

# OHIO DEANS COMPACT ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

**June 2, 2022**

### Applications for New Incentive Grants:

*Partnership Grants to Improve the Capacity of Ohio's P20 Education System to Advance Postsecondary Options & Outcomes for All Learners*



**DATED MATERIAL: OPEN IMMEDIATELY**

<b>RFA AVAILABLE:</b>	<b>June 2, 2022</b>
<b>BIDDERS CONFERENCE:</b>	<b>June 8, 2022, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm</b> ( <i>attendance is required as a condition for submitting a proposal; applications may be submitted beginning noon on June 8, 2022</i> )
<b>CLOSING DATE:</b>	<b>July 1, 2022</b> ( <i>applications must be received by 4:30 pm ET</i> )
<b>NOTIFICATION OF AWARD:</b>	<b>ON OR BEFORE August 1, 2022</b>
<b>ANTICIPATED PROJECT PERIOD:</b>	<b>August 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023</b>

**REQUESTS FOR APPLICATIONS (RFAs): PARTNERSHIP GRANTS TO IMPROVE THE CAPACITY OF OHIO'S P20 EDUCATION SYSTEM TO ADVANCE POSTSECONDARY OPTIONS & OUTCOMES FOR ALL LEARNERS**

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# REQUESTS FOR APPLICATIONS (RFAs): PARTNERSHIP GRANTS TO IMPROVE THE CAPACITY OF OHIO'S P20 EDUCATION SYSTEM TO ADVANCE POSTSECONDARY OPTIONS & OUTCOMES FOR ALL LEARNERS

## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### Purpose of Program

The *Ohio Deans Compact on Exceptional Children* (hereafter referred to as the Compact) seeks proposals that implement sustainable improvements in Ohio's P20 education system to advance postsecondary learning experiences, successful employment, and independent living for students with disabilities. The request for applications (RFA) solicits proposals that lead to these improvements by contributing to the **effectiveness of professional learning systems** that build the individual and collective capacity of educators to reach Ohio's vision for each child to be "challenged to discover and learn, prepared to pursue a fulfilling post-high school path and empowered to become a resilient, lifelong learner who contributes to society" (Ohio Department of Education [ODE], 2018, p.9). This vision can best be achieved through the commitment of educator preparation programs (EPPs) at Ohio's institutions of higher education (IHEs) in partnership with related services provider programs, educational leadership programs, rehabilitation counseling programs, career technical centers, and other job service programs. Justification for this work is provided below in the "Background" section of the RFA.

In the initial year of funding Postsecondary Outcomes (PSO) Incentive Grants (i.e., 2021-22), the Compact funded six IHE-district partnership grants across three priority areas. In this second year of funding, the Compact seeks proposals in two priority areas to increase the percentage of high school graduates with disabilities who are enrolled and succeeding in post-high school learning experiences; serving in a military branch; earning a livable wage; or engaged in a meaningful, self-sustaining vocation. The Compact is particularly interested in investing in the development and implementation of comprehensive models that improve the preparation, support, and retention of students with disabilities, including those from other underrepresented subgroups within a career path (e.g., Black, Indigenous, People of Color [BIPOC] students; students who are English learners; students from disadvantaged backgrounds), in higher education and enhancing P20 systems that help students with disabilities graduate from high school and college and transition into in-demand occupations.

Our nation's future depends on the meaningful inclusion of all residents in our educational system, including students with disabilities (Office of Special Education Programs, 2010). In support of this assertion, the Compact offers the following statement of beliefs. Such beliefs, grounded in research and authoritative opinion, are used to guide this RFA:

1. All local, regional, state, and higher education educational agencies must commit to supporting each pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade (PK-12) student to graduate from high school.
2. All educators must sustain high expectations for each student, including maintaining rigorous graduation requirements for students with disabilities so they are well-prepared for their postsecondary experiences.
3. All educators must be willing to consider multiple pathways whereby students can achieve their postsecondary goals.

4. When students identify specific postsecondary goals that have a specified path, educators must keep pathways open for students so they are challenged, empowered, and prepared to change their goals (if desired) with a clear pathway to do so.
5. Increased options and outcomes for all students depend upon interagency communication and collaboration to prepare every learner for meaningful transitions to postsecondary endeavors.

## **PRIORITY AREAS**

Applicant IHEs\* may respond to one or both of the priority areas; however, only one application per priority area per applicant IHE will be considered for funding. If an applicant IHE was funded in 2021 and is applying for Priority Area #2 funding in this grant cycle, the proposed activities must be substantially different in scope to justify funding. If more than one application in a priority area is received by an applicant IHE, only the first one received will be reviewed. Across both priority areas, competitive preference points will be awarded for two or more IHEs that submit a proposal to work in partnership (Competitive Preference Priority #1) and/or who target a special population<sup>1</sup> of students with disabilities (Competitive Preference Priority #2).

\*For the purpose of this RFA, eligible applicants include Ohio's 4-year colleges and universities.

### ***Priority Area #1: Implementing PSO Programs to Advance Secondary Graduation and/or Postsecondary Transition Success for Students with Disabilities***

Priority Area #1 is open only to the six IHEs funded in the 2021-22 incentive grant cycle. This priority area aims to provide small-scale grants to support implementation of the PSO program the applicant designed in their first year of funding. Incentive Grant teams applying for Priority Area #1 must commit to making any revisions to their design as identified by Community of Practice (CoP) facilitators and to implementing their program with students with disabilities for the 2022-23 academic year.

### ***Priority Area #2: Designing Comprehensive P20 Demonstration Models that Advance Graduation and Postsecondary Success for Students with Disabilities***

Priority Area #2 focuses on the development of model demonstration partnerships between applicant IHEs and local school districts to advance high school graduation and increase the percentage of high school graduates with disabilities who are enrolled and succeeding in postsecondary learning experiences, serving in a military branch, earning a living wage, and engaged in a meaningful, self-sustaining vocation. The RFA calls for *comprehensive* models, by which it means multifaceted initiatives that combine strategies across four dimensions that relate to the support and sustained engagement of P20 students with disabilities, self-reflection of bias, pre-apprenticeships/apprenticeships in high-need areas, and interagency collaboration. The design of these comprehensive P20 models can be achieved only through the concerted efforts of authentic, meaningful, collaborative, and sustainable university-school district<sup>2</sup> partnerships. Applicant IHEs are encouraged to consider developing consortium efforts that extend involvement to multiple districts and include educational service centers (ESCs), community colleges, and other partners.

The comprehensive model must include, at a minimum, a plan to address the following components:

#### **A. P20 STUDENT SUPPORT AND SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT COMPONENT**

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<sup>1</sup> Special populations are defined in the [Strengthening Career Technical Education in the 21st Century Act](#).

<sup>2</sup> School district for purposes of this RFA is defined broadly to include Ohio's educational service centers (ESCs).

The applicant IHE(s)-district partner(s) must identify one or more approaches for supporting P20 students with disabilities and sustaining their engagement to promote high school and college graduation. These might include any combination of the following strategies or other strategies identified by the applicant IHE in collaboration with its school district partner(s):

- **Grow Your Own Program.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop or expand a grow your own program to attract P12 students with disabilities into high-demand careers. This program should include the systems and supports necessary to support high schoolers with disabilities to enroll and be accepted into the IHE's program as well as to apply for and be selected to work in high-demand jobs with one or more industry partner.
- **Cohort Program.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop a cohort program of special populations<sup>3</sup> to create the social, cultural, and academic support systems necessary to increase the pool of individuals with disabilities in the workforce.
- **Tutoring Program.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop one or more tutoring programs to give middle and/or high school students with disabilities (who are interested in the high-demand profession) opportunities to receive tutoring from teacher candidates and/or prospective IHE candidates in the high-demand profession, academic support in areas that have historically been a barrier to students with disabilities accessing their postsecondary aspirations.
- **Mentoring Program.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop a mentoring program to support the social, emotional, and professional learning needs of individuals with disabilities in the career pathway.

## B. HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND SELF-REFLECTION OF BIAS COMPONENT

The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) must identify one or more approaches for identifying bias within each partnering institution to disrupt the cycle of low expectations for individuals with disabilities. IHE and P12 partners should identify intentional ways to embed professional learning opportunities on assets-based practices into their current adult learning opportunities (e.g., teacher academies, mentor trainings, educator professional development) and specify new approaches necessary to actualize this component of the model (e.g., identifying and dismantling policies and practices that promote ableism, racism, etc.). These approaches might include any combination of the strategies listed below or other strategies identified by the applicant IHE in collaboration with its school district partner(s). Additionally, the district partner(s) should conduct or supply data/information from an already-conducted equity and implicit bias audit in year one of the grant to support the identification of needs to be addressed by the IHE-district team.

- **Critical Reflection.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop an intentional system that facilitates critical reflection for individuals (inclusive of educators, counselors, administrators, and disability services staff) across partnering institutions. Critical reflection provides a means for identifying and addressing bias and may include the following components: identifying practices that need to change to increase equitable experiences for all P12 students, prospective candidates in the profession, and educators/faculty/staff across institutions; identifying biases; identifying action steps necessary to improve the IHE/district's emotional climate. The applicant IHE may also select other components as targets for the critical reflection. The applicant should

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<sup>3</sup> Special populations are defined in the [Strengthening Career Technical Education in the 21st Century Act](#).

clearly specify the components and intended outcomes of the critical reflection.

- **High Expectations.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop a system that promotes assets-based perspectives regarding all P12 students, candidates in the profession, and educators. This system should include methods that support educators to identify how their own identities influence their teaching, any of their own deficit-based perspectives, and how both of these aspects influences their students'/candidates' learning (including those with disabilities). The applicant should also specify the types of supports that will be provided to assist educators/faculty/staff to proactively counter deficit-based perspectives.
- **Developing Knowledge of the Students'/Candidates' Identities.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop a system for getting to know their students/candidates through informal methods (e.g., regular communication with P12 students and their families) and formal methods (e.g., student affinity groups; district-wide PD). Once knowledge is obtained, a system should be in place to support educators/faculty/staff to incorporate the information into their instruction and interactions with students/candidates with disabilities to foster relationships and make their teaching relevant to their students'/candidates' lives.

### C. PRE-APPRENTICESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP IN HIGH-NEED AREA COMPONENT

The applicant IHE(s) and PK-12 partner(s) must identify one or more approaches for creating or enhancing model pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship programs in partnership with one or more industry partners. These might include any combination of the following strategies or other strategies identified by the applicant IHE in collaboration with its school district partner(s):

- **Customized Training Program.** The applicant IHE(s) and PK-12 partner(s) shall develop a customized training/apprenticeship program, in which individuals with disabilities earn a livable wage while building skills and pathway competencies on the job. These high-quality work-based learning opportunities should meet state standards and include agreements between the IHE and industry partner for aligned educational pathways that afford individuals with disabilities the opportunity to increase knowledge in the pathway, which when paired with workplace experience, leads to career advancement.
- **Professional Leadership Program.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop and implement leadership systems for recognizing, rewarding, and promoting individuals with disabilities in the profession. This program should create pathways for prospective candidates and practicing individuals to develop into leaders in the profession.
- **Self-Employment.** The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) shall develop systems to support P20 students with disabilities who have entrepreneurial aspirations. These systems should include training and ongoing support for P20 students with disabilities to understand self-employment regulations and the requirements involved in starting and sustaining one's business.
- **Immersion Program.** Developing in partnership with area school districts, applicant IHEs shall offer summer learning and research programs for high school students with disabilities to expose students to careers in the high-need profession, and provide a stipend to participating students.

### D. INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION COMPONENT

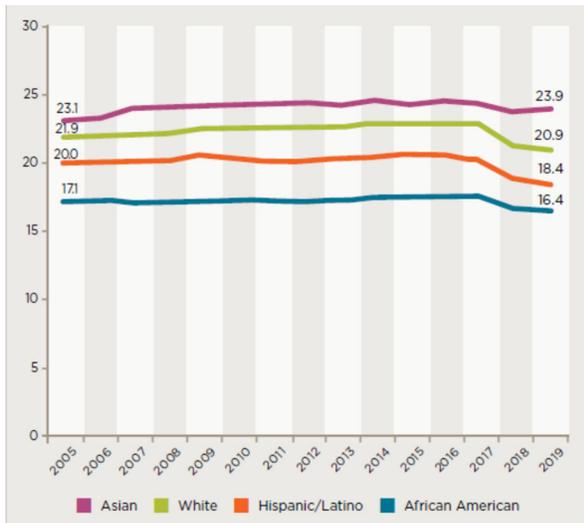
The applicant IHE(s) and P12 partner(s) must identify one or more approaches for communicating and collaborating with one another and other partners during and after the life of the grant. Applicants

must address the ways in which they are accelerating entry and advancement into a career through their collaboration and strategies that will be used to develop, leverage, and sustain effective partnerships within the IHE, between the IHE and area school districts, and between the IHE and other partners.

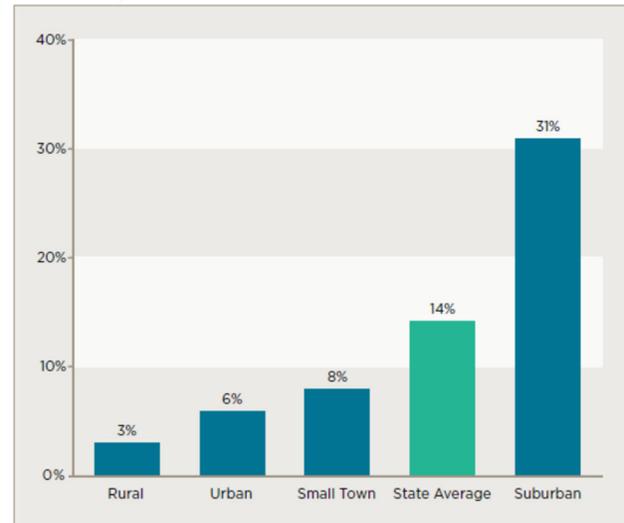
**BACKGROUND**

The background section discusses the evidence supporting the Incentive Grant initiative. It provides information applicable to all priorities in this RFA. Applicants are encouraged to consider the ways in which their proposed activities respond to needs identified in this section.

Ohio’s postsecondary readiness and outcomes subgroup data show incongruities to the state’s population when analyzing the data based on race, ethnicity, disability, and locale. Data of Ohio’s youth including ACT test scores, Advanced Placement (AP) exams passed, industry credentials earned, and high-school and college graduation rates, consistently demonstrate disproportionate outcomes (ODE, 2018, 2021; Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2020). Despite the fact that most of the students across all subgroups can engage with more challenging coursework, many of the underrepresented P12 students (including students with disabilities) are not held to the same standards, afforded high expectations, or given equitable opportunities to advance their education and training during their P12 schooling. The two figures below from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2020) provide an example of the disparities in postsecondary readiness and outcomes for Ohio’s students.



Average ACT Scores by Race/Ethnicity



Percent of Graduates with 1+ Passing AP Exam Score

The national emphasis on college and career readiness has increased graduation requirements across the nation; however, graduation rates for students with disabilities continue to lag behind rates for other students (Thurlow et al., 2015). In 2017, Ohio’s four-year on-time graduation rate was 84.1%. The rate for students with disabilities for the same class was 70.4%. This disparity exists even though about 79% of Ohio’s students with disabilities are excused from meeting some of the state’s graduation requirements (ODE, 2021). For three consecutive years, at least 20% of Ohio’s students with disabilities have dropped out of high school each year, representing nearly 4,500 individuals with disabilities statewide who have limited PSO options and opportunities.

Other risk factors for disparate postsecondary outcomes include poverty and adverse childhood experiences. Ohio's students are attending school with increasingly diverse experiences (e.g., homelessness; trauma) that impact their academic, social, emotional, and behavioral learning (Children's Defense Fund, 2018; ODE, 2018). Nearly 20% of Ohio's children are living in poverty and 50% are characterized as economically disadvantaged. These and other adverse life experiences negatively impact students' persistence in school to high school graduation. Given the differences in P12 students' life experiences and educational opportunities, it is understandable why education, training, and supports to advance postsecondary outcomes must be individualized for each student based on age-appropriate transition assessment information that includes the student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS).

As described in *Each Child Our Future: Ohio's Strategic Plan for Education 2019-2024* (ODE, 2018), Ohio's central goal is an annual increase in the percentage of its high school graduates who, one year after graduation are (1) enrolled and succeeding in postsecondary learning experiences, (2) serving in a military branch, (3) earning a living wage, or (4) engaged in a meaningful, self-sustaining vocation. Ohio's strategic plan commits to holding high expectations for all students and for the educators who teach and support them. Over 35 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of students from marginalized backgrounds (e.g., students with disabilities or learning difficulties; BIPOC students) could be made more effective by having high expectations and ensuring their participation and progress in the general education curriculum in inclusive settings<sup>4</sup> to the maximum extent possible (U.S. DoE, OSEP, 2010).

Ohio's vision is for each P12 student in the state to be challenged, prepared, and empowered for their future (ODE, 2018). Ohio's comprehensive design for realizing this vision includes a focus on equity, partnerships, and quality schools. The state's guidance for enhancing students' high school experiences to advance fulfilling postsecondary outcomes for each student includes a recommendation for districts to provide each student with "access to a variety of opportunities that will lead to a standard diploma and ensure a seamless transition to postsecondary education and employment settings" (ODE, 2021, p.29). Enacting this recommendation requires the use of a combination of relevant education (e.g., honoring and promoting career-technical education), training (e.g., expanding work-based learning experiences), and support services (e.g., using partnership-based approaches; utilizing age-appropriate transition assessments; intensifying transition services provided based on students' PINS) for each student (e.g., Anderson et al., 2017; Cotner et al., 2021; Fein & Hamadyk, 2018; Hamadyk & Zeidenberg, 2018; Martinson et al., 2018; Modicamore et al., 2017; ODE, 2018, 2021).

An increasing number of authors and researchers (e.g., Darling-Hammond, L., 2010; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Schmoker, M., 2006; Louis, et al., 2010; Wahlstrom et al., 2010; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008) advocate for the use of team structures to facilitate shared learning for instructional improvement. They note that no single person has all the necessary knowledge, skills, and talents to meet the needs of all children. This finding is reflective of the growing body of evidence in support of teachers working together to inform each other's instructional practice and to share meaningfully in school leadership functions (Gallimore, et al., 2009). This shift is evident in the work of the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, which provides a foundation for Ohio's improvement process and associated structures. In order to advance postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities, all educators need to assume collective responsibility for each student by sustaining high expectations, implementing evidence-based instruction and intervention, and engaging in a continuous

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<sup>4</sup> "Inclusive" or "inclusion" means an active commitment to equity for all students so as to maximize the participation of all learners, by making learning opportunities relevant and high quality (National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI) Leadscape, 2011).

improvement process whereby data are critically examined and used in a formative manner to maximize equitable opportunities to learn and outcomes for P12 students with disabilities and to inform professional development needed by building and district personnel.

The 2022 Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards hold IHEs accountable for ensuring that partnerships are central to candidate preparation. It is through these partnerships that candidates develop the “knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions [necessary] to demonstrate positive impact on diverse students’ learning and development” (p.1). Shared beliefs and a shared commitment to successful and sustainable outcomes for each student are critical to the success of partnership efforts (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 2018; Bier et al., 2012; Causton-Theoharis et al., 2011; Mantle-Bromley et al., 2000). Actualizing “positive and lasting impacts on Ohio’s education system” (ODE, 2021, p.34) is only possible through partnerships (e.g., with local districts, other IHEs, businesses, families) that address real problems in the community and state.

#### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

Applicants must indicate the applicable priority area on the applicant information page of the application:

- **Priority Area #1: *Implementing PSO Programs to Advance Secondary Graduation and/or Postsecondary Transition Success for Students with Disabilities***
- **Priority Area #2: *Designing Comprehensive P20 Demonstration Models that Advance Graduation and Postsecondary Success for Students with Disabilities***

An applicant must include the following in its application:

- A. A logic model, reflective of research-/evidence-based practice that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. A logic model communicates how a project will achieve its outcomes and provides a framework for both formative and summative evaluation of the project.
- B. An implementation plan for accomplishing the activities described in the Quality of Project Services and the Implementation, Management, & Evaluation of the Project sections of this RFA.
- C. A plan, reflective of effective practice and linked to the project’s logic model, for a formative evaluation of the proposed activities that relies on clear performance objectives and measures of progress in implementing project activities, and describes how key partners, including school district representatives and business/industry partners, will contribute to continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.
- D. Letters of support from the applicant institution’s Provost or highest-ranking academic official, the Dean of the school/college of education, and the applicable Department Chairperson.
- E. A letter of commitment from a minimum of one partner school district and/or one business/industry partner that meets the requirements described under the Purpose of the Program section of this RFA. The external letter of support must reflect the support of the district superintendent/CEO. The letter should specify the roles each partner will play in contributing to project implementation and include the signatures of all partners. Signatures of the partner school district superintendent/CEO,

teacher union/association president, and board of education president must be included as part of the agreement.

- F. A budget for an external evaluation to be conducted by an independent third party, and a signed assurance indicating that the applicant IHE will participate in Compact “centralized” evaluation activities. Note: Each project employs an evaluator to give formative feedback and to help write the end-of-year report. The end-of-year reports (in aggregate) inform the summative (also known as centralized) evaluation.
- G. A budget for attendance at an annual two-day statewide conference of the Ohio Deans Compact on Exceptional Children during which successful applicants will be required to share their progress in implementing project activities; attendance at quarterly Ohio Deans Compact meetings (each held for one and a half days and requiring one overnight); and participation in quarterly phone conferences. *(Note: At a minimum, the Quarter 1 and 2 meetings of 2021-22 will be virtual.)*

In addition, for Priority Area #2, an applicant IHE must include the following in its application:

- H. A balanced review of the literature describing the effectiveness of each of the approaches selected for each of the four components of the model
- I. A description of the process used to design the postsecondary model, including the individuals internal and external to the IHE who will be involved in the implementation of project activities (Note: this description must address the ways in which interdisciplinary collaboration will occur across units within the IHE, and external partners, to advance postsecondary outcomes for all students).

Applicant institutions must be represented at the virtual bidders conference, scheduled for **June 8, 2022, from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm** as a condition of submitting one or more applications in response to this RFA ***(Note: at least one representative of the applicant institution must attend; the representative need not be the prospective principal investigator).***

#### **DELIVERABLES**

At the **end of the year of funding**, each project should provide:

- A. For **Priority #1 awards**, the complete curriculum implemented throughout the year;
- B. For **Priority #2 awards**, a description of and a document presenting the complete model designed by the applicant IHE, along with all materials, products, tools, and resources that form the basis of the postsecondary model. The description should include a visual representation of the model and the relationship among its core components;
- C. Products that were developed or enhanced through the grant;
- D. A plan for sustaining the effort beyond the life of the grant;
- E. A fiscal impact statement signed by the Dean at the applicant IHE, which provides an explanation of the fiscal impact of ongoing implementation of the project for the IHE;

F. Slide presentations outlining the content of interim reports to share as a part of the Office for Exceptional Children's Guiding Coalition; and,

G. Mid-year and annual performance reports, which include all evaluation findings and information.

## **OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

Recipients of awards under this request are required to participate in the following activities:

- A Compact-sponsored Community of Practice (CoP);
  - 4 sessions held during quarterly meetings (required)
  - 4 sessions held virtually between meetings (required)
  - Individual consultation sessions with a CoP facilitator (optional)
  - Compact conference lunch & learn session with a CoP facilitator (optional)
  - Pre-meeting/conference sessions (optional)
- An annual Compact statewide conference (2-3 days) (to be held in-person in January 2023);
- Quarterly Compact meetings (1.5 days per meeting).
- A Guiding Coalition quarterly meeting during which funded IHEs will be asked to report on their progress in implementing approved activities.

Recipients of awards under this RFA must share evaluation information with the Ohio Deans Compact and participate, upon request, in Compact-sponsored evaluation activities.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

Information about the estimated number of awards, the maximum award amount, and the project period is provided in the table below. The Compact will reject and will not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding the maximum amount for any single budget period under this RFA.

### **FUNDING**

Across priority areas for the project period of August 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023, awards will range in size from \$20,000 - \$50,000. All projects must include at least one local district partner; additional IHE and/or industry partners affords competitive preference points for the applicant. Table 1 shows the maximum award, estimated number of awards, anticipated duration of the project, project period, and indirect cost limits.

### **EXPECTED NUMBER OF AWARDS**

The Compact expects to fund eight awards. The total number of awards will be based on the number of proposals received for each priority area.

**Table 1. Expected Grant Funding Information**

Incentive Grants to Ohio IHEs					
PRIORITY AREA	MAXIMUM AWARD	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF AWARDS	ANTICIPATED DURATION	PROJECT PERIOD	INDIRECT COSTS
1 <i>Implementing PSO Programs to Advance Secondary Graduation and/or Postsecondary Transition Success</i>	Up to \$20,000	4	11 months	August 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	Limited to 8% of applicable direct costs
2 <i>Designing Comprehensive P20 Demonstration Models that Advance Graduation and Postsecondary Success</i>	Up to \$50,000	4	11 months	August 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	Limited to 8% of applicable direct costs

### III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Accredited four-year colleges and universities in Ohio.

#### COST SHARING OR MATCHING

Cost sharing/matching is not required.

### IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

#### PAGE AND FORMAT LIMITATIONS

Applications submitted in response to this request for applications must be limited to 25 double-spaced pages for Priority Area #1 and 35 double-spaced pages for Priority Area #2. This page limitation applies to all material presented in the application narrative (i.e., the section where applicants address selection criteria). Use the following standards in developing the application narrative:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch). Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. An application submitted in any other font (including Times Roman or Arial Narrow) will not be accepted.

The page limit applies only to the application narrative. It does **not** apply to the applicant information page, the required budget components (including the narrative budget justification), the one-page abstract, or appendices. Additionally, the page limit does **not** apply to staff vitae, instruments to be used, partnership agreements (e.g., agreements between the IHE and partners such as area school districts), and letters of support/cooperation.

Staff vitae should include each person's title and role in the proposed project and contain only information that is relevant to this proposed project's activities and/or publications (not to exceed five pages). Vitae for consultants and advisory committee members should be similarly brief.

Letters of support/cooperation should be specific, indicating agreement with a particular aspect of the proposed project. Proposals must include a letter of commitment from a minimum of one partner school district that meets the requirements described under the Purpose of the Program section of this RFA. The district letter of support must reflect the support of the district superintendent/CEO, teacher union/association president, and board of education president.

The application narrative should be organized to follow the exact sequence of the components in the selection criteria used to evaluate applications. The selection criteria are listed under **Section V Application Review Information** for each of the priorities addressed in this request. The abstract should precede the table of contents and application narrative.

The Compact will reject (that is, will NOT consider) an application that fails to adhere to the page limit requirements, or the standards delineated above, for the competition.

### **SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES**

Applications Available: **June 2, 2022**

Required Bidders Conference: **June 8, 2022, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm**

Deadline for Receipt of Applications: **July 1, 2022, 4:30 pm ET**  
(Note: applications will not be accepted before noon on June 8, 2022)

Notification of Award: **on or before August 1, 2022**

**Applications that do not comply with the deadline requirements will not be accepted.**

### **SUBMISSION PROCESS**

Applications for grants in response to this request must be submitted electronically using the Ohio Deans Compact web site at [www.ohiodeanscompact.org](http://www.ohiodeanscompact.org). The following application components must be uploaded as PDF documents to the web site: (1) Abstract; (2) Application Narrative; (3) Appendix A; (4) Other Appendices; (5) Project Budget; and (6) Budget Narrative Justification. An application information page and project budget template must be downloaded from the website, completed, and uploaded in PDF format as part of the required components.

**Appendices: Appendix A** should provide the following required components (see Application Requirements & Project Activities in this RFA): (1) project logic model, (2) implementation plan and schedule, (3) plan for formative evaluation of proposed activities, and (4) other data, charts, and/or tables referenced in the Application Narrative. **Other Appendices** should include, at a minimum, partnership agreements, letters of support, and project personnel vitae.

**Questions:** Questions regarding this RFA should be submitted online through the Compact website. Responses to questions will be posted through this site to ensure that all interested applicants receive the same information.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under **Section VII Contact Information** of this request. If an

individual with a disability receives an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this request.

## V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

In reviewing applications under this request for applications, the Ohio Deans Compact on Exceptional Children may consider the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award or awards from the Compact, such as the applicant's timely use of funds, the applicant's attendance at required Compact meetings and events, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Compact may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

Additionally, in making a competitive grant award, the Compact requires various assurances including those applicable to federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving financial assistance. These assurances and additional certifications will be required of any institution recommended for funding and as a condition of receiving funding under this request. One of these assurances includes a detailed expenditure plan. Projects that do not expend the funds they receive probably did not need those funds in the first place.

Upon completion of the review process, individual reviewer scores and applications will be ranked. **Five competitive preference points will be awarded for including one or more community colleges and/or one or more IHEs as partners in the work.** The higher ranked, approved applications will be funded first. There may be lower ranked, approved applications that do not receive funding. It is possible that a small number of applications that are approved and fall next in rank order (after those projects selected for funding) will be placed on hold. If funds become available as a result of negotiations, or if a higher ranked applicant declines the award, the projects on hold may receive funding in full or in part. Reviewers may include suggestions the applicant IHE needs to consider implementing prior to being awarded funding. If applicants receive a letter stating their application will not receive funding, then their project has neither been selected for funding nor placed on hold. Copies of reviewer comments will be emailed to applicants upon request.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

#### ***Abstract***

An **abstract**, not to exceed one page, should precede the application narrative, and should include the title of the program. Additionally, the abstract should include the intended outcome, and goals and activities of the project (including activities to strengthen interagency collaboration), how the proposed project meets Compact priorities for advancing postsecondary outcomes for all students, and the names and affiliations of the partners. If an applicant is applying for the competitive preference priority points, it should clearly be labeled on the abstract.

#### ***Significance***

In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Compact considers the following factors:

- (1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies;

- (2) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement for individuals with disabilities;
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of individuals with disabilities;
- (4) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively by other IHEs in Ohio;
- (5) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project; and,
- (6) The likelihood that project funds will be used effectively to support efforts that otherwise would not be possible.

### ***Quality of Project Services***

In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Compact considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. Additionally, the Compact considers:

- (1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services;
- (2) The extent to which entities that are to be served by the proposed project demonstrate support for the project;
- (3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice;
- (4) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services;
- (5) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners in using resources to maximize the effectiveness of project services;
- (6) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources; and,
- (7) The extent to which the services to be provided include a plan to sustain the project after the life of the grant.

### ***Quality of Project Personnel***

In determining the quality of project personnel, the Compact considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally

been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Compact considers the following factors:

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel; and,
- (2) The time commitments for all project personnel, and the extent to which the time commitments of the principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to implement the proposed activities as planned.
- (3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

**TABLE 2. EXAMPLE: PERSON LOADING CHART —TIME IN DAY(S) BY PERSON\***

Activity	Time in Day(s) by Person			
	Person A	Person B	Person C	Person D
Program Design & Planning	0	0	0	0
Curricular Revision	0	0	0	0
Collaboration & Teaming	0	0	0	0
Program Development	0	0	0	0
Compact Engagement (e.g., quarterly meetings, community of practice)	0	0	0	0

\*Note: All figures represent FTE for the grant year.

***Adequacy of Resources (10 points)***

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Compact considers the following factors:

- (1) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization;
- (2) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project; and
- (3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

***Quality of the Management Plan***

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Compact considers the following factors:

- (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined and feasible responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;
- (2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project;

- (3) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project;
- (4) How the applicant will ensure that diverse perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

**Quality of Project Evaluation**

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Compact considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.
- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide timely guidance for quality assurance.
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.
- (5) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.
- (6) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.
- (7) The clear agreement that local evaluators will share information with any related centralized evaluation effort undertaken by the Ohio Deans Compact.

**Table 3. Scoring Criteria by Priority Area**

	<b>Priority #1</b>	<b>Priority #2</b>
<b>Significance</b>	--	<b>10</b>
<b>Quality of Project Services</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Quality of Project Evaluation</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>110</b>

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants receiving awards must submit mid- and annual performance reports describing their implementation of project activities, findings, and other relevant information in accordance with procedures established by the Compact and the University of Cincinnati. Each grantee shall freely share all products

developed through the grant back to the Compact at a minimum of once annually. These products will be posted on the Compact website to support other IHEs and P12 districts to replicate development and implementation efforts in their locale.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Applicants must include clear and measurable performance measures keyed to the implementation objectives identified by the applicant.

In addition, the Compact requires all applicants to address the following program performance measure in their application:

- *By the end of the project year, a signed commitment from the dean of the college indicating that strategies identified in the plan will be fully implemented in the next grant year.*
- *By the end of the project year, 100% of the products, materials, and resources designed to advance postsecondary outcomes for all students.*

## VI. REQUIRED BUDGET COMPONENTS

Applicants are required to complete a project budget template and budget narrative justification. The template must be downloaded from the website, completed, and uploaded in PDF format as part of the required components. The budget narrative justification describing all costs identified in the project budget must be uploaded in PDF format as part of your required application. Please refer to [www.ohiodeanscompact.org](http://www.ohiodeanscompact.org) for submission instructions.

In developing your project budget, please note the following:

- Applicants must specify the level of effort on the part of the principal investigator and other key personnel contributing to the project. Applicants for Priority #2 are encouraged to incorporate PI effort at no less than .25 FTE (one to two course releases per year depending on IHE-specific workload policies).
- Faculty buy-out for summer terms is allowable.
- Equipment purchases, defined as equipment that has a useful life of one year or more and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more, are permitted if their purchase is necessary to support implementation of approved project activities. Other property purchases necessary to support project implementation are allowable and should be included with *materials and services* costs.
- Travel within the US is allowable when it relates to the expressed goals of the project. Requests for travel to international conferences/events will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- For applications submitted in response to this request, the indirect cost rate may not exceed 8% of the direct costs. Applicable Education Department General Administrative Regulations apply to training grants.

- Tuition costs are allowable if related to the employment of a graduate research assistant to support project implementation. Tuition costs for students with disabilities to participate in postsecondary education, apprenticeship programs, and training are allowable.

Successful applicants recommended for funding under this competition will be required to complete additional certifications and assurances as a condition of receiving an award. Funding may be withheld from institutions that do not follow the requirements specified in this RFA or the certification and assurance documents.

## VII. CONTACT INFORMATION

*For further information, contact:*

Areej Ahmed, CoP Facilitator  
Ohio Deans Compact on Exceptional Children  
Telephone: (614) 897-0020  
Email: [ahmed2aj@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:ahmed2aj@ucmail.uc.edu)

## VIII. REFERENCES

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*Note: sections of this Request for Application were modified from several notices issued by the U.S. DoE, Office of Special Education Programs.*