

Open Educational Resources (OER) Grant Program

**A Report to the Texas Legislature in accordance with the
General Appropriations Act, Senate Bill 1, 89th Texas
Legislature, Article III, Rider 39**

October 2026

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Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board



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Agency Purpose

Our purpose is to strengthen Texas through higher education. By making higher education accessible to a wide range of people, we can ensure Texas remains one of the world's most innovative, valuable educational systems. By bringing together data, policymakers, and institutions, we can inform sensible policies that make a difference and make education beyond high school available to every person in our state. When we do that, we will improve lives, communities, and our shared economy.

Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The THECB's core values are:

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

Efficiency: We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

Collaboration: We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

Excellence: We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The THECB does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.

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Executive Summary

Senate Bill 810, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, established the Open Educational Resources Grant Program (OERGP), which was designed to support eligible Texas institutions of higher education to adopt, modify, redesign, or develop courses that use only OER. The General Appropriations Act, Senate Bill 1, 89th Texas Legislature, Article III, Rider 39 (III-73), requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to provide a report to the Legislative Budget Board and the governor on the effectiveness of the program.

This report details the administration and effectiveness of the competitive grant program, including textbook cost savings for students through faculty use of OER and the number of students supported by each round of grants, awarded in 2018, 2020, 2023, and 2025.

The 85th Texas Legislature appropriated \$200,000 to the THECB for the OERGP. The 86th, 87th, and 88th Texas Legislature appropriated \$212,049 each biennium for the OERGP. Four rounds of grants have been announced and awarded. In June 2025, a second Request for Applications (RFA) was announced for the 2025-2027 grant cycle. Additional funding was allocated to the program to support institutions to adopt, modify, redesign, or develop courses from the [Workforce Education Course Manual](#) in high-demand fields. Funding provided by the 89th Texas Legislature through the General Appropriations Act, Senate Bill 1, 89th Texas Legislature, Article III, Rider 39 (III-73), enabled THECB to allocate more than \$2 million for Round 5 of the OERGP, covering the 2026-2028 grant cycle. Since the launch of the OERGP, approximately \$1.05 million has been distributed across 71 grant awards, impacting more than 33,000 students. As a result of the OERGP, these students have saved an estimated \$3.5 million in textbook costs, representing an average savings of approximately \$105 per student.

The 2026-2028 grant cycle continues to focus on expanding access to and development of OER for high-demand fields. In August 2026, the Office of the Governor [announced that more than \\$2 million was awarded](#) to nine institutions to support free OER for students in nursing and workforce training programs. These nine institutions will begin their two-year grant cycle on September 1, 2026.

Introduction

The Open Educational Resource Grant Program (OERGP) was established by Senate Bill 810, 85th Legislature (2017), to support Texas institutions of higher education in adopting, modifying, redesigning, or developing courses that use only OER. As required by the General Appropriations Act, SB 1, 89th Legislature, Rider 39 (III-73), this report provides a summary of the effectiveness and impact of the OERGP. Specifically, this report provides data collected from the OERGP's four grant cycles (2018, 2020, 2023, and 2025), including the number of students served and estimated savings in course-material costs. Based on grantee-reported data, the program has generated an estimated \$3.5 million in student course-material savings, serving approximately 33,700 students across the four reporting periods.

Texas Education Code Section 51.451 defines open educational resource as “a teaching, learning, or research that is in the public domain or has been released under an intellectual property license that permits the free use, adaptation, and redistribution of the resource by any person. The term may include full course curricula, course materials, modules, textbooks, media, assessments, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques, whether digital or otherwise, used to support access to knowledge.” OER are usually free or offered at a low cost for students.

Grant Awards

Fiscal Years 2018-2025

In Fiscal Years (FYs) 2018-2025, 71 grant awards in the total amount of \$1,049,914 were made to Texas public institutions of higher education that proposed to adopt, modify, redesign, or create courses using only open educational materials. Materials developed by grantees under the OER Grant Program are uploaded to the OERTX repository.

Table 1 provides information about the number of awards and amounts awarded by grant round.

Table 1. OER Grant Program Fiscal Years 2018-2025 Amounts Awarded

Round	Fiscal Years	Number of Awards	Total Amount Awarded
Round 1	2018-2019	15	\$152,000
Round 2	2020-2021	20	\$208,620
Round 3	2022-2023	16	\$184,958
Round 4	2025-2027	20	\$504,335
Total		71	\$1,049,914

Fiscal Years 2025-2027 (Round 4)

In October 2024, THECB released an initial RFA for two grant categories. Category one included Continuous Improvement Grants and category two included Development Grants. Unique to this RFA was the emphasis on priority areas for projects that incorporate student participation in the creation, adaptation, and/or evaluation of the resources, supporting nursing courses through adoption of textbooks from the OER Nursing Essentials (ONE) series, and designing or redesigning courses that support zero textbook cost programs, known as z-degree programs, using only OER.

In June 2025, additional allocated funding supported the release of a second RFA. This RFA supported Texas public institutions to adopt, modify, redesign, or develop courses from the [Workforce Education Course Manual](#) (WECM) that use only OER, with priority for courses taught in support of the [Community College Finance Program FY 26-27 High-Demand Fields](#). Two categories of awards were offered under this RFA: (1) Development Grants for developing new or substantially improving existing OER, and (2) Development and Collaborator Grants for developing new or substantially improving existing OER and cross-institutional collaboration.

Fiscal Years 2026-2028 (Round 5)

To support Texas' goals for increasing attainment of credentials of value in high-demand fields, the 2026-2028 OERGP offers two targeted funded opportunities:

- Nursing OER Adoption Grants support institutions in redesigning and scaling the use of existing nursing OER developed through the OER Nursing Essentials Project across two or three courses.
- Workforce OER Collaborator Grants support the development of new OER or the substantial enhancement of existing OER for three, four, or five WECM courses that can be taught using only OER. Priority will be given to courses that support THECB's FY 2026-27 High-Demand Fields. Applicants must also provide a plan to engage faculty from at least one other Texas public institution as collaborators and peer reviewers.

Data from Grantee Progress Reports

As part of grant reporting requirements, grantees report student cost savings each time a course is taught using OER during the grant period. Cost savings are calculated by multiplying the cost of the commercial textbook previously used by the number of students enrolled in the course(s) each semester.

Grantees also report additional faculty adoptions and describe the broader impacts of OER beyond cost savings. Adoption levels vary by institution and course. For example, one institution reported 61 adoptions of OER developed through the OERGP, driven by a department wide transition in which all course sections adopted the OER. This approach created a model that has facilitated adoption in other departments. The institution also shared with the THECB that, as a result of this grant, it is progressing toward 95% OER use across all courses.

A Round 4 grantee institution that developed OER for welding courses, a high-demand workforce field, reported that the adaptability of OER enabled faculty to develop industry-aligned, interactive course materials. In partnership with industry representatives, faculty modified course content to better align with learning outcomes, resulting in increased time for hands-on laboratory instruction to strengthen student skills. Additionally, students were able to redirect funds typically spent on single-use textbooks toward higher-quality safety equipment and supplies that can be used as they enter the workforce.

The following tables provide a summary of reported cost-savings. Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 present estimated student cost savings by grant round. In spring 2026, grant reports across all rounds were systematically reviewed. As a result of this comprehensive review, the figures presented here reflect updated estimates and may differ from those reported in prior reports.

Table 2. OER Grant Program 2018-2021 Award Impact (Round 1)

Term	# of Students Served by Grantee Faculty Member and Colleagues	Total Amount Saved by Students During the Term*
Fall 2019	2,351	\$333,652
Spring 2020	1,950	\$283,095
Summer 2020	298	\$26,412
Fall 2020	2,870	\$358,120
Spring 2021	2,136	\$288,789
Summer 2021	254	\$22,673
Total	9,859	\$1,312,741

Source: THECB Grant Program Reports

*Amount saved based on the number of students completing the course and the cost of course materials in the semester preceding OER use. Material costs ranged from \$43 to \$413 per student, per course.

Table 3. OER Grant Program 2020-2023 Award Impact (Round 2)

Term	# of Students Served by Grantee Faculty Member and Colleagues	Total Amount Saved by Students During the Term*
Fall 2020	534	\$50,010
Spring 2021	625	\$71,246
Summer 2021	306	\$30,358
Fall 2021	2,404	\$242,635
Spring 2022	2,043	\$210,554
Summer 2022	389	\$35,451
Fall 2022	2834	\$285,447
Winter 2022 (4-week term)	36	\$2,880
Spring 2023	2,116	\$209,672
Summer 2023	555	\$63,716
Fall 2023	251	\$36,459
Winter 2023 (4-week term)	16	\$1,280
Total	12,099	\$1,239,708

Source: OER Grant Program Progress Reports

*Amount saved based on the number of students completing the course and the cost of course materials in the semester preceding OER use. Material costs ranged from \$60 to \$306 per student, per course.

Table 4. OER Grant Program 2023-2025 Award Impact (Round 3)

Term*	# of Students Served by Grantee Faculty Member and Colleagues	Total Amount Saved by Students During the Term**
Fall 2023	1,477	\$94,721
Spring 2024	1,789	\$111,500
Summer 2024	103	\$6,966
Fall 2024	3903	\$360,576
Winter 2024 (4-week term)	57	\$8,550
Spring 2025	3649	\$325,456
Summer 2025	261	\$34,583
Total	11,239	\$942,352

Source: OER Grant Program Progress Reports

*Round 3 grantees taught courses using OER from the grant project for the first time in fall 2023.

**Amount saved based on the number of students completing the course and the cost of course materials in the semester preceding OER use. Material costs ranged from \$25 to \$174 per student, per course.

Table 5. OER Grant Program 2025-2027 Award Impact (Round 4)

Term*	# of Students Served by Grantee Faculty Member and Colleagues	Total Amount Saved by Students During the Term**
Fall 2025 Total	494	\$50,280

Source: OER Grant Program Progress Reports

*Round 4 grantees reported courses taught using OER from the grant project for the first time in fall 2025. The remaining grantees taught the courses using OER from the grant project in spring or summer 2026, due to grantee reporting cycles spring and summer data is not reflected in this report.

**Amount saved based on the number of students completing the course and the cost of materials in the semester preceding OER use. Material costs ranged from \$45 to \$120 per student, per course.

Conclusion

The OER Grant Program has reduced the cost of course materials for Texas students while strengthening institutional capacity to expand the use of high-quality, affordable educational resources. Since its inception, the program has invested approximately \$1.05 million through 71 grants and has supported an estimated 33,700 students, generating approximately \$3.5 million in course material savings.

The program's impact extends beyond the immediate savings generated during grant periods. Grant-funded resources are made available through the statewide OERTX repository, allowing materials developed with state support to be shared and reused across institutions. The program has also contributed to broader faculty adoption, cross-institutional collaboration, workforce-aligned course development, and institutional capacity for sustainable OER practices.

Importantly, the program is evolving to maximize its impact. The current focus on nursing and other high-demand workforce fields, cross-institutional collaboration, industry engagement, and technical assistance positions OER as a tool not only for reducing the cost of attendance, but also for supporting access to credentials of value and strengthening Texas' talent pipeline.

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates that the OERGP is an effective state investment that delivers direct financial benefits to students while creating resources and institutional capacity that can generate benefits well beyond the initial grant award.

The THECB maintains information about the OERGP online at <http://www.highered.texas.gov/oergp>.

Appendix A: Resources

OERTX OER Grant Program Hub: <https://oertx.highered.texas.gov/hubs/oer-grant-program>

OER Nursing Essentials Hub: <https://oertx.highered.texas.gov/hubs/ONE-nursing>

OERTX Repository: <https://oertx.highered.texas.gov/>

Rules for the OER Grant Program (Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter 0, Rules 4.230-4.238): https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?chapter=4&interface=VIEW_TAC&part=1&subchapter=O&title=19

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. *Building a Talent Strong Texas*: 2025 Update. <https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/miscellaneous/building-talent-strong-texas/>

Texas Higher Education

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This document is available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website:
<https://highered.texas.gov>.

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