Frequently Asked Questions: Amplifying Ohio's Pathways to Graduation Grant

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this grant is to address gaps in graduation rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Selected applicants will receive funds to provide technical assistance to schools and districts for the purpose of opening more pathways to graduation, particularly increasing access to the career-readiness competency alternatives. Technical assistance programs will provide any necessary services to support schools and districts to increase programming. The Department will award grants in the total amount of $1,000,000. Applicants will apply for the specific funding amounts to support development of their program, with a maximum potential of $100,000 per application.

Eligible applicants will have experience in supporting schools in developing or expanding programming related to Ohio's alternative demonstrations of competency in the long-term graduation requirements. Eligible applicants will have experience working with schools and will have contacts in the region they serve to ensure they will be able to connect schools to postsecondary and workforce partners. Applicants must also identify districts they intend to serve with technical assistance. Applicants must identify one of the target districts identified by the Department as a partner who has committed to working with the applicant to develop programming.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Who is eligible to apply for this grant opportunity?

Career-technical planning districts, non-profit organizations, registered apprenticeship training providers and colleges and universities that demonstrate relevant expertise and strong partnerships in co-designing, developing, managing, communicating and overseeing a large infrastructure that supports programming related to Ohio's alternative demonstrations of competency in the long-term graduation requirements are eligible to apply for this grant.

Can awardees serve districts not identified as target districts in the Request for Applications (RFA)?

Yes, applicants may serve more than just the districts they identify from the target list, but each applicant must have an established and documented agreement to serve **at least one** of the target districts.

How were the target districts chosen?

Based on the 4-year 2019 graduation data from the cohort of economically disadvantaged students, target districts have been identified as those with greater than 7% gap in actual 4-year graduation rate to the graduation rate long term goal. Evaluation criteria was based on the 2026 4-year graduation rate long term goals established in the state ESSA plan for the Gap Closing measure.

What are the alternative demonstrations of competency?

Students must demonstrate competency in math and English by passing the state's algebra I and English II tests. Students who have taken required tests more than once without passing and have received remedial supports are able to show competency through one of the options below:

1. College Credit Plus

2. Military Enlistment
3. ACT/SAT remediation free score
4. Industry Recognized Credentials
5. Proficient score of WebXams
6. Registered apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship programs
7. Supporting career-focused demonstrations:
    a. WorkKeys Assessment
    b. Work-based Learning
    c. OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal

What is the maximum amount of money an awardee can receive?

Applicants will apply for the specific funding amounts to support development of their program, with a maximum potential of $100,000 per application.

Why is this grant being released now?

The Department has determined an emergency need for a plan to implement programs that support multiple high school graduation pathways among schools and districts. Grantees will develop and implement support, especially with the focus on alternative graduation pathways, to help Ohio achieve its critical short- and long-term graduation goals.

What is the timeline for these funds being awarded, allocated and drawn down?

Funds will be awarded by March 2, 2022, allocated by March 24, 2022, and drawn down by June 2024.

What if I don't have an Individual Retrieval Number (IRN)?

An applicant must have an OH|ID and an OEDS Organization Applicant role in order to be able to apply for an IRN.

What is the purpose of this grant?

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When is the application deadline?

This grant application will open on January 7, 2022, and close on February 4, 2022.

How can these funds be used? What are allowable and non-allowable uses?

Permitted uses of funds include:

- Staff training on career focused programming.
- Staff compensation for time devoted to technical assistance.
- Regional programming to offer technical assistance to districts, either virtually or in person.
- Development of materials or resources to aid in technical assistance.
- Technology or software needs to support technical assistance program.
- Other uses as identified by the applicant.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

Are there specific contacts at the target districts listed that we contact to establish an agreement?

There are not specific contacts you need to contact; however, a building leader will ultimately have to approve an agreement between the district and the applicant. Individual districts may handle submitting letters of approval for grants differently.

Are ESC's eligible to apply to this grant opportunity?

No, ESC's are not eligible to apply for this grant opportunity. If there are eligible applicant organizations that your ESC works with, please consider passing this opportunity onto them. Your ESC could be a partner with that eligible applicant in implementing any technical assistance programming.

Any questions not addressed can be directed to Sara Watson at Sara.Watson@education.ohio.gov.