

# **Pennsylvania Near Completer Round 2 Notice of Grant Availability and Bidder's Conference Questions and Answers**

This document may be updated as needed.

Last updated: January 27, 2023

**UPDATE: Appendix F has been added as an attachment to the website. Any reference to the \$7500 cap per participant has been removed.**

**Q: I did not receive an attachment F nor is there one on the website?**

**A:** It is in the NGA as Appendix F. It is not a stand-alone attachment.

**Q: Regarding the \$7,500 cap mentioned in Appendix F, is this cap in reference to supportive services? Or total cost allowable to be spent on a participant (including training)?**

**A:** There is no cap per student identified in the NGA. However, we will be looking for the most efficient and equitable use of funding.

**Q: Can students complete a degree that is different than what they started, if it is an HPO, PA IDOL, or a program from a PASSHE school? For example, a student started a degree in business analytics, but dropped out. They want to go back to school to earn their degree, but now would like to pursue carpentry. Can the school apply past credits earned and work experience and apply them to a new degree? Or does the degree completion need to be in the degree started?**

**A:** Yes, so long as their current employment is not within their training interest area. They can switch degrees/certificates; however, they must be able to complete the course of study by June 30, 2024.

**Q: How and when do the college/university receive payment? Is the semester tuition paid up front or upon successful completion of the term?**

**A:** Fiscal agents include eligible applicants. If organizations apply as a partnership, the application must appoint a single entity as the lead applicant who must also act as fiscal agent. The fiscal agent will receive, manage, and disburse grant funds. This grant allows the flexibility for the LWDB and schools to work together to come to an arrangement that works best for both. Even if you have more than one school you are working with, you can work with each of them to determine how payment should be made. Also, you may want to consider how both the LWDB and school are going to handle refunds/repayments regarding any cancellations or incomplete classes.

**Q: What is the grant eligibility distinction between degree programs and certificate programs?**

**We frequently partner with our CTEs in assisting displaced and incumbent workers in upskill training necessary for employment and retention. Most of these programs typically result in a certificate but aren't necessarily degree-related.**

**I'll use the example of a programmer that has a foundational level of education attainment but is wanting to add a new certificate of competency, not degree program credits, in additional programming languages to expand their resume. Another example would be a displaced or at-risk maintenance tech that is looking to upskill by enrolling in a training program included in an AAS curriculum that results in a certificate but is not looking to complete a degree.**

**A:** All these scenarios would be acceptable if the person had already started credentialing with a post-secondary institute of higher education but then had to stop before completing. All new, current, and graduated students would be ineligible.

**Q: What is considered an eligible certificate?**

**A:** If the certificate is offered as a *stand-alone certificate*, such as OSHA certification, and can be completed by June 30, 2024, it is considered an eligible credential. The participant must have been previously enrolled in a post-secondary institute and then stopped out to be eligible (among the other eligibility requirements listed in the NGA).

If the student was previously enrolled in a *certificate program* but had to stop out then they would meet that eligibility requirement if they can complete it by June 30, 2024 and meet the other eligibility requirements.

If the student was previously enrolled in a program that required *certifications along the way*, such as master pipe fitter, and then had to stop out before completing the entire program, then they would meet that eligibility requirement if they can complete the program by June 30, 2024 and meet the other eligibility requirements.

If the student is CURRENTLY enrolled, they are not eligible.

If the student has never been enrolled in school or has successfully completed school, they are not eligible.

Remember, the student must be re-enrolling in a post-secondary higher institute of higher education. They cannot just be doing the certification online through a third-party such as Coursera.

**Q: Can the LWDB partner with more than one school during the life of the grant, or do the schools need to be named in the proposal ahead of time?**

**A:** Applicants must have a confirmed, formal engagement with a post-secondary education institution at the time of application. The LWDB can partner with additional schools throughout the life of the grant. The LWDB, if deciding later to partner with more schools, would not need a modification or agreement from L&I (unless there is a question on whether the school is acceptable).

**Q: Can this grant pay for any unpaid tuition costs for the student to re-enroll.**

**A:** Yes. Appendix F, Suggested Activities, in the NGA outlines some (but not all the educational supports) that can be included. Specifically: *Waiver (temporary or permanent) or reduction of outstanding fees, fines, or penalties (parking fines, outstanding payments, etc.) related to prior enrollments while participating in the program to allow for enrollment and participation, etc.*

**Q: Can a student on the verge of dropping out/being kicked out be eligible? Can a student who went part-time because of barriers enroll as full-time under this grant?**

**A:** No. Only students who have already disengaged (stopped out) are eligible.

**Q: If a student stops out, what documentation from the school does the LWDB need showing the student is disengaged?**

**A:** That would depend on the school and what kind of documentation they keep. At minimum, a date of disengagement from the school is acceptable. Transcripts showing that they previously attended would work. The LWDB would need supporting documentation that the student was enrolled and now they are not and the student's previous GPA.

**Q. Because of the one-year time frame, it seems as though the person would have to be a full-time student. What about living expenses being covered?**

**A:** The LWDB's should follow their own supportive services policies.

**Q: Does the student's program have to meet the educational requirements of the HPO or PA IDOL?**

**A:** No. The student's program must reflect an occupation that is either on the HPO list or the PA IDOL if not attending a PASSHE school. The requirement is the SOC title and not the Educational Attainment section. If going to a PASSHE school, any certification is allowed, whether on the lists or not.

**Q: With regards to exiting a post-secondary program in the past two years, when does that time calculation start...from the date of grant award? The date of the NGA? Or by school year?**

**A:** We have some flexibility here with the way the NGA is written. The main thing we want to ensure is that the person's previous credits will still be counted. The 2-year eligibility requirement can be seen as a rolling two years based on when the person comes to see you for assistance and is accepted into the educational program.

**Q: When does the re-enrollment have to take place? Can it be prior to the date of the award? Or after the award date of the grant? Some summer sessions start in May.**

**A:** The Period of Performance for this grant begins June 1, 2023. Any costs prior to this date are considered pre-award costs. Pre-award costs are unallowable costs and are incurred at the applicant's risk. The LWDB is encouraged to leverage funds from other funding streams or to develop a proration to cover costs after June 1, 2023 if for example, classes begin prior to June 1, 2023. A student can be enrolled before June 1, 2023.

**Q: Would a student pursuing a Master or Doctorate level degree qualify if they meet the other eligibility criteria?**

**A:** This grant does not support master or doctorate level degrees. The goal is to support initiatives across the Commonwealth of PA that address the education and training needs of Pennsylvania's citizens, through rapid attainment, to help them obtain employment that pays a living wage.

**Q: If applying with interest from multiple post-secondary schools what is the best options on proceeding? Can we submit an application for \$2.5 million and within it that have multiple post-secondary agreements and spell out in the application which each school is training for? Or should we do individual apps for each school, and cannot exceed the \$2.5 million in total?**

**A:** Each Local Board should only submit one application for award up to \$2.5 million. You can have as many partner schools as you would like, however you are only required to have one at the time of application.