

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value Grant Program

Ray Martinez, Deputy Commissioner, Academic Affairs and Workforce Education, THECB
Sheri Ranis, Assistant Director, Workforce Education, THECB
Douglas Brock, Assistant General Counsel, THECB

October 25, 2021

GEER and Accelerating Credentials

- To aid in economic recovery from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund is meant to support the rapid reskilling and upskilling of the Texas workforce.
- To align with the aim of GEER funds, **Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value** seeks to build public higher education capacity by supporting the **creation and expansion of high-value, short-duration credential programs** and the delivery of those opportunities to students in Texas.
- This grant program stems from an allocation of \$94.6 million in GEER funds to the Coordinating Board and has \$12.5 million in dedicated funds.

Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value Grant Program

- Purpose: To accelerate the number of high-value credential opportunities for Texas students.
- Goal: To offer more short-term duration (12 months or less) postsecondary credentials that incorporate skills and knowledge required by high-demand careers.
- Focus: Credentials from three broad areas:
 1. **Digital skills**, including programming, web and application development, digital project management, and cybersecurity programs;
 2. **Data analytics** including data analysis and visualization; and
 3. **Front-line healthcare** including nursing, medical specialist, and technician programs.

Accelerating Credentials Awards

Accelerating Credentials Award Schedule

Accelerating Credentials Award Ranges

\$50,000 maximum for planning grants

\$50,000-\$500,000 for single institution projects

\$50,000-\$1.5 million for Consortia projects

- Competitive grant award: Applications will be evaluated, ranked, and awarded until funds are fully obligated.
- Eligible institutions may submit a maximum of two applications: one as a single recipient and the other as a member of a consortium.
- Grant period ends Sept. 30, 2022.

Accelerating Credentials Project Criteria

- Funding will be provided to eligible applicants who provide a plan or intend to create or expand a high-value, short-duration credential program with industry recognized knowledge and skills in one of three designated fields: **digital skills, data analytics, and/or front-line healthcare.**
- The formation of consortia by multiple eligible public institutions is encouraged and will be given preference in the review process.
- The proposed project may focus on a particular credential program or several related credential programs. The credential(s) may be in association with Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Doctoral, and post-graduate level degree programs.
- Programs are encouraged to be developed with workforce stakeholders such as workforce and economic development boards or associations, industry representatives, or employers.

Accelerating Credentials Project Criteria (cont.)

- At the undergraduate level, credential programs must be convertible or stackable to a degree program. These programs may be embedded in an existing academic degree program, delivered as a stand-alone credential, or as post-baccalaureate diploma or certificate programs.
- At the graduate level, credential programs may be embedded in graduate degree programs, delivered as stand-alone credential, or as post-graduate programs.
- In all cases, credential programs are encouraged to be developed and deployed in consultation with workforce stakeholders including employers, industry representatives, workforce boards, or industry organizations.

Resources

- Texas Workforce Commission target occupations by region
- Consultations with employers, local workforce boards, employer advisory committees
- Institution research on labor market trends
- Perkins CLNA or WIOA plan
- Texas Workforce Development Toolkit

Short-Duration Credential Approvals

- **19 Tex. Admin. Code § 5.48 Criteria for Certificate Programs at Universities and Health-related Institutions** is a rule that pertains to for-credit programs only.
- Two important considerations if the project's programs are for-credit:
 - The creation of these credentials must be in a disciplinary area where the institution already offers an undergraduate or graduate program; and
 - Upper division or graduate level credentials must not be equivalent to lower-division certificate programs.

Accelerating Credentials Allowable Expenses

Allowable uses

- Curriculum development and instructional design; software that supports instruction; faculty/trainer hiring and training capacity; costs for off-the-shelf credential and training materials; marketing and outreach costs; and costs associated with data administration and reporting of the Accelerating Credentials grant by the grantee.
- In composing, operating, and reporting on the project budget, the Grantee must conform to federal Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG).

Disallowed uses

- Non-allowable use of funds include any and all non-allowable costs specified in federal Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) as well as the following: travel expenses, student financial aid, student supports, facility purchase/lease, building or construction; institutional marketing and/or communications expenses other than those pertaining to the grant project; and technology that is not for instructional use (e.g., laptops for staff).

Accelerating Credentials Application Calendar

- Public announcement: **Oct. 8, 2021**
- RFA and applications released: **Week of Oct. 25, 2021**
- Informational webinar: **Oct. 25, 2021, at 11 a.m. CST**
- Last day of inquiries to the THECB: **Nov. 10, 2021**
- Applications due to the THECB: **Nov. 12, 2021**
- Public announcement of awards: **Around Nov. 29, 2021**

Selection Criteria

- The selection of credential program(s) is within the three designated high value fields.
- The rationale supporting the selection of project program(s) is compelling.
- The role played by workforce stakeholders in the development as well as execution of the project is described.
- Project goals and activities are clearly articulated.
- Description of capacity to undertake the project is included.
- If Consortium is proposed, clear rationale is articulated and nature of the collaboration is described.

RFA Section 6.3, Appendix C

Selection Criteria (cont'd)

- Project timeline clearly indicates project activities, estimated duration and estimated completion and is aligned with the project description. Timeline entries seem reasonable and achievable.
- Project budget maximizes the impact of available funds and limits or excludes direct administrative costs and indirect costs to administer the grant.

RFA Section 6.3, Appendix C

Bonus Points

- Formation of consortium among multiple eligible institutions
 - Consortia are defined as collaborations or partnership among multiple eligible institutions.
 - State University Systems may apply as consortia.

RFA Section 3.1, 6.3, Appendix C

Accelerating Credentials Evaluation Criteria

Scoring	Maximum Points
Core Elements (25 possible Points)	
	5
Description of Project Program Selection	5
Description of Project Goals and Activities	5
Description of Applicant and/or Consortium Members	5
Project Timeline	5

Application

- Certification
- Contact Information
- Requested Grant Amount
- Project Description
 - Credential programs selected
 - Description of how credential programs were selected
 - Description of project goals and activities
- Description of Applicant or Consortia
- Project Timeline
- Budget Request Form

RFA Section 7

Questions?

Point of Contact

Dr. Sheri Ranis

newcredentials@highered.texas.gov