

Memorandum

May 12, 2022

**To: Presidents and Chancellors, Institutional Research Directors
Texas Public Institutions of Higher Education**

**Cc: Chief Academic Officers, Chief Financial Officers, Liaisons
Texas Public Institutions of Higher Education**

**From: Harrison Keller, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education**

Subject: Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value Planning Grant Opportunity

As part of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is pleased to announce a new Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value Planning Grant opportunity to support public colleges, universities and health-related institutions impacted by COVID-19.

The THECB will award grants of up to \$50,000 to eligible institutions to plan for the accelerated development or expansion of short-term, industry-recognized postsecondary credentials that incorporate the skills and knowledge required by high-demand careers. Planning projects must concern credentials required by high-demand careers in the following areas:

- Advanced Manufacturing (Including Biomedical)
- Data Analytics
- Digital Skills
- Front-line Healthcare
- General Management/Sales
- Transportation/Logistics

Because of the relative short grant period, institutions should focus their planning efforts on a select credential or set of highly related credentials in one of these high demand career areas.

Credentials programs must be planned in consultation with one or more workforce entities including employers, industry representatives, trade associations, workforce boards, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations or other industry organizations.

The deliverable for this grant is a completed work plan concerning the expansion or creation of new short-term credential program(s). Eligible institutions that deliver a robust completed plan at the end of this planning grant period will be given bonus points for the next round of grants for Accelerating Credentials which is expected to be released in the near future.

Students enrolled in these credential programs should be able to complete the program with twelve months or less of full-time enrollment. The credential programs may be stand alone or embedded in existing degree programs (Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Doctoral, post-graduate). These programs may result in a certificate, certification, badge or other credential, but in all cases, the credential programs being planned must be convertible or stackable to a credit bearing degree program. Where practicable, institutions should leverage or incorporate existing industry-recognized certifications, training, and tools.

Eligibility

A direct award of up to \$50,000 will be made to any Texas public university, university system, health related institution, or community, technical, and state college that meet the application requirements to receive an Accelerating Credentials Planning Grant. Consortia of three or more eligible entities may apply for a planning grant. An eligible institution is limited to applying once as a single institution and once as a lead institution for a consortium for a maximum total of two applications.

Allowable Uses

In composing, operating, and reporting on the project budget, grantees must conform to federal Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG). Planning grant budgets can include:

- Purchases of curriculum development and instructional design materials;
- Personnel costs for staff/faculty time dedicated to the planning project including time needed to prepare for the THECB approval process;
- Costs associated with staff/faculty training central to the planning project;
- Costs associated with hiring external trainers, instructional designers, and other vendors necessary for the planning project; and
- Costs for meetings and travel necessary and reasonable to the planning project and allowable under UGG.

Expenditures may commence upon execution of the grant agreement and complete before September 30, 2022.

Application Process

Eligible institutions must submit a letter of interest from the president or president's designee from the institution describing the planning project, project deliverables, and how the grant funds will be spent.

Eligible institutions should also submit a letter of commitment from a workforce entity involved in the project that describes the workforce entity's role in the planning project. This letter should include the name, title, and contact information for the main participant in the project for the workforce entity. The workforce entity must be a private nonprofit, for-profit, or government agency with authority and that is in good standing to operate and conduct business within Texas.

A budget form indicating proposed expenditures not to exceed \$50,000, federal certifications and disclosure forms must also be provided. Templates for these are attached.

The application checklist is as follows:

- Letter of interest signed by the president or the president's designee
- Proposed budget
- Letter of commitment from one or more workforce entities
- Required federal certification and disclosure requirements

Please email the completed application packet to newcredentials@highered.texas.gov with the subject line "Accelerating Credentials Planning Grant" by **May 31, 2022**.

For more information, or if you have any questions, please email Dr. Sheri Ranis at newcredentials@highered.texas.gov