



Commercial Truck Driver Student Aid Program Application

Release Date: August 18, 2023

Proposal Submission Window: August 18 – September 19, 2023

APPLICATION OVERVIEW: All eligible institutions (as described below) which offer commercial driver's license (CDL) program(s) (as described below) may be eligible to submit an application to the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) in compliance with the criteria set forth below. If the respondent's application is acceptable to ODHE, then an approved eligible institution will be approved to solicit students enrolled in an approved CDL training program. Each enrolled student may apply for a grant and loan from the eligible institution to participate in the CDL program. The participating eligible institution in cooperation with ODHE will receive the grant and loan proceeds for enrolled students who applied for and are accepted into the CDL program. The participating eligible institution will not be liable for the repayment of the loan made to the enrolled student but will be required to proactively counsel students prior to enrollment about program requirements, expectations, and timelines. ODHE, as loan servicer, will determine the rate and terms of each loan.

I. Background and Purpose of the Application

Background: Amended Substitute House Bill 33 of the 135th General Assembly set forth the parameters for the CDL Program under Section 3333.125 (originally enacted under Amended Substitute House Bill 110).

Purpose: To promote and encourage Ohio's commercial driver's job growth through educational training in programs related to employment opportunities. Institutions must qualify as eligible institutions along with their identified CDL program(s) in order for students enrolled in these programs to be eligible for grants and loans under the Program. The funds awarded to eligible institutions will be disbursed in the form of grants and loans to students enrolled in approved CDL training programs at participating eligible institutions.

II. Eligibility

An eligible institution for this program is a commercial driver training school licensed by the Director of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) pursuant to section 4508.03 or 4508.09 of the Revised Code, rules adopted under either of those sections, and other necessary standards and procedures as determined by the director or any of the following that is jointly approved by DPS and the Chancellor:

- i. A state institution of higher education, as defined in 3345.011 of the Ohio Revised Code;
- ii. A career college or school in this state that holds a certificate of registration from the state board of career colleges and schools under Chapter 3332. of the Revised Code;
- iii. A private, nonprofit institution in this state that holds a certificate of authorization pursuant to Chapter 1713. of the Revised Code;
- iv. A private institution exempt from regulation under Chapter 3332. of the Revised Code as prescribed in section 3333.046 of the Revised Code, if the program has a certificate of authorization pursuant to Chapter 1713. of the Revised Code;
- v. A career-technical center, joint vocational school district, comprehensive career-technical center, or compact career-technical center offering adult training.



III. Application Criteria

Applications are required to address the following:

1. Evidence of CDL program approval and a list of approved programs seeking support under this opportunity (Class A, Class B, etc.): CDL training programs licensed by the Director of Public Safety or approved by the Chancellor and DPS must submit the appropriate documentation prior to the release of funds in accordance with the procedures described in Part II.
2. Provide a copy of the school's license from the State of Ohio, if required to maintain a license pursuant to ORC 4508.03 or 4508.09.
3. Evidence and/or certification by the institution that the licensed or approved institution does not charge employers recruiting fees.
4. Grant and loan eligibility requirements: Include requirements that will be applied to students in the CDL training program.
 - The total amount of a grant and a loan awarded to an eligible student under this section shall not exceed the cost of tuition and related expenses for an eligible school's commercial driver training program.
 - The chancellor shall award a loan to an eligible student in the same amount as the grant. A loan for an eligible student's program costs under this section shall not exceed ten thousand dollars.
 - Describe the proposed strategies for counseling students about program requirements, expectations, and timelines, which shall include:
 - Process of submitting an application and ensuring the student signs a promissory note with ODHE; (promissory note to be provided by ODHE).
 - Process to cancel the note if a student completes the program and provides documentation of employment for one year as an Ohio resident.
 - That the first repayment begins 12 months after completing the CDL program and failing to secure and provide documentation of employment for one year as an Ohio resident, or immediately upon a student's disenrollment in a program, or failure to complete the program.
 - Recipient must either be employed as a truck driver by an entity that has a valid mailing address in the state or be self-employed as a truck driver using a valid mailing address in the state and being an Ohio resident on tax filings.
 - Attorney General to collect on a note for a student that has defaulted repayment.
5. Ohio Residents: Provide documentation that demonstrates and/or defines how program recipients will be limited to Ohio residents as defined in OAC 3333-1-10.
6. Marketing: Describe marketing efforts on behalf of the program; detail how the institution will engage students and leverage other resources to reach potential students including OhioMeansJobs resources. An applicant may include appropriate supporting materials as attachments.
7. Compliance with all Federal Regulations regarding commercial driver's license training for entry level drivers as described in 49 CFR 380. Proof of registration with the Federal Motor Carrier Services Association (FMCSA) must be included.



IV. Anticipated Awards

The total of all awards under the CDL Program will not exceed the total funding available. The Chancellor is not obligated to expend all funds set aside for this initiative.

- An institution may request up to \$200,000 to provide grants and loans to eligible students.
- The grant and loan combination may not exceed the cost of tuition and related expenses.
- The Chancellor may adjust award amounts based on availability of funds, demand for the program, quality of applications, and past program performance.
- Awards are distributed directly to the institution on behalf of a student when all documentation and a signed promissory note has been received for that student.

Total Funding Available: up to \$2,550,000.00

V. Eligible Expenses and Project Term

Awards under the grant and loan program are to be expended for grants and loans to eligible students who are enrolled in approved CDL training programs.

Individual student approval consists of an institution submitting the student information for review to the state, and the state approving that submission, and the student signing the promissory note.

An approved program may consist of one or more cohorts, however, the maximum request per qualified CDL program(s) is \$200,000. ODHE will disburse funds under a given award during the 12-month period following the institution's execution of an award agreement.

ODHE may provide additional instructions and requirements for approved institutions.

VI. Application Contact

Any questions or concerns regarding this application should be sent via e-mail to cdl@highered.ohio.gov. ODHE will host an application webinar on August 31, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. More details and registration information for the webinar will be posted at <https://highered.ohio.gov/businesses/services-programs/cdl>.

VII. Application Review Process and Timeline

Applicants are responsible for submissions of applications within the time frame set by the Chancellor. Applications become property of the Chancellor and are subject to public record laws of the state.

The Chancellor's staff will initially screen applications for completeness. The applicant must address any application deficiencies within a time period set by the Chancellor's staff. While all applications will receive careful consideration, the submission of a complete application does not guarantee funding.

Accepted applications will be evaluated using the following Project Narrative. After considering the recommendations of reviewers, the Chancellor shall make the final determination regarding which applications will be eligible to receive funding.

The Chancellor, due to unforeseen circumstances, may revise the schedule and any changes will be communicated to the applicants. Information regarding the program will be posted at: <https://highered.ohio.gov/businesses/services-programs/cdl>.

Upon applicant approval, the Chancellor will provide an award letter to the institution that includes the total amount awarded, followed by a grant agreement between ODHE and the applicant.



VIII. Application Submission

Once an institution completes an application, it may be submitted to cdl@highered.ohio.gov. Responses to questions presented to the Chancellor will be posted online to provide the information to interested parties.

The institutional submission is one electronic PDF file sent electronically to cdl@highered.ohio.gov.

IX. Application Requirements

A. Applications are limited to 20 pages plus attachments. The page limit includes, and must contain, a cover letter, an executive summary, project narrative, budget, and timeline.

1. The cover letter should not exceed one page and must identify a primary, fiscal, and legal notice contacts by providing the name, title, address, phone, and email address for each. The cover letter must also include the requested institutional award amount.
2. The Executive Summary is limited to one page.
3. The project narrative must contain detailed information about how the application meets the criteria set forth.
4. The project budget must document tuition and related eligible expenses for each CDL program.
5. The project timeline must include proposed activities and estimated completion milestones for each activity.
6. Application must be submitted in Arial Font - 10 point, and double-spaced.

B. Required Application Section: Executive Summary (1 page)

The Executive Summary describes how the CDL training program meets labor market needs, with an emphasis on employment opportunities in the region and Ohio. It will also explain the role of businesses, industries, and post-secondary institutions to connect the CDL program to Ohio's economy.

C. Required Application Section: Project Narrative

The Project Narrative must describe the CDL training program(s) and provide evidence that it will meet the criteria outlined in Section III of the application. The Project Narrative must respond to the five sections listed below:

1. Describe how the CDL program(s) address(es) existing and/or emerging CDL job training needs in a specific region and in Ohio. Applicants may submit labor market data from OhioMeansJobs.com or other information illustrating the how the CDL program helps meet the need.
2. Success rate of the CDL training program(s):
 - a. Number of students currently enrolled in the program;
 - b. Projected enrollment over the next 12 months;
 - c. Number of students that have completed the program in the past 24 months;
 - i. Number of students receiving a certificate,
 - ii. Percentage of students completing the program and receiving a Commercial Driver's License;
 - iii. Number of students obtaining Ohio employment post-completion (ODHE may also request additional post-completion state of employment and/or state of residence data).



- d. ODHE will evaluate past performance with the CDL Student Assistance program when considering future awards that may include expenditure rate, student completion, submission of employment verification forms, and number of students referred to the Ohio Attorney General for repayment. If a previous CDL program grantee awarded funds by ODHE in previous funding rounds; identify the number of students assisted, obtained employment in Ohio, and in default repayment status.
3. Cost of the CDL training program(s):
 - a. Provide the maximum per student cost of tuition and related expenses for each CDL training program seeking funding under this opportunity by completing the attached program budget form.
4. CDL Program student eligibility and loan counseling:
 - a. Provide documentation that demonstrates and/or defines how program recipients will be limited to Ohio residents as defined in OAC 3333-1-10.
 - b. Describe the process used by the institution to inform and counsel students about the grant and loan upon entrance and exit from the program.
 - i. Submit copies of loan counseling materials, information on loan documents and program and post-employment requirements.
 - (1) Describe the pre and post completion loan counseling procedure including review of the employment verification form.
 - ii. ODHE will provide certain disclosure information and loan documents (i.e., the Promissory Note) to each approved institution after the institution receives an award letter from the Ohio Department of Higher Education for a qualified program.
 - (1) The interest rate will be determined by the Chancellor if a student defaults. ODHE reserves the right to modify the term for a program within the guidelines provided for in the law.
 - iii. ODHE encourages institutions to review a student's federal loan status prior to making an award. Describe how the institution will make the final determination if it decides to award a student who is currently in default of a federal student loan.
 - c. Describe specific actions the institution will take to assist ODHE to work with students to determine program employment compliance and help avoid student defaults.
5. Institutional default rate, if applicable:
 - a. Provide the institution's official 3-year cohort default rate as reported by the U.S. Department of Education.
- D. Program budget form –Excel workbook
 1. Complete the institutional program budget for Class A, Class B, etc. driver's license programs.
- E. Institutional timeline
 1. Submit a project plan with key milestones for the program with a brief description of each step (one-two sentences)



F. Required reporting

Prior to funds being distributed, specific student information is required to be submitted, as determined by ODHE.

In addition, each awarded institution will be required to file annual reports to the Chancellor in a form designated by the Chancellor. This information will include the following elements and may be revised by the Chancellor to provide further data and metrics to determine progress and impact:

1. Amount of each grant and loan awarded
2. Number and percent of students receiving certificates and types of Driver's License
3. Percent of students obtaining Ohio employment after completing the program (ODHE may also request additional post-completion state of employment and/or state of residence data).
4. Entry level wage for students obtaining employment after completing the program
5. Number of students in repayment, if applicable

X. Legal Notices

The institution understands that if its application is accepted by the State, the institution shall enter into an award agreement with the State governing the use of the awarded funds. The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the conduct of the work hereunder.

The institution understands the repayment of any loans awarded will be subject to the terms set in the promissory note by the Ohio Department of Higher Education. All future loans and students are subject to the terms and conditions of the promissory note.

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 re-issue 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 under the Loan Program. The State reserves the right to adjust the dates for this announcement for whatever reasons deemed appropriate. The State reserves the right to waive any non-substantive infractions made by an applicant, provided if 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.

All 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 application 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.



XI. Trade Secrets

- A. All information submitted in response to this application is public information unless a statutory exception exists that exempts it from public release under the Ohio Public Records Act, as defined in Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code. All Institutions are strongly discouraged from including in an application 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.
- B. If any information in the application is to be treated as a trade secret, the application must:
1. Identify each and every occurrence of the information within the application with an asterisk before and after each line containing trade secret information and underline the trade secret information itself;
 2. Identify that the application 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 application 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.”
 5. The institution or business asserting trade secret bears the responsibility to take formal action if necessary and defend such assertion. Otherwise, public records laws may require disclosure.
- C. The Ohio Department of Higher Education requires non-disclosure agreements from all non-Ohio Department of Higher Education persons who may have access to applications containing trade secret information, including evaluators.