SECOND CHANCE GRANT PROGRAM

Overview

Approximately 1.5 million Ohioans have earned some college credit but no degree. It is critical to the continued economic well-being of the State of Ohio that a substantial number of these former students earn a credential. Indeed, economists have indicated that increasing the number of Ohioans with postsecondary degrees or credentials is necessary for Ohio to remain economically competitive and meet the workforce needs of the future. As we think about ways to increase postsecondary enrollment and meet Ohio's workforce needs, we should explore as many creative options as possible to incentivize these former students to come back to our institutions.

In pursuit of this goal, and in order to facilitate the return to higher education by Ohioans who stopped out prior to crossing the finish line, the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) issued guidance for voluntary institutional debt relief programs titled **College Comeback**.

With the passage of Senate Bill 135, the State of Ohio further strengthens its commitment to assisting students in attaining a degree or credential through establishment of the **Second Chance Grant** in Ohio Revised Code (section 3333.127). Qualifying institutions are encouraged to market the Second Chance Grant to disenrolled students who may wish to renew their pursuit of a degree or credential.

> Qualifying institutions are encouraged to market the Second Chance Grant to disenrolled students who may wish to renew their pursuit of a degree or credential.

The objectives of the Second Chance Grant are to reduce financial barriers preventing Ohioans with some college credit but no bachelor's degree from returning to higher education and to increase the number of Ohioans with a degree or credential. As such, qualifying institutions are recommended to promote the Second Chance Grant to students who have demonstrated that they are likely to be able to earn a degree or credential in a reasonable amount of time if given an increase in financial support. Qualifying institutions may wish to prioritize grants to students who are within one year of completion, for example. It is also strongly encouraged that institutions combine the Second Chance Grant with other financial aid and debt forgiveness programs (i.e., College Comeback) to maximize the financial benefit to the re-enrollee and additionally incentivize stopped-out students to consider returning.

The Second Chance Grant Program provides financial assistance in the form of $2,000 grants to eligible students re-enrolling at a qualifying institution to obtain a degree or credential. Second Chance Grants shall be applied against the student's **cost of attendance (COA)** after all need-based federal and state grants have been applied. In order to accept these funds, a qualifying institution must have a published CoA or restrict the grant's use to tuition and fees. Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve rolling basis.

Eligibility

Student eligibility requirements are as follows:

- The re-enrollee is a resident of the State of Ohio.

- The re-enrollee has not obtained a bachelor's degree from any institution of higher education.

- The re-enrollee disenrolled ("stopped out") from a qualifying institution (see list below) in Ohio and did not transfer to another institution of higher education in the two semesters immediately following the disenrollment.

- The re-enrollee was in good academic standing with no record of disciplinary issues (including suspension or expulsion) at the time of disenrollment.

- The re-enrollee is enrolling in a qualifying institution (see list below) within five years of their disenrollment.

- The re-enrollee is not enrolled in the College Credit Plus program. *Please note that for the purposes of the Second Chance Grant, participation in the College Credit Plus program is not considered enrollment at a qualifying institution.*

- The re-enrollee completes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and accepts any federal and state need-based grants and/or scholarships to which the student would be entitled as verified by the receiving institution.

- The re-enrollee is pursuing a credential or degree beyond that which they already possess. Second Chance grantees must be pursuing a bachelor's degree, associate degree, undergraduate certificate, or certification. There are no restrictions on a particular major or program. Students who already possess a degree or credential MUST be pursuing a degree or credential beyond that which they already possess to qualify for a Second Chance Grant:
  - » Students possessing an associate degree must be pursuing a bachelor's degree.
  - » Students possessing a certificate must be pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree.
  - » Students possessing a certification must be pursuing a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree.

- The re-enrollee is not a recipient of one of the following state-supported scholarships: Choose Ohio First Scholarship, Ohio Safety Officers College Memorial Fund, Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Program, or Ohio National Guard Scholarship.

Qualifying Institutions are defined as one of the following:

- A state institution of higher education, as defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code;

- A private nonprofit institution of higher education that holds a certificate of authorization pursuant to Chapter 1713. of the Revised Code;

- An institution with a certificate of registration from the Ohio State Board of Career Colleges and Schools under Chapter 3332. of the Revised Code;

- A private institution exempt from regulation under Chapter 3332. of the Revised Code as prescribed in section 3333.046 of the Revised Code;

- An Ohio Technical Center, as defined in section 3333.94 of the Revised Code.

Application Process

Pre-Registration

Qualifying institutions must pre-register their intention to participate in the Second Chance Grant pilot program by emailing **secondchancegrant@highered.ohio.gov**. . This pre-registration email should include the name of the institution, as well as the name and email address of one designated employee to be provided access to the Second Chance Grant application portal. All grant applications must be submitted through the web portal. *Please note that qualifying institutions with more than one campus or location should submit contact information for only one designated employee who will be responsible for all of the institution's applications, regardless of site.*

Application

Institutions may make an offer of a second chance grant to qualifying students as soon as they apply for admission. When institutions make an offer of a grant, the student should be informed that there are a limited number of grants available and receiving the award may be dependent upon the date of the student's acceptance into the institution.

When a qualifying student is accepted, the institution will notify ODHE through the **Second Chance Grant application portal**. Second Chance Grant **application portal instructions** are available on the Second Chance Grant webpage and updated as needed. As the Second Chance Grants are provided on a first-come, first-serve basis, it is recommended that applications be submitted on a regular (i.e., daily) basis immediately following successful admission to the institution by the re-enrollee. Upon receipt of the information, ODHE will reserve an award for the admitted student. Please note that all fields within the web portal are required to be completed for an application to be considered submitted.

One of the required fields is the census date – the census date is the point in an academic program or term when a student's enrollment is verified for financial aid purposes. Institutions participating in the Second Chance Grant Program must verify applicants' enrollment through the online application portal within two weeks of the census date. Institutions will need to indicate a census date for each application submitted via the online portal.

The census date is for the individual applicant and should reflect that applicant's first term (semester or quarter) of attendance. For many students this will be the start of a traditional academic term, but if students will be taking their first course(s) in an alternate term (such as courses that begin in the second half of the semester), the census date recorded should be for that alternate term. For institutions that do not use a traditional academic term (semesters or quarters), census date (for financial aid purposes) is calculated as the point in which 20% of the course or program has been completed.

Enrollment Verification

The process for verifying enrollments begins when an application has reached its census date. An email will be generated and sent to the institution's designated Second Chance Grant contact stating that one or more applications are ready for enrollment verification. The institutional contact will need to log in to the Second Chance Grant Application Portal to verify enrollment. After enrollment has been verified by checking the box, ODHE will be able to process the payment and disburse the funds.

Voided Applications

If an application has not had enrollment verified within 10 business days of the census date, the application will be voided. After 30 days, all voided applications will be deleted from the Second Chance Grant application portal. If an application needs to be deleted for any reason, the institution's Second Chance Grant point of contact should email **secondchancegrant@highered.ohio.gov** and indicate which application should be deleted by referencing the date/time stamp.

Award

Second Chance Grants shall be awarded by ODHE to the re-enrollee's institution after verification of enrollment on the institution's census date. Grants will continue to be awarded on a rolling basis until such time that allocated funds are exhausted. While grants are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis, ODHE reserves the right to make modifications to the grant award process to better attain the goals and objectives of the program and the State of Ohio. This may result in distribution of awards to achieve an appropriate balance of geographical region, institutional sector, and/or demographic factors.

Disbursement

Once enrollment has been verified, ODHE will disburse funds. The Second Chance Grants will be disbursed from ODHE's subsidy system. The funds will come from the State of Ohio and will reference BOR01 which is ODHE's business unit. There is typically a comment that will say, "subsidy." It is recommended that Second Chance Grant points of contact alert the accounting department or treasurer of the amount to be received ($2,000 x number of verified applications) to help match up the payment.

Grants shall be applied against the student's COA after any federal or state need-based grants have been accepted and applied. If any amount of the $2,000 Second Chance Grant remains after applying it to the re-enrollee's COA for the academic year, the remainder shall be applied to any future year in which the student is enrolled, and the Second Chance Grant program is operating. The institution shall return to ODHE any amount remaining after the re-enrollee graduates or disenrolls from the institution or after the Second Chance Grant program ceases to operate.

Return of Funds

It is possible that an applicant may withdraw from an institution after enrollment has been verified, or an applicant may not make use of their full $2,000 award toward their cost of attendance. If this occurs, funds may need to be returned to ODHE, depending on the timing of the withdrawal;

1. If the student drops before the 100% refund withdrawal date (presumably before financial aid has been disbursed), then the institution should email **secondchancegrant@highered.ohio.gov** informing ODHE of the situation and referencing the student's application date/time stamp as identifier, and return the funds (see process below).

2. If the student drops after financial aid awards have been applied to their account and refunds issued, then funds do not need to be returned.

To return funds, first contact ODHE through the Second Chance Grant email (**secondchancegrant@ highered.ohio.gov**)) referencing the student's application date/time stamp. Funds may be returned via check or ACH payment. Checks should be payable to Treasurer, State of Ohio and mailed to the address below.

Ohio Department of Higher Education
Attn: Dawn Gatterdam
25 South Front Street, 7th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215.

Reporting

Qualifying institutions receiving grant funds agree to provide additional data on grantees' program(s) of study at their previous and current institution(s), retention, progress toward credential, enrollment status, credential status, and any other grant-related information as requested by ODHE.

Please address questions to **secondchancegrant@highered.ohio.gov**.