

# Center for Training Excellence Program – Application

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## Center for Training Excellence Program

**Application Release: October 3, 2025**

**Application Due: October 29, 2025**

### I. Program Purpose

As appropriated by Section 381.210 (B) of House Bill 96 of the 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education (“ODHE”) will distribute funding to Ohio Technical Centers (hereinafter “OTC(s)”) to provide customized training and business consultation services with matching local dollars, with preference to industries on the existing in-demand jobs list or in regionally emerging fields or local business and industries.

### II. Eligible Institutions, Services and Expenses

#### A. Eligible Institutions:

1. OTCs must be accredited by an accrediting agency approved by the United States Department of Education (“USDOE”) and be recognized by ODHE as an OTC.
2. The OTC must be recognized as a Center for Training Excellence or a Center for Training Excellence candidate.
  - a. Center for Training Excellence (“CTX”) – the institution must meet the following criteria:
    - Has the capacity to offer customized training and business consultation services.
    - Offer a minimum of three (3) technical certificate programs in at least two (2) different technical career field areas approved by ODHE.
  - b. Center for Training Excellence candidate – the institution must meet the following criteria:
    - Has interest but needs to develop organizational capacity to offer customized training and business consultation services.
    - Offer a minimum of two (2) technical certificate programs in at least one (1) technical career field area approved by ODHE.

#### B. Services that can be offered include:

1. Customized Training
2. Needs analysis (i.e., job profiling, assessments, etc.)
3. Strategic planning services
4. Continuous improvement to businesses/organizations/entities participating in a customized training program
5. Student pre-employment services
6. Curriculum development
7. Program infrastructure technology upgrades
8. Job advancement strategies

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## C. Expenses for the following are allowed:

1. Salaries and benefits for staff and faculty directly involved with CTX activities.
2. Supplies/equipment used for CTX activities.
3. Purchased services, e.g., subscriptions, professional development, licensing agreements.
4. Other, e.g., marketing materials, industry-related membership fees, rent, utilities, mileage, etc.

## III. Project Term

The work covered by the grant will begin upon execution of the Award Agreement, and continue until June 30, 2026, with a final grant and expense report due in December 2026. A desk and/or site audit will occur prior to the final closeout of the funds.

## IV. Anticipated Institutional Awards

The funds will be disbursed to eligible OTCs. The Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education (the “Chancellor”) will make final award allocation determinations based on the number of eligible OTCs that submit proper applications. ODHE will take into consideration applicant’s past performance with the CTX funding, as applicable.

The source of funding for this program is House Bill 96 of the 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Each eligible center awarded under this RFP shall receive at least \$25,000.

## V. Proposal Review Process and Timeline

ODHE staff will initially screen proposals for completeness. Any deficiencies must be addressed by the applicant within a time set by ODHE.

- A. Accepted proposals will be evaluated by ODHE following the guidelines approved by the Chancellor.
- B. The schedule below may be revised by the Chancellor and ODHE due to circumstances; any changes will be communicated to the applicants.
  1. Release of Application – October 3, 2025 via the ODHE RFP Portal (<https://rfp.ohiohighered.org/>)
  2. Webinar for RFP – October 8, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.
  3. Proposals Due – October 29, 2025 by 11:59 p.m.
  4. Review & Evaluation of Proposals – November
  5. Chancellor’s Award Decisions – November and December
  6. Agreement Preparation and Execution – November and December
  7. Funds Disbursed to Applicants – December
  8. Award period starts – Upon execution of the Award Agreement
  9. Award period ends – June 30, 2026

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## VI. Proposal Contact

Any questions or concerns regarding this application should be sent to ODHE's CTX team at [CTX@highered.ohio.gov](mailto:CTX@highered.ohio.gov) by October 20, 2025.

Responses to questions will be posted online at [https://highered.ohio.gov/educators/workforce-adult-ed/otc/Center+for+Training+Excellence+\(CTX\)](https://highered.ohio.gov/educators/workforce-adult-ed/otc/Center+for+Training+Excellence+(CTX)) and in the ODHE RFP Portal at <https://rfp.ohiohighered.org/> to provide the information to all interested parties. Additional assistance may be requested from ODHE via phone or e-mail.

## VII. Proposal Submission

Parties interested in submitting an application must create an account in the ODHE RFP Portal at <https://rfp.ohiohighered.org/>. Once logged into the portal, parties can view the RFP and all related documentation including the questions and their responses related to the RFP.

All application materials can be downloaded from ODHE's RFP Portal at [rfp.ohiohighered.gov](https://rfp.ohiohighered.org/). Once a school has completed an application, the documents must be uploaded and submitted through the RFP Portal in PDF format. No other file formats will be accepted through the portal. No hard copies or emailed applications will be accepted.

Applicants are responsible for timely submissions of proposals. Proposals become property of the Chancellor and ODHE and are subject to public record laws of the state. Proposals containing all the required elements will receive careful consideration but cannot be guaranteed funding.

The cost of preparation and submission of the proposal are solely the responsibility of the respondent.

Proposals must be received by 11:59pm on October 29, 2025 through the ODHE RFP portal at <https://rfp.ohiohighered.org/> as a fillable PDF file.

## VIII. Proposal Format

A. Proposals must include the following elements:

**(NOTE: Please review the Center for Training Excellence (CTX) Definitions document prior to completing.)**

- a. **Institutional Information:** Identify the primary contact who will oversee and administer the program by name, title, address, phone number, and email address. Identify the fiscal agent by name, title, phone number and email address. Identify legal notice contact by name, title, phone number and email address. The legal notice contact **must** be an employee of the institution having the authority to receive formal and legal communications regarding the agreement between the parties
- b. **Executive Summary:** Explain how the proposed CTX submission addresses career(s) on the Ohio's Top Jobs list, <https://topjobs.ohio.gov/top-jobs-list/ohios-top-jobs-list>, as determined by a local and regional needs assessment. Please include data on regional needs and how proposed activities support local in-demand jobs.
- c. **Goals:** Provide at least two goals related to the institution's customized training and business consultation services. Relate the goals to the regional economy. What is the expected impact of the goal? Reference Ohio's Top Jobs list, <https://topjobs.ohio.gov/top-jobs-list/ohios-top-jobs-list> in supportive narrative.

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- d. **Budget and budget narrative:** Provide detailed narrative of each anticipated budget expense. Examples: if accounting for salaries, provide position title, percentage of time dedicated to CTX, and responsibilities of personnel; if purchasing supplies/equipment, please explain types and purpose of items, etc.
- e. **Marketing Plan:** Describe how the institution will market customized training and/or business consulting services to current and prospective businesses. Supportive documentation may include screenshots or links to social media, copies of collateral, outreach plans to specific locations and groups, visuals, or informational brochures. Identify efforts that the institution will take to secure businesses and complete agreed upon services. Please identify staff that will lead this marketing effort.

**NOTE:** Each awarded CTX institution will receive a base award of \$25,000. The total amount of funding requested must include a local dollar-for-dollar match. For institutions requesting more than \$25,000, funds will be distributed based on a formula utilizing FY25's customized training and business consultation services data.

**NOTE:** Institutions must enter into a contractual agreement to provide customized training or business consultative services with at least one business. Failure to enter into at least one contractual agreement will result in repayment of CTX funds.

### IX. Reporting Requirements

ODHE will monitor each initiative for which an award is granted to ensure that there is fiscal accountability, operating progress, and that the desired outcomes are achieved. Regular reports will be required from all awardees. All awardees will submit the required data and metrics, expenditures, and briefings of project milestones and success stories.

#### A. Reports to be collected:

- 1. Fund Balance Updates – As requested by ODHE
- 2. Annual Metrics
- 3. Final Expenditure Report (FER)

**Note:** Data will be collected via surveys and in the OTC HEI data system.

#### B. Metrics and financials to be collected and reported by an institution will include the following:

- 1. Fiscal Report
  - a. Description of activities for customized training and business consultation services.
  - b. Funds spent itemized by activities.
  - c. Progress toward organizational goals.
- 2. Training Offered
  - a. Program name
  - b. Name of business/organization
  - c. Program start and end dates
  - d. Program hours
  - e. Program field
  - f. Program description

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- g. Number of participants enrolled for training
  - h. Number of participants who successfully completed training
  - i. Industry-recognized credential (where applicable)
- 3. Business Consultation Services
  - a. Project name
  - b. Name of business/organization
  - c. Project start and end dates
  - d. Project type
  - e. Project description
  - f. Project hours
- 4. Other metrics as determined by the Chancellor.
- 5. Additional narrative questions.

### **X. Legal Notices**

The applicant understands that if its application is accepted by the State, the applicant shall enter into an agreement with the State governing the use of the awarded funds. Such funding will not be provided until all statutory provisions under the Ohio Revised Code, including Section 126.05 and 126.07, have been complied with and until such time as all necessary funds are made available and forthcoming from appropriate state agencies. The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the conduct of the work hereunder.

The State reserves the right to fund any application in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to require new applications from interested parties, to reject any or all applications responding to this announcement, or to reissue the announcement if it is determined that it is in the best interest of the State of Ohio. Issuing this announcement does not bind the State to making any awards. The State reserves the right to adjust the dates for this announcement for whatever reasons are deemed appropriate. The State reserves the right to waive any non-substantive infractions made by an applicant, provided that the applicant cures such infraction upon request.

All costs incurred in preparation of an application shall be borne by the applicant. Application preparation costs are not recoverable under an award. The State of Ohio shall not contribute in any way to recovering the costs of application preparation.

The funding decisions are final. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application(s) at the conclusion of the review process.

The applicant understands that the information provided herein is intended solely to assist the applicant in submittal preparation. To the best of the State's knowledge, the information provided is accurate. However, the State does not warrant such accuracy, and any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this solicitation. Interested parties bear the sole responsibility of obtaining the necessary information to submit a qualifying application. The State retains the right to modify or withdraw this solicitation at any time. By applying, applicants expressly agree to these terms.

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### **XI. Trade Secrets**

All applicants are strongly discouraged from including in a proposal any information that the applicant considers to be a “trade secret,” as that term is defined in Section 1333.61(D) of the Ohio Revised Code. All information submitted in response to this application is public information unless a statutory exception exists that exempts it from public release under the Ohio Public Records Act in Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code.

If any information in the proposal is to be treated as a trade secret, the proposal must:

- a. Identify each and every occurrence of the information within the proposal with an asterisk before and after each line containing trade secret information and underline the trade secret information itself.
- b. Identify that the proposal contains trade secret information in the cover letter; and
- c. Include a summary page immediately after the cover letter that lists each page in the proposal that includes trade secret information and the number of occurrences of trade secret information on that page.
- d. To determine what qualifies as trade secret information, refer to the definition of “trade secret” in the Ohio Revised Code at 1333.61(D), which is reproduced below for reference:
  - (D) “Trade Secret” means information, including the whole or any portion or phase of any scientific or technical information, design, process, procedure, formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or improvement, or any business information or plans, financial information, or listing of names, addresses, or telephone numbers that satisfies both of the following:
    - (1) It derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use.
    - (2) It is the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy.
- e. The Ohio Department of Higher Education requires non-disclosure agreements from all non-ODHE individuals who may have access to proposals containing trade secret information, including evaluators.