



SECOND CHANCE GRANT PILOT 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) recently issued guidance for voluntary institutional debt relief programs titled [College Comeback](#).

The State of Ohio is further strengthening its commitment to assisting students in attaining a degree or credential through the establishment of the [Second Chance Grant Pilot Program](#). Qualifying institutions are encouraged to market the Second Chance Grant Pilot Program to disenrolled students who may wish to renew their pursuit of a degree or credential.

The objectives of the Second Chance Grant Pilot Program 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 Pilot Program 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 programs 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 Pilot Program will provide up to \$3 million in financial assistance in the form of \$2,000 grants to eligible students re-enrolling at a qualifying institution in order 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. Grants will be awarded on a first-come first-serve basis, beginning in the spring semester (winter quarter) of 2022. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis until such time that grant funds are exhausted or 1,500 re-enrollees have been issued grants.

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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 accredited institution of higher education.
- The re-enrollee disenrolled ("stopped out") from a state institution of higher education in Ohio and did not transfer to another institution of higher education in the three semesters (four quarters) 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 within five years of their disenrollment.
- The re-enrollee's start of re-enrollment will be on or after January 1, 2022.
- The re-enrollee is not enrolled in the College Credit Plus program.
- The re-enrollee completes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and applies for 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 (i.e., if the student possesses an associate degree, the student is pursuing a 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, War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' 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.

Step One: Pre-Registration

Qualifying institutions must pre-register their intention to participate in the Second Chance Grant pilot program through [completion of an online form](#). This pre-registration includes the submission of the name and email address of one designated employee to be provided access to the web portal. All applications must be submitted through the web portal. Pre-registration will open on October 7, 2021 and continue until funds are exhausted.

Step Two: Application

Institutions may make an offer of a second chance grant to qualifying students when they apply for admission. When a qualifying student is accepted, the institution will notify ODHE through an online web portal. The web portal is currently being developed and is anticipated to be ready for use on November 1, 2021. Qualifying institutions will be made aware as soon as ODHE is ready to begin accepting applications via the web portal. In the meantime, institutions are encouraged to begin marketing the Second Chance Grant Pilot Program to disenrolled students who may wish to renew their pursuit of a degree or credential.

Institutions that have pre-registered will have access to the Second Chance Grant web portal beginning November 1 and until all available funds have been exhausted. As the Second Chance Grants will be 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 received. 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.

Award

Second Chance grants shall be awarded by ODHE to the re-enrollee's institution following verification of enrollment on the institution's census date. The first grants will be awarded for spring semester (winter quarter), 2022. Grants will continue to be awarded on a rolling basis until such time that available funds are exhausted. Institutions will be notified when all available grants have been reserved. 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 Pilot 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.

Institutions receiving student awards agree to verify awardees' enrollment via the web portal within 10 working days of the institution's census date. Grants shall be applied against the student's COA after any federal or state need-based grants have been accepted and applied. Students receiving state supported scholarships (Choose Ohio First Scholarship, Ohio Safety Officers College Memorial Fund, War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Scholarship Program, or Ohio National Guard Scholarship) are not eligible for Second Chance grants. 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 other 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.

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.