

Creating Opportunities for Driver Education

CODE Grants



Driver Training Grant Proposal Overview and Guidelines

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Mission Statement

The Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO) is dedicated to saving lives and preventing injuries on Ohio's roads by using creative leadership, innovative education and comprehensive enforcement programs. OTSO strives to work in partnership with local, state, and federal entities to advance equity in highway safety programs, ensuring they benefit all road users in Ohio.

Grant Program Goal

OTSO aims to expand the capacity of driver training in Ohio by providing grants to Education Service Centers (ESCs), school districts, career technical programs, current driver training enterprises and prospective driver training enterprises to offer more driver training opportunities to students in underserved areas of the state.

Grant Program Details

The Ohio Traffic Safety Office's (OTSO) goal with this grant is to expand the quantity of training to reduce roadway fatalities and help set Ohio's new drivers up for success. Recent Ohio data shows that Ohio drivers who obtain their driver's license at 16 or 17 are less likely to be in injury crashes within their first 12 months of licensure than those who first obtain their license at 18 or 19 when driver training is no longer required¹. This tells us that driver training works to reduce crash risk for new drivers.

Ohio Licensure Requirements:

Ohio law requires driver training for all new drivers if they are 16 or 17 years old at the time of licensure. Anyone aged 18 or older can obtain their license without any formal training, if they pass their licensing test on the first attempt. If an adult fails the licensing test, they must complete a four-hour course (which can be done in-person or online) and either complete 24 hours of driving experience with a licensed driver age 21 or older, or 4 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction with a licensed instructor. Ohio BMV data indicates only about 24% of first-time drivers over the age of 18 end up taking this abbreviated driver training.

In contrast, Ohio law requires 16- and 17-year-olds to take 24 hours of classroom instruction (which can be done in-person or online) and complete 8 hours of behind-the-wheel driving with a licensed instructor. These drivers must also complete 50 hours of in-car practical experience (10 hours at night) with a parent or guardian and must hold their temporary instruction permit for at least 6 months prior to obtaining their license. This instruction and required in-car practical experience provide youth with the knowledge and skills they need to reduce risk once they are licensed.

¹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2791283?resultClick=3>

Ohio Driver Training Requirements

	16- or 17- year-old New Drivers	New Drivers 18+, if pass test on 1 st attempt	New Drivers 18+, if failed test
Classroom Instruction (Can be online)	24 hours	None	4 hours
Behind-the-Wheel Hours (Instructor led)	8 hours	None	4 hours (Unless driver chooses in-car)
In-Car Hours (Not instructor led)	50	None	24 hours (Unless driver chooses behind-the-wheel instruction)
Length of Permit	6 months	None	None, but must wait 2 days to retake test

Benefits of Licensure at Ages 16 and 17:

In addition to the traffic safety benefit from obtaining driver training, enabling youth to get their license has potential economic and crime-prevention benefits. With many businesses struggling to hire entry-level and part-time positions, enabling 16- and 17-year-olds to get their license gives youth the ability to fill these positions if transportation to the job was previously a barrier. Additionally, some communities have focused on providing driver training to decrease unlicensed youth drivers and the criminal violations that stem from being caught driving without a license- or even fleeing law enforcement because the driver isn't licensed.²

Teens Delaying Licensure:

However, many teens are delaying licensure. In 2018, more than half (53%) of non-commercial driver's license applicants were 18 years-old or older. Teens delay licensure for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to the cost of driver education, lack of access, and long wait times to get into driver training schools.

Currently, the driver training industry experiences long backlogs, and Ohio students often wait months before beginning behind-the-wheel training. Many areas of Ohio do not have a local driver training school, or the current schools are cost prohibitive for lower income families. Both of these scenarios can contribute to delays in licensure.

To help address these issues, the Ohio Traffic Safety Office has established three priority areas to strengthen teen driver training.

² <https://www.cantonrep.com/story/news/2022/04/15/canton-police-program-help-student-drivers-need/7275273001/>

- **More Accessibility:** Increase the number of Ohioans that are able to attend driver training, by providing opportunities for low-income students and those living in areas where driver training is not easily accessible.
- **Increased Capacity:** Increase the number of driver training schools and instructors to help meet the need for formal driver training education.
- **Stronger Education:** Utilize best practices and research-based strategies to elevate Ohio's driver training practices and bring them closer to the national Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards.

OTSO is supporting its mission by establishing a grant program to provide funding for the establishment or expansion of driver training enterprises. OTSO anticipates this will help address specific localized needs for driver training by adding programs in areas with limited driver training options. This program is not intended to replace current driver training schools, but instead add additional capacity to an overburdened driver training system and to fill training gaps within the state.

Competitive Grants Funding Priorities

Competitive grants will be directed toward eligible entities that have the greatest need, as determined by factors set forth by OTSO. This will include, but may not be limited to, communities with lower access to or availability of driver training schools, higher local poverty levels, higher fatal crash rates, and the ability of the applicant to reach a large number of students.

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive funds under this grant program, the proposing entity must meet the following criteria.

Must be a city, local, or exempted village school district; joint vocational school district or other career-technical planning district; or educational service center regulated under [Chapter 33 of the Ohio Revised Code](#). Driver training enterprises licensed pursuant to [Chapter 4508 of the Ohio Revised Code](#), are also eligible, as are prospective driver training enterprises who can demonstrate they can become a licensed driver training enterprise and enroll students within the grant period.

Grantees will be required to abide by all the provisions set forth in [Chapter 4508 of the Ohio Revised Code](#) regarding Driver Training Schools.

Entities that have received funding through the [Drive to Succeed Grant Program](#) are eligible to apply for CODE Grant funding. However, applicants that receive CODE Grant funding will not be eligible to receive future Drive to Succeed Grant funding.

Funding Information

OTSO will use the following criteria to determine each grant proposal's funding eligibility: (1) met the submission deadline; (2) met the minimum proposal requirements, and 3) the extent to which the proposal will achieve or impact program goals.

OTSO will award grants at its discretion based on: (1) the amount of funding available to OTSO; (2) the total number of proposals submitted to OTSO; (3) the needs of the community, which may be determined by the lack of access to or availability of driver training schools, poverty level, fatal crash rates in the community, and potential reach; and (4) the strength of the application as it relates to the proposed program's likelihood for success and sustainability.

Funding may be used for allowable expenses to start or expand a current driver training school. This includes funds to supplement the salaries of instructors, as defined in [Section 4508.01 of the Ohio Revised Code](#). It also includes funds to supplement the salaries of driving mentors. Mentors must meet the applicable provisions outlined in section [4507.05 of the Ohio Revised Code](#) for an eligible adult for the purposes of completing the mandatory 50-hours of practical driving experience, as required by paragraph [\(B\)\(2\) of Section 4507.21 of the Ohio Revised Code](#).

OTSO reserves the right to limit the number of grants awarded and the awarded amounts at any time based on available funding and ability to impact statewide goals.

Grant Period

The grant period will be through June 30, 2025, with exact dates established based on the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement. Grantees must submit reports of grant activity and spending to the OTSO in the manner and frequency at which OTSO requires (but no more than monthly). All grantee programs may also be subject to a programmatic and/or fiscal site visit during the grant period, in addition to any site visits required by compliance with [Chapter 4508 of the Revised Code](#).

Funding Mechanism

Grants will be provided on a reimbursement basis. Grantees will have until the end of the grant period to spend the money. Any unspent portion of the award will not be disbursed after the grant period, unless otherwise determined by the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Eligible entities may use the CODE Grants to cover the following costs:

- Vehicle purchases (Up to \$20,000 per vehicle for up to 4 vehicles. Vehicles must be used for driver training purposes),

- Retrofitting of vehicles for student driving in accordance with [4501-7-14 of the Ohio Administrative Code](#) (e.g. dual control and rearview mirror installation),
- State-required student driver decals (does not include school branding or advertisement),
- Instructor candidate training compensation (based on training hours and salary, as determined by the applicant, but no more than \$1,500 per instructor candidate),
- Background checks,
- Partial cost of administration time to set up the school (\$10 per hour per administrator for up to two administrators),
- Partial cost of licensed driving instructor salaries (\$10 per hour per instructor for up to four instructors),
- Partial cost of driving mentor salaries (\$10 per hour per mentor for up to two mentors),
- Online driver education (up to \$90 per student).

Other costs, including the cost to contract with a training manager, may be considered during the application process; however, the grant may not be used to cover insurance, bond or escrow, fuel, vehicle maintenance, credit card fees, or employee benefits. OTSO retains sole discretion on allowable/unallowable expenses. OTSO may expand funding for allowable expenses if additional funds become available.

Grantees must provide OTSO monthly expense reports detailing how the money is being spent.

If an expense or function of the grant program will be borne by another entity other than the grantee, the grantee must submit a letter of commitment from the other entity.

CODE grant funds are intended to increase the number of affordable driver training options. If an applicant intends to charge a fee to students, the applicant should demonstrate in its proposal how the fee will assist in the longevity of the program beyond the grant funding.

The grant will only cover part of the hourly rate for the positions listed above. The remaining portion of the salary beyond the \$10 per hour supplement is the responsibility of the grantee. Salaries should be set high enough to attract and retain high-quality candidates.

Funding for instructors and mentors may be used to cover instructional and administrative time. Funding for administrators may only be used to cover time directly dedicated to the driving school. Grantees must include logs to validate hours in monthly expense reports.

Proposal Requirements

Grant Proposal Contents

It's crucial to the success of this grant application and grant program that the applicant prepare for and consider all aspects of opening a business, the driver training enterprise. Grant funding does not cover all expenses associated with opening and running an enterprise; therefore, expenses and business plans must be established upfront to ensure long-term success.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to create a formal business plan. While this application does contain many elements that should be in a business plan, it does not necessarily account for every actuality that should be considered when opening a driver training enterprise.

Grant proposals must be submitted on the provided application form with the necessary supplemental pages included. Only the agency that will receive the funding and administer the grant, may submit the application. Successful grant proposals must thoroughly answer all of the questions on the application form and in the supplemental documents.

All applications will need to provide the following:

- **Scope:**
 - Number of high schools the applicant currently serves, if applicable.
 - Number of students that attend high schools the applicant currently serves, if applicable.
 - For existing driver training enterprises, the average number of students the applicant provides Class D driver training to on an annual basis.
 - Number, name and address of locations where the applicant intends to provide driver training (include letters of commitment from these locations).
 - How the applicant will find and recruit prospective instructors.
 - How the applicant will prevent and prepare for instructor turnover.
 - For existing driver training enterprises, how the applicant will use the funds to expand their driver education program to serve more students.
- **Market Analysis:** Current availability and access to driver training schools, local poverty levels, and local crash rates within the communities to be served.
- **Financial Plan:** Clear demonstration of the capacity of the applicant to administer grant funding. The applicant should also demonstrate that they have adequate resources (i.e., personnel/staff and infrastructure to implement the project as proposed.) Supplemental documentation should be submitted where necessary to demonstrate the resources and planning detailed here. Annual financial projections should be based on the state's fiscal year periods (July 1 – June 30) of each year. The CODE Grant Planning Spreadsheet provided by OTSO should be used and submitted to show required details. All tabs must be completed. These include:
 - **Locations:**
 - Anticipated locations.
 - New location fees (\$250 per location).
 - **Instructor Training:**
 - Anticipated number of instructors to be hired.
 - Detailed outline of the costs associated with training instructors.
 - **Administrator Salaries:**

- Current or anticipated administrator salaries and the projected number of hours the administrator will spend working on tasks directly related to the driver training enterprise both weekly and annually.
 - **Instructor Salaries:**
 - Current or anticipated instructor salaries and the projected number of hours each licensed instructor will log both weekly and annually.
 - **Mentor Salaries:**
 - Current or anticipated mentor salaries and the projected number of hours each mentor will log both weekly and annually.
 - **Vehicles:**
 - Number of vehicles being purchased/retrofitted.
 - **Online Driver Education:**
 - Cost and number of students for online classroom (if applicable).
 - **Revenue:**
 - Anticipated number of students served on an annual basis through the applicant's driver training school.
 - Fees anticipated or currently charged to students enrolled in the driver training school. All fees collected must be used to ensure the sustainability of the program, and to meet the goals of the grant.
 - **Financial Summary:**
 - Accounting of all anticipated expenses (including those not covered by the grant) and how they will be covered.
 - Anticipated net income.
- **Five Year Road Map:** Comprehensive, thorough *timeline* that is well defined and specifies **what** will be done, **who** (individuals and organizations) will do it, and **when** it will be accomplished.
 - Applicants should also describe a plan of action to sustain the program activities beyond the grant period. The application will be evaluated as to how effectively it explains the steps that will be taken to ensure long-term program [sustainability](#) (i.e., the ability for the program to maintain its services over time).
 - The applicant must demonstrate a commitment to the program by describing a plan for maintaining programmatic activities after OTSO funding ends.

More information can be found below in the Recommendations section.

Grant Proposal Deadline

CODE Grant Proposals must be submitted by email to CODEgrants@dps.ohio.gov no later than 5:00 pm EST on December 15, 2023.

Data Collection

The goal of this program is to increase the capacity of driver training, to meet the demand of students in need of training. Therefore, during the grant period, grantees will be required to provide feedback regarding the grant program processes and outcomes, as requested by OTSO. With this information, OTSO will be able to determine the success of this funding mechanism in expanding driver training capacity for youth in Ohio.

This tracking information should be submitted using a format OTSO provides to grantees. This is in addition to required fiscal reporting outlined elsewhere in this document.

Bidder's Conference

An information session, known as a Bidder's Conference, will be held virtually on Monday, November 6 at 10 a.m. To register, please email CODEgrants@dps.ohio.gov and you will receive a link to attend the meeting.

Recommendations

Work with already established driver training enterprises – Your entity can identify one or more established driver training enterprise as a model. OTSO has a list of these enterprises that are willing to help others get started. Please email CODEgrants@dps.ohio.gov and the Driver Training Office will help you make that connection.

Attend a New School Orientation – All new driver training enterprise owners and Authorizing Officials are required to attend a New School Orientation. Attend one of these online sessions **before** submitting the grant application to get a better understanding of the requirements for opening and operating a driver training enterprise. Look for the **Class D New School Orientation** at [Opening a New School | Department of Public Safety \(ohio.gov\)](https://www.ohio.gov/opening-a-new-school).

Identify a Training Manager – New enterprises will need to identify a training manager in order to get started. The Driver Training Program Office has a list of training managers willing to help other schools get started. Please email CODEgrants@dps.ohio.gov and the Driver Training Program Office will help you make that connection.

Locations: You are required to submit details about your driver training enterprise structure. Locations should be in line with local community needs regarding driver training. Select locations that have less access to driver training schools. This model is designed to supplement the current driver training availability, in an effort to serve students whose needs are not being met, based on geographic limitations.

Other Funding Opportunities: Federal funding for after school programing may be available. Check with your statewide association or your fiscal office for specifics. Your county Job and Family Services office may have access to additional funding to help youth who are low-income or under their jurisdiction pay for drivers' education.

Pricing: High-priced driver training courses often exclude lower income students. Consider ways to keep prices low, and create opportunities for lower income students, by working with your county Job and Family Services office.

Partner with Local Businesses: Reach out to local businesses to obtain sponsorships for expenses not covered by the grant, or expenses that will be incurred after the grant period ends. Check with local car dealers, auto manufacturers or service shops for support in purchasing, servicing and/or retrofitting vehicles.