

# Drive to Succeed 2024 Grant Solicitation

Teen Driver Training Grant Proposal  
Overview and Guidelines



**Ohio Traffic  
Safety Office**

## Contents

Mission Statement .....	3
Grant Program Goal .....	3
Grant Program Details .....	3
Competitive Grants Funding Priorities .....	5
Eligibility.....	5
Funding Information.....	5
Proposal Requirements .....	6
Data Collection .....	7
Bidder's Conference .....	8
Recommendations.....	8
Recommendations.....	8

## Mission Statement

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The mission of the Ohio Traffic Safety Office is to save lives and reduce injuries on Ohio's roads through leadership and partnering efforts with others interested in traffic safety, utilizing the most innovative and efficient methods possible of managing state and federal resources.

## Grant Program Goal

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**OTSO aims to expand access to teen driver training to low-income populations by providing funding for localized scholarship programs.**

## Grant Program Details

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The Ohio Traffic Safety Office's (OTSO) goal is to promote traffic safety messaging, research, and programing in Ohio, in an effort to decrease traffic fatalities in Ohio road users. Recent OTSO research has, for the first time in Ohio, provided data that indicates a correlation between youth who complete driver training and obtain their license before they turn 18 and their crash outcomes within the first year of licensure.<sup>1</sup> With the knowledge that driver training plays a crucial role in creating safer new drivers, OTSO is focused on helping more young drivers obtain driver training by making it more accessible.

Ohio law only requires driver training for all new drivers if they are 16 or 17 years old at time of licensure. Anyone aged 18 or older can obtain their license without any form of 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 online) and either 24 hours driving experience with a licensed driver over age 21, or 4 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction. Ohio BMV records indicated only 24% of first-time drivers over the age of 18 end up taking this abbreviated driver training.

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

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.chop.edu/news/study-suggests-policy-education-and-training-make-youngest-novice-drivers-better-prepared>

## Ohio Driver Training Requirements

	16- or 17- year-old New Drivers	New Drivers 18+, if pass test on 1 <sup>st</sup> 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 (Unless driver chooses in-car)
In Car Hours (Not instructor led)	50	None	24 (Unless driver chooses behind-the-wheel instruction)
Length of Permit	6 months	None	None, but must wait 2 days to retake test

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 kids the chance to take one of these jobs, if transportation to the job was previously a barrier. Additionally, some communities have focused on providing driver training as a means to prevent unlicensed youthful drivers and the potential criminal violations that stem from being caught driving without a license- or even fleeing law enforcement because the driver isn't licensed.<sup>2</sup>

Teen driver training courses generally cost between \$300-600, or even more. This cost can prove to be a huge barrier to obtaining training for youth from low-income families. Given the many benefits of earlier licensure for youthful drivers, OTSO strives for more equity in access to driver training.

OTSO has supported this mission by establishing a grant program to provide local jurisdictions funding to establish teen driver training scholarship programs. Local governmental agencies, such as police departments, sheriffs' offices, health departments, school districts, educational service centers, etc. may apply for funding to establish community-based scholarships. Funding local jurisdictions allows for programs which can address the specific localized needs and resources of the community, while establishing relationships between local law enforcement and the populations they serve.

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

The first round of Drive to Succeed grants were awarded in March of 2023 to 25 grantees and students started receiving scholarships in July of 2023. As of January 1, 2024, over 300 students have started the program from all around the state.

## Competitive Grants Funding Priorities

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Competitive grants will be directed toward those local jurisdictions based on the strength of the grant application and with a priority on the greatest community need, as determined by factors set forth by OTSO. This may include local poverty level, population, and/or the fatal crash rate.

## Eligibility

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To be eligible to receive funds under this grant program, the proposing agency must be a local unit of government or council of government (e.g., county, city, township, village, police department or sheriff's office, health department, educational service center, school district, etc.).

## Funding Information

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**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) proposal's ability to impact program goals.**

**OTSO will award grants based on: (1) the amount of funding available to OTSO; (2) the total number of proposals submitted to OTSO; and (3) the strength of the grant application, with a priority on the need of the community, which may be determined by the poverty level, population, and/or fatal crash rates in the community. Previous Drive to Succeed grantees may also be evaluated on the success and implementation of their previous grant when considering a new award under this solicitation.**

**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. The applicant may be funded at an amount less than the total amount requested, meaning less students may be served in total.**

### Grant Period and Project Commencement

This grant period will be for two years, with exact dates established based on execution of a Memorandum of Agreement. Grantees must submit reports to the Ohio Traffic Safety Office in the manner and frequency at which OTSO requires. The grantee 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

Grantees will be awarded all funding up front, at the beginning of the grant period. Grantees will then have 2 years to spend down the money, for grant purposes. Any unspent funds at the end of the grant period must be returned to the Department of Public Safety (DPS), unless otherwise directed by DPS at its sole discretion. In order to assure the grant funds are being spent in a timely manner for their intended purpose, DPS reserves the right to cancel a grant agreement after 6 months if less than 25% of the grant amount has been spent at that time. In this case, any unspent funds must be returned to DPS.

## Funding Restrictions

Funding may only be used to pay driver training schools for the actual cost of novice teen driver training for eligible students. Eligible students are defined as those with an articulable financial need or barrier (such as below the poverty level) and who have not previously had teen driver training. Students may not be directly reimbursed for driver training costs. Payments should be made to the driver training school.

A small amount to assist grantees with administrative costs will be provided with each award.

Administration of the grant **may not** be conducted under any existing federal traffic safety grant through OTSO, as this is not a federally allowable expense. Personnel who also conduct federal OTSO grant activities may conduct activities for this grant, they just may not do so with federal funding.

## Proposal Requirements

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### Grant Proposal Contents

Grant proposals must be submitted on the provided application form by the agency which will receive the funding and administer the grant. Successful grant proposals must answer all of the questions on the application form:

- Identification of the grant program administrator, fiscal officer contact, and person(s) with authority to sign the MOU within the applying agency (these may be three separate people);
- Identification of driver training school(s) to be used, costs associated per student, and letter(s) of commitment from driver training school(s);
- Identification of any local partners and participating schools;
- How eligible students will be identified and notified of opportunity;
- Criteria by which students will qualify for scholarships (see below for more information);
- Requirements of students and families regarding driver training attendance and reimbursement for non-attendance;

- How the grantee will handle students who may not complete training (such an agreement with the driver training schools to transfer tuition fee to another student).

More information can be found below in the Recommendations section.

## Grant Proposal Deadline

**Drive to Succeed Grant Proposals must be submitted by email to [DrivetoSucceed@dps.ohio.gov](mailto:DrivetoSucceed@dps.ohio.gov) no later than 5:00 pm EST on March 15, 2024.**

## Data Collection

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A vital part of this program is to ensure that teen drivers are benefitting from increased access to driver training classes, resulting in fewer crashes and driving violations. Therefore, to help us in tracking the effectiveness of the program, we will ask grantees to provide the following information on a semi-annual basis:

- Legal names of all scholarship recipients (as it appears on a driver license);
- Their dates of birth;
- Their full legal addresses;
- Their driver license/permit number;
- The dates that they begin and end driver training.

This tracking information should be submitted using an Excel spreadsheet, which will be provided to grantees.

With this information, OTSO will be able to monitor driving records of the scholarship recipients and compare their safety performance with the performance of young Ohio drivers who do not enroll in driver training.

Additionally, as part of the agreement, grantees must register each student receiving a scholarship through a provided link to a registration form and a completion form when driver training is completed. The grantee will be required to facilitate the completion of a brief survey by scholarship recipients prior to starting their driver training and upon the completion of their driver training. OTSO will provide the survey. This survey will ask the recipient, among other things:

- How instrumental the scholarship was in allowing the student to attend driver training and successfully attain licensure;
- The extent to which a driver license has helped the student with school or job commitments, family responsibilities, charitable activities, etc.

This survey will help OTSO assess the extent to which the scholarship has resulted in a real-life, positive impact for the youth drivers who receive them.

Grantees may be required to provide other feedback regarding the grant program processes and outcomes, as requested by OTSO.

## Bidder's Conference

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**An information session, known as a Bidder's Conference, will be held virtually on February 20, 2024.** Please email [DrivetoSucceed@dps.ohio.gov](mailto:DrivetoSucceed@dps.ohio.gov) to register to attend or with any questions on the program.

## Recommendations

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**Working with Driver Training Schools** – Your agency should identify one or more Driver Training schools with whom you will send students to for training. This may be a combination of an online school and an in-person school to provide the behind-the-wheel training. Applying agencies are strongly encouraged to establish an agreement with the driver training school to address issues of cost, payment parameters, attendance, uncompleted training, timelines, etc. Applicants may want to consider factors such as online reviews, proximity to their location, capacity of the driving school to enroll more students, and local student experiences when determining which driving schools to work with.

**Criteria Suggestions:** Criteria must be established as to how students will be identified and selected to receive funding for the training. Criteria must first establish how students will be identified as eligible (meeting needs-based requirements). Additional criteria should be in line with the needs of the local community, but may include a minimum GPA, school absence minimums, teacher recommendations, essay submission, participation in other agency-sponsored programs (i.e., seminars or education). Criteria should be used to encourage and ensure program attendance and completion, but should not be so restrictive so as to exclude most eligible students.

**Cost-Sharing:** Agencies may find it helpful to require students to pay a small non-refundable portion of the fee, in order to help ensure their attendance. The fee may range from \$25 to no more than \$50.

**Uncompleted training:** Every effort should be made to ensure all students complete the full training course. In the event the driver training school requires payment upfront, agencies should establish an agreement with the driver training schools that addresses tuition paid for students who do not complete training, such as transferring the tuition to another student.

**Community Involvement:** Applicants are encouraged to develop broad-based support and commitment by local officials, constituent groups, community-oriented groups, schools, and businesses. Local Safe Communities Coalitions may be interested and able to help coordinate Drive to Succeed grant activities (but not under their federal grant).