Bill 529 of the 132nd as amended by Amended Substitute House Bill No. 166 of the 133rd General Assembly. Therefore, continued access to funds that are not released to the institution by the Controlling Board and expended or encumbered prior to June 30, 2020 will be subject to the biennial capital re-appropriations process. While it is anticipated that un-released funds will be reappropriated by the General Assembly without objection, this action cannot be guaranteed and should therefore be taken into consideration by institutions when developing and executing project timelines.

ODHE will provide an opportunity for potential applicants to seek assistance regarding their application through a structured conference call(s) and other technical assistance. Applicant questions are to be submitted in writing via email to RAPIDS@highered.ohio.gov. Responses to questions will be posted online to provide the information to interested parties.

Additional information regarding the program is available by contacting John Magill, Assistant Deputy Chancellor, Economic Advancement, at 614.752.9530 or jmagill@highered.ohio.gov.

VI. Proposal Requirements

A. Format of proposal as a whole

Proposals must be submitted in Arial font, 10 points or larger; there is an exception for tables and images. Please see below for page allocations and directions for each section of the proposal. Please clearly label each of the following sections within the proposal submission.

1. **Cover Letter (one page):** Title of project; identify the primary contact plus the fiscal agent by name, title, address, phone number, and email address.
2. **Executive Summary:** Include: 1) rationale for the targeted regional industries and in-demand occupations; 2) a synopsis of the plan to address workforce needs for these targeted industries; and 3) a description of the how the equipment investment will directly improve education and training learning outcomes.
3. **Project Narrative:** Should address the proposal criteria in order, see section B.

4. **Budget Narrative & Budget Table:** The budget narrative will provide background related to the costs of equipment and its deployment at the institutional level. Requests must be supported with *third-party cost estimates for all the equipment investment*. This is only an estimate and if the proposal is funded the applying institution(s) will need to follow State of Ohio proper procurement policies and procedures.
- a. The budget narrative should include:
 - i. Itemized costs
 - ii. The underlying assumption for each cost (i.e. base cost of item or service, number served, number of times per year, etc.)
 - iii. Any matching funds that will be leveraged, clearly labeled (matching funds are not required for the RAPIDS program). Matching funds may pay for curriculum development, building improvements, supplies, professional development, and other not covered by RAPIDS state dollar.
 - iv. **A separate budget table and narrative must be included for each institution that will receive a grant agreement.**
 - b. The budget table encompasses three parts:
 - i. Initial purchase and installation of the equipment
 - **Third-party cost estimates are required for all equipment**
 - ii. First-year costs to implement the education and training program(s) related to the equipment
 - iii. Sustainability model for the use of the equipment for three years after the grant period.
5. **Attachments:** Proof of commitment from all parties responsible for the implementation of this project is required. Include a minimum of seven unique, original letters of support from each business that communicate their dedication to this RAPIDS program, as well as any signed agreements between project partners. Materials on the location of equipment (leases, etc.) are required. Additional visuals or informational brochures are allowable.

B. Project Narrative and Criteria

Project Narratives are required to address the following criteria:

1. *Project Design:* Description of the plan to address a regional workforce need through strategic investment in equipment and facilities that will be used in postsecondary credit and/or noncredit educational programs, enhancing the economic growth of students and businesses in the region. This description should, at minimum:

- a. Identify and list the in-demand occupations that will be targeted through this workforce program.
 - i. Describe the career pathways within the targeted industry connected to the selected in-demand occupations. An example of a career pathway map is found at <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Career-Tech/Career-Connections/Career-Pathways>.
 - ii. List the targeted Job Titles and Standard Occupational Codes (SOCs) associated with the project's education and training.

- b. Identify the regional industries that will benefit from an increase in the number of individuals educated or trained for these in-demand jobs.
 - i. Provide the Jobs Ohio industry North American Industrial Code System (NAICS) for each targeted industry, and list businesses participating in the project(s).
 - ii. Letters of support from business must be original and written by the business. Each letter must reference the equipment investment and workforce development education training, as well as how it will be of benefit to the business

2. List and describe the credit or non-credit courses that will be provided to help meet the identified industry and job needs, and their relationship to targeted in-demand occupations.
 - a. The list will include institution, department, CIP, and/or course name if non-credit offering.
 - i. Describe the types of curriculum changes and faculty training needed to integrate the equipment into courses; provide examples of how the equipment will be integrated into a program.
 - ii. Identify any facility investments and other equipment needed to support the courses.

3. Clearly explain how equipment will enable students and incumbent workers to acquire career skills through credit and/or non-credit courses and programs leading to opportunities in the identified industries and occupations.
 - a. Describe how input was received input from industry partners, and how they will be involved in the implementation of the project.
 - i. What input has business had on the type of equipment targeted for selection?
 - ii. Provide specific examples related to how the equipment investment can directly benefit regional business partners and economic growth.

- b. Explain how/why collaboration is critical to program success and document the collaboration expected throughout the project. Note: Attachments, including business letter of support, should provide evidence of a commitment to collaboration.
 - c. Describe with two or three examples how the equipment investment will improve workforce education and skills for the regional industries.
4. List the location(s) of the project (with map), and describe how the equipment will be accessed by students in the region, including OTC, community college, and universities, and incumbent workers, if applicable. If the equipment is mobile, describe the service area (with map) and possible locations (2-3) to be served.
5. *Project Rationale*: This section should explain why this project is important and likely to succeed and will be sustained beyond the grant period. This section should address, but is not limited to, the items detailed below:
 - a. Describe the state-level data that informs the focus on the targeted industries and in-demand jobs within the region. Baseline data related to labor market need can be a combination of OhioMeansJobs data, Executive Pulse data from JobsOhio economic development partners, and regional or local data related to need. Data from OhioMeansJobs can be found at <http://omj.ohio.gov/OMJResources/WorkforcePros.stm>.
 - b. If an occupation is not on the in-demand occupation list, please provide appropriate rationale and data as support. Explain why the occupations are or will be in demand within the region. This may include information related to regional employment growth, employee replacement, churn, or the need to increase the occupational skills to current employees.
 - c. Describe the student population(s) on which there will be a focus and the corresponding recruitment, retention, and job placement strategies for each population. Types of students can include, but are not limited to, traditional students, adult learners (including adults seeking a high school credential), veterans, incumbent workers, and College Credit Plus high school students. Provide an estimate of the expected number of students impacted by the project annually.
 - d. Demonstrate commitment to project success. Indicate any financial or in-kind contributions, including existing equipment and facilities, articulation agreements, and other activities that will contribute to success. Note: institutional, business or other partner letters/agreements should provide evidence of commitment.
 - e. Describe how this project will be sustained beyond the grant period and continue to provide substantial value and lasting impact. Note: institutional, business or other partner letters/agreements should provide evidence of

- commitment to project sustainability, including equipment care and maintenance.
- f. Discuss how this project will support regional economic development strategies and draw on the advice of industry, economic development professionals, workforce investment boards (WIBs), and other regional stakeholders.
6. *Project Plan:* This section should provide a clear description and timeline for activities to be undertaken and will be included as a separate attachment in the grant agreement.
- a. Outline the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and provide brief biographies.
 - b. Provide a GANNT chart with proposed activities, dependencies, and estimated completion milestone for each activity.
 - c. Describe with one to three examples of the opportunities and outreach to students, including those in College Credit Plus partnerships at Ohio Technical Centers, community colleges, and universities, as well as incumbent workers to directly benefit from and be exposed to the equipment.
 - d. **A separate project plan must be included for each institution that will receive a grant agreement.**
7. *Project Evaluation:* Explain how project success will be measured. The evaluation plan should include both formative and summative measurements. Project evaluation must include a system to measure, i.e. academic achievement and regional economic impact, which may include productivity gains and cost savings.
- a. Describe the evaluation design. Clearly explain how academic achievement and economic impact will be defined and measured.
 - b. Describe the ongoing evaluation process, including collecting data, analyzing data, responding to data (i.e. developing improvement plans), and reporting data to ODHE.
 - i. The implemented evaluation process will guide the development of improvement plans, as necessary, for the project.
 - c. Provide a timeline for the evaluation process, including formative and summative evaluations complementing the project GANNT chart.
 - d. Identify the individuals who will lead the evaluation process and describe their credentials.
 - e. ODHE will collect academic and economic data related to the project for three years after the end of the agreement. This data will include and is not limited to the specific metrics listed and described in the proposal's evaluation plan.

VII. Reporting Requirements

The Ohio Department of Higher Education will monitor each project for which an award is granted to ensure that there is fiscal accountability and operating progress, and that the desired outcomes are achieved. Regular reports, semi-annually, will be required from all awardees through a standard reporting template or system. ODHE may request additional documentation up to three years after project completion to review the investments' impacts.

VIII. 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. The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations 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 withdraw this solicitation at any time. By submitting an application, applicants expressly agree to these terms.

IX. Trade Secrets

All lead applicants are strongly discouraged from including in a proposal any information that the lead 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 RFP 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:

1. 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;
2. Identify that the proposal contains trade secret information in the cover letter; and
3. 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.
4. 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 persons who may have access to proposals containing trade secret information, including evaluators.
- b. If the applicant claims that a record is not subject to disclosure under the Ohio Public Records law based on trade secret, it will bear costs of defending this claim.

X. Capital Funds¹

Use of the funds shall comply with the requirements set forth in House Bill 529 of the 132nd General Assembly as amended by Amended Substitute House Bill No.166 as passed by the 133rd Ohio General Assembly and signed by Governor DeWine. The funds for this program are from Fund 7034 and may not have private use. Additional information regarding private use and reporting can be found at <http://regents.ohio.gov/capital/forms/private-activity-bond-form-and-guidelines.doc>.

Capital funds awarded through this RFP may not be used for operating expenses of the project.

SECTION 207.410. For all of the foregoing appropriation items from the Higher Education Improvement Fund (Fund 7034) or the Higher Education Improvement Taxable Fund (Fund 7024) that require local funds to be contributed by any state-supported or state-assisted institution of higher education, the Department of Higher Education shall not recommend that any funds be released until the recipient institution demonstrates to the Department of Higher Education and the Office of Budget and Management that the local funds contribution requirement has been secured or satisfied. The local funds shall be in addition to the foregoing appropriations.

SECTION 207.420. None of the foregoing capital improvements appropriations for state-supported or state-assisted institutions of higher education shall be expended until the particular appropriation has been recommended for release by the Department of Higher Education and released by the Director of Budget and Management or the Controlling Board. Either the institution concerned, or the Department of Higher Education with the concurrence of the institution concerned, may initiate the request to the Director of Budget and Management or the Controlling Board for the release of the particular appropriation.

SECTION 207.430.

(A) No capital improvement appropriations or House Bill No. 529 132nd G.A. re-appropriations in this act made from the Higher Education Improvement Fund (Fund 7034) or the Higher Education Improvement Taxable Fund (Fund 7024) shall be released for planning or for improvement, renovation, construction, or acquisition of capital facilities if the institution of higher education or the state does not own the real property on which the capital facilities are or will be located. This restriction does not apply in any of the following circumstances:

- (1) The institution has a long-term (at least 20 years) lease of, or other interest (such as an easement) in, the real property.

¹ Office of Budget and Management (OBM) policy requires that leases and Joint Use Agreement Covering equipment owned by non-profit entities needs to be 20 years.

- (2) The Department of Higher Education certifies to the Controlling Board that undue delay will occur if planning does not proceed while the property or property interest acquisition process continues. In this case, funds may be released upon approval of the Controlling Board to pay for planning through the development of schematic drawings only.
- (3) In the case of an appropriation or re-appropriation for capital facilities that, because of their unique nature or location, will be owned or will be part of facilities owned by a separate nonprofit organization or public body and will be made available to the institution of higher education for its use, the nonprofit organization or public body either owns or has a long-term (at least 20 years) lease of the real property or other capital facility to be improved, renovated, constructed, or acquired and has entered into a joint or cooperative use agreement with the institution of higher education that meets the requirements of division (C) of this section.

(B) Any foregoing appropriations or re-appropriations that require cooperation between a technical college and a branch campus of a university may be released by the Controlling Board upon recommendation by the Department of Higher Education that the facilities proposed by the institutions are:

- (1) The result of a joint planning effort by the university and the technical college, satisfactory to the Department of Higher Education;
- (2) Facilities that will meet the needs of the region in terms of technical and general education, taking into consideration the totality of facilities that will be available after the completion of the projects;
- (3) Planned to permit maximum joint use by the university and technical college of the totality of facilities that will be available upon their completion; and (4) To be located on or adjacent to the branch campus of the university.

(C) The Department of Higher Education shall adopt and maintain rules regarding the release of moneys from all the foregoing appropriations for House Bill. No. 529 132nd G.A. capital facilities for all state-supported or state-assisted institutions of higher education. In the case of capital facilities referred to in division (A)(3) of this section, the joint or cooperative use agreements shall include, as a minimum, provisions that:

- (1) Specify the extent and nature of that joint or cooperative use, extending for not fewer than 20 years, with the value of such use or right to use to be, as is determined by the parties and approved by the Department of Higher Education, reasonably related to the amount of the appropriations;

- (2) Provide for pro rata reimbursement to the state should the arrangement for joint or cooperative use be terminated;
- (3) Provide that procedures to be followed during the capital improvement process will comply with appropriate applicable state statutes and rules, including the provisions of this act; and
- (4) Provide for payment or reimbursement to the institution of its administrative costs incurred as a result of the facilities project, not to exceed 1.5 percent of the appropriated amount.

(D) Upon the recommendation of the Department of Higher Education, the Controlling Board may approve the transfer of appropriations for projects requiring cooperation between institutions from one institution to another institution with the approval of both institutions.

(E) Notwithstanding section 127.14 of the Revised Code, the Controlling Board, upon the recommendation of the Department of Higher Education, may transfer amounts appropriated to the Department of Higher Education to accounts of state-supported or state-assisted institutions created for that same purpose.

Exhibits

A. Proposal Cover Letter

Name of Lead Institution (only one)	
Project Start Date	
Lead Applicant – Must be public higher education institution	Name and Address of Postsecondary Institution
Chief Contact Individual must be authorized to sign agency grant contract and legally responsible as agency representative.	Name/Title of legal representative Address, Telephone, and E-Mail
Project Director(s)- Key Personnel(s)	Name/Title, Address, Telephone, and E-Mail
Amount of state money requested	\$
Leveraged funds	\$
JobsOhio Region	
JobsOhio key industry/ies impacted	
Proposed number of students to be educated-trained	
Certificates, Certifications, Degrees supported by the equipment investment	

B. Legal Applicant

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

CEO Name: _____

1) Certification by Authorized Official:

To the best of my knowledge and belief, data contained in this application are true and correct. The document has been duly authorized to comply with the required assurances.

Signature of Authorized Official: _____

Typed Name and Title: _____

Date: _____

2) Administering Entity

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Contact Person: _____

Title: _____ E-Mail: _____

3) Business Partners (please submit separate information for each partner)

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Contact Person: _____

Title: _____ E-Mail: _____

4) Educational Partners (please submit separate information for each partner)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

President/CEO/Director Name: _____