

Innovative Workforce Incentive Program – Frequently Asked Questions

How were the qualifying industry-recognized credentials determined?

The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation Innovative Workforce Incentive Program is based on the Ohio Department of Education's approved industry-recognized credential list. Find more information on the Ohio Department of Education's approved industry-recognized credential list [here](#). Find school districts offering these industry-recognized credentials [here](#).

The Innovative Workforce Incentive Program targets segments of the economy that have been identified as high-growth, in-demand fields including information technology and cyber security, advanced manufacturing, construction, engineering and the skilled trades. To ensure Ohio continues to meet the workforce needs of employers, the program incentives are designed to expand student access and provide new opportunities for the next generation of the workforce.

What are the requirements to receive the incentive payments?

The only requirements to receive the incentive payment is for the student to earn the credential and for that credential to be reported by the student's school. This means that any city, local, and exempted village school district, community school, STEM school, or Joint Vocational School District may receive incentive payments.

Does a district collect incentive funding for more than one industry-recognized credential per student?

Yes. Individual reimbursement amounts are available to school districts for each industry-recognized credential students earn. When a student earns a credential that is eligible for the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program, his or her school district will receive an additional reimbursement payment of \$1,250.

Is there a limit on how many incentive payments a school can receive per student?

No, there is not a limit per student. The only limit is the time and effort it takes for a student to earn credentials.

Is there a cap on how much incentive money a school can receive?

No, there is no limit on the total money a school can receive. The only limiting factor to the payments is the total amount allotted. If more than \$12.5 million in incentive payments are requested by schools reporting that students earn credentials, the amount will be prorated equally across payments.

When can schools begin submitting for the incentive payments?

Schools do not need to do anything other than report that students are earning qualifying credentials in the same system and in the same way they always have, through the Education Management Information System, or EMIS. A new flag has been incorporated into the system to indicate if a school paid for a credential to help ensure both reimbursement and incentive payments are going to the correct school.

How are the incentive payments and the grant money related/separate?

Both the incentive payments and the startup grant funds are part of the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program. Incentive payments of \$1,250 are triggered anytime a student earns one of these credentials. There is no application or additional work a school must do to receive this money.

The implementation grant is specifically designed to help schools start up programs so that students can begin to earn qualifying credentials from the program list. Schools can receive money from both arms of the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program if they are awarded a grant and students begin earning credentials.

Implementation Grant

What is the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program Implementation Grant?

Approximately \$4.5 million is available for Innovative Workforce Incentive Program Implementation Grant awards for state Fiscal Year 2020, with another \$4.5 million to follow in Fiscal Year 2021.

Grants will be awarded based on the application's technical review score and competitive preference priorities. The amount awarded will be based on the submitted budget if dollars must be prorated. The Innovative Workforce Incentive Program Implementation Grant provides funding to districts to establish or expand qualifying credential programs.

How do schools apply for the grant?

The grant funding application is housed, like many other grants managed by the Ohio Department of Education, in the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan, better known as CCIP. Schools can find information regarding how to apply on Ohio Department of Education website by clicking [here](#) or by searching keywords "*Innovative Workforce Incentive Program*". A page has been dedicated to the program where schools can find information and instructions on how to navigate CCIP and apply for the grant.

Can the grant money be used to expand an existing program or is it specifically to create new programs?

The grant money is specifically allocated to create new programs in which students can earn these credentials. If a school is already operating credential programs but would like to add credentials from the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program list to their current offerings, that would be considered a new program to earn these credentials and that school would be eligible.

What can the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program Implementation Grant money be spent on?

Innovative Workforce Incentive Program Implementation Grant money must be used to implement a new credentialing program from the list of eligible programs. This means school districts must use the funds to invest in resources such as materials, facilities and administrative costs associated with developing and implementing a new, eligible credentialing program. Funds may not be used to pay for the costs of student credential exams, as districts are eligible to receive reimbursement for those costs. To receive reimbursement, districts must report students as earning industry-recognized credentials to the Ohio Department of Education. Find more information on reporting [here](#) (visit sections 2.8 - Student Assessment Record and 2.8.1 - Assessment Area Codes).

Can the grant money be used to pay for the salary of a new teacher to cover a new program?

Yes. However, it is important to remember this is a one-time payment, so sustainability of the program could become a problem if a school is relying on this grant to pay the salary on a more regular basis.

How will grant determinations be made?

Priority consideration will be given to applications from districts where senior-only credential programs related to qualifying credentials do not currently operate. Competitive preference will be determined by a technical grant review. Conditions of the review, including scoring rubric, are included in the grant's Request for Applications. Find more information on senior-only credential programs [here](#).

How will awards be allocated?

The following factors will be considered regarding grant award allocation decisions:

- The number of approved applications received;
- The total amount of requested budgets;
- Minimum amounts needed to operate the credential program;
- Applicants' final scores on the afore mentioned rubric.

Is there a minimum/maximum amount that can be requested through the grant?

There is no minimum or maximum amount set that can be requested.

For more information, please reference the grant request for applications.