



Request for Application

2025 Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE or Department) Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education is pleased to issue this request for applications for public institutions of higher education to expand access to dual credit programs and improve delivery of college credit coursework at high schools serving significant populations of underserved students. This document describes the requirements that applicants will be expected to meet and the criteria that will be used to award funding for this competitive grant program.

The application submission window will open at 12:00 AM on **Monday, January 13, 2025**, and close at 2:00 PM on **Monday, February 10, 2025**.

Please complete and return your application submission via [eGrants](#).

Background

[Section 2004-I of the School Code](#) established the Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program within PDE. The purpose of the program is to provide funding for public colleges and universities to increase capacity to provide dual credit courses. Dual credit programs allow high school students to take college courses and earn both college and high school credit. Dual credit courses have been found to increase college readiness, college attendance, and college attainment, especially among traditionally underserved students.^{1,2,3} Yet, these students are underrepresented in dual credit courses.⁴

More than 55,000 high school students enrolled in at least one dual credit course during the 2023-24 school year. From 394 school districts, 47 charter schools and 19 career and technical centers, the students enrolled in more than 8,000 dual credit courses altogether.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible public institutions of higher education include the following:

- An institution of the State System of Higher Education established under Article XX-A;
- A community college established under Article XIX-A;
- Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology;

¹ An, B.P., & Taylor, J.L. (2015). Are dual enrollment students college ready? Evidence from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 23(58). (<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1070379>)

² Taylor, J.L., Allen, T.O., An, B.P., et al. (2022). Research Priorities for Advancing Equitable Dual Enrollment Policy and Practice. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah. (https://cherp.utah.edu/_resources/documents/publications/research_priorities_for_advancing_equitable_dual_enrollment_policy_and_practice.pdf)

³ National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Programs. *NACEP Fast Facts*. Retrieved 11/19/2024, from <https://www.nacep.org/resource-center/nacep-fast-facts/>

⁴ Fink, J. (2021, January 14). How equitable is access to AP and dual enrollment across states and school districts? *The CCRC Mixed Methods Blog*. Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. (<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/ap-dual-enrollment-access-update.html>)

- The Pennsylvania College of Technology; and
- The rural regional college established under Article XIX-G, upon accreditation.

If the Department does not receive sufficient applications to expend the available funding, the department may reopen the grant application and award grants to State-related institutions and independent institutions of higher education.

Only one proposal will be accepted from each institution. Applicants may not apply as a consortium. Only the main campus may apply, and funds can be disseminated to branches as the institution deems appropriate if awarded.

Partner School Entities

Funding may only be used to offer college coursework to high school students enrolled in eligible school entities. For the purposes of this grant program, the law defines a school entity as a school district, area career and technical school, charter school, cyber charter school or regional charter school.

Applicants must provide letters of support from each partner school entity receiving dual credit programming or services under this grant.

Priority Funding

The Department shall give priority in grant funding to public institutions of higher education that create or expand the current offerings, including individual student scholarships, with a particular emphasis on providing courses aligned with high-priority occupations and/or serving students experiencing education instability⁵, students enrolled in career and technical education programs, low-income students, historically underserved student groups, those who face financial, academic, or systemic barriers, and students in rural areas of this Commonwealth.

Priority consideration also will be given to institutions that propose to use funding to cover the entirety of course-related expenses so there is no cost to the student or school entity. This funding model provides financial support on a per-course basis, rather than per student. Funding is allocated for each eligible course offered, regardless of the number of students enrolled. Institutions should note that the total funding received will depend on the number of qualifying courses, not on the individual student enrollment within those courses. This structure emphasizes course-level support, ensuring resources are distributed based on the number of courses offered, not by counting individual student participants.

Maximum Grant Request

Eligible institutions may request grant funding up to \$1,000,000.

Allowable Expenses

Grant funding may be used for the following:

- To operate dual credit courses that are tuition free to high school students.
- To support public institutions of higher education in seeking external accreditation for their dual credit courses, such as through the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP);

⁵ [Assisting Students Experiencing Education Instability- PA Public School Code of 1949](#)

- To provide student academic supports to aid students enrolled in dual credit courses to be successful in the courses and to successfully transition to postsecondary education upon graduation from high school;
- To increase the use of no-cost or low-cost textbooks or course materials used in dual credit courses; and
- To provide professional development activities for high school teachers to enable them to teach dual credit courses.

Funds may be expended only on eligible programs, activities, and purposes identified in the proposal and as approved by PDE's Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education. Funding requests may include a combination of any eligible programs described in this request for application.

Examples of eligible programming may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Developing or enhancing partnerships with high schools to develop clear pathways that connect dual credit programs to college enrollment after high school graduation. Courses must be transferable to more than one public institution of higher education within the Commonwealth. Transfer agreements with multiple public institutions of higher education will be given priority.
- Plans should emphasize wrap-around services and the expansion of equitable access to dual credit opportunities, with a focus on historically underrepresented students. Priority will be given to programs that focus on students from underserved racial and ethnic backgrounds, low-income households, rural communities, and those who face financial, academic, or systemic barriers. Additionally, programs should seek to engage students who might not typically enroll in dual credit courses or who are uncertain about pursuing postsecondary education, fostering inclusion and building pathways to future academic success.
- Developing and expanding dual credit programs that offer courses in areas to meet regional and state workforce demands.
- Funding partnerships between employers, K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions to create industry-aligned pathways by fostering collaboration between high schools, community colleges, and local employers to ensure curriculum alignment, internship opportunities, and seamless credit transfer pathways.
- Developing or providing wrap-around services, including career counseling and internships, to support students' transition from high school to the workforce or postsecondary education.

Application Process

The application submission window will open at 12:00 AM on **Monday, January 13, 2025**, and close at 2:00 PM on **Monday, February 10, 2025**.

All application materials must be submitted through the Department's [eGrants system](#). Applications received by email or after 2:00 PM on February 10, 2025 will not be considered. For access to the eGrants system and the related grant opportunities, prospective applicants should complete the [eGrants Request Form](#). Please note that the person completing the grant

application must have signatory authority to negotiate grants and contracts for the institution and be able to upload documentation into the eGrants system. Institutions with eSign ability in eGrants will be able to utilize this feature to complete the application.

To ensure access to eGrants system, please notify the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education whenever there is a staffing change.

Application Components and Scoring

The Dual Credit Innovation Grant application consists of four areas: Applicant Information, Program Information, Narratives, and Budget.

1. **Applicant Information:** Provide detailed information regarding contact information for the individual responsible for the grant application. It is important to provide any changes to the institution's contact to ensure all vital information and continuity of information between PDE and the institution.
2. **Program Information:** Provide the project overview, including the title of the project, estimated start date (no earlier than July 1, 2025), estimated completion date (no later than June 30, 2027), estimated total project cost, and grant amount being requested.
3. **Narratives:**
 - a. **Proposal Narrative** – Explain the institution's specific plans to implement the proposed program(s). Responses should be detailed and include specific examples of how the initiative will be created or expanded and include the eligible programming options mentioned earlier in this request. Ensure that the narrative demonstrates how funds will be used equitably for supporting students experiencing education instability, from underserved racial and ethnic backgrounds, low-income households, rural communities, and those who face financial, academic, or systemic barriers. Additionally, demonstrate how funds will be used to engage students who might not typically enroll in dual credit courses or who are uncertain about pursuing postsecondary education. Institutions must upload letters of commitment from proposed partners (i.e. school district, area career and technical school, charter school, cyber charter school or regional charter school).
 - b. **Expected Outcomes** – Explain how the specific goal or objectives will lead to the expected outcome and how the institution will show that the goal/objectives were met. State the expected outcomes in measurable terms, including baseline information and expected improvements, and explain how program impact will be assessed.
4. **Budget**
 - a. **Instruction** – Purchased Professional and Technical Services; Contracted Services; Supplies and Equipment – The budget demonstrates a fiscally sound allocation of funds to successfully provide activities related directly to dual credit initiatives. Round amounts to the nearest whole dollar. All budgets will be reviewed to evaluate appropriateness and connection to proposed grant activities and goals.
 - b. **Budget Summary** – The budget demonstrates fiscally-sound allocation of funds to successfully provide activities. All budgets will be reviewed to evaluate appropriateness and connection to proposed grant activities and goals.
 - c. **Budget Narrative** – Explain each budget item and how it relates to the objectives in the proposal. Ensure that the budget narrative demonstrates how funds will be used equitably for supporting students from underserved racial and ethnic backgrounds, low-income households, rural communities, and those who

face financial, academic, or systemic barriers. Demonstrate how funds will be used to engage students who might not typically enroll in dual credit courses or who are uncertain about pursuing postsecondary education. If funding will be used to cover the entirety of course-related expenses, include an itemized breakdown of the course cost.

- d. **Compliance Objectives** – All grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Education. All grant funds must be spent, and services performed/products received on or before June 30, 2027. The Pennsylvania Department of Education shall seek repayment of funds if it determines that funds were not utilized for the stated and approved purpose. Grantees will be required to submit reports in the eGrants system on forms supplied by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Final Expenditure Reports must be submitted no later than July 30, 2027. Grantees are also expected to participate in Pennsylvania Department of Education program evaluation and research, including staff interviews and student surveys.

Review Process

Applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis by a team selected by the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education. Applications will be reviewed for:

1. Alignment of goals and objectives in the proposal to dual credit initiatives.
2. Clarity of narrative describing programming for which funding will be used, including details of how the proposed program will expand equitable access to dual credit programs and improving delivery at high schools serving significant populations of underserved students.
3. Improvement of dual credit initiatives and partnerships.
4. Correlation of detailed budget information with the goals and objectives of the proposal.
5. Viability of expected outcomes and alignment to program activities.
6. Adaptability of the proposal to already established resources.
7. Accuracy of the information submitted.

Applications that do not include all the above required information on the application will not be considered for funding. All qualifying applications will be reviewed and scored based on a rubric. Each application will be scored twice by unique grant evaluators.

Award and Disbursement

The Department will announce awards in the spring of 2025.

Grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Education Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education.

Funding is not guaranteed to any applicant. The Department reserves the right to adjust priority considerations and eligible programming based on the evolving needs of the Commonwealth.

Grant Period

The grant period is July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027.

All grant funds must be committed, and services performed by June 30, 2027. Funds may not be rolled over into a new grant year. No-cost extensions will not be granted.

The Department shall seek repayment of funds if it determines that funds were not utilized for the original stated and approved purpose. All unused grant funds must be returned to the Department with the final report.

Interim Reporting

Interim reports will be due June 30, 2026, and December 31, 2026. Reports will include a summary of activities, student enrollment, courses offered, and a description of additional services offered to support students enrolled in the program.

Final Reporting

Upon completion of the grant, grantees will be required to submit a final report on forms supplied by the Department detailing the dual credit courses offered, the instructors facilitating these courses, and the total number of credits earned by students enrolled in courses funded through this grant. Final reports and correlating invoices/receipts must be submitted no later than July 30, 2027. Additional details regarding data reporting will be provided to awardees. Institutions are advised to include and coordinate grant administration activities with various individual throughout the institution and partner schools to ensure awareness of the program reporting and evaluation deadlines.

Program Changes

All requests for changes to the approved grant must be submitted to the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education in writing no later than **April 30, 2027**.

The Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education must approve program changes, or the grant will be rescinded. If approved, the institution will be required to revise the budget in eGrants.

Technical Assistance

For technical assistance or questions with related to the grant application, contact ra-highereducation@pa.gov.

All substantive questions must be submitted by **Wednesday, January 22, 2025**. Responses will be provided in the form of an FAQ distributed to all institutions on **Friday, January 24, 2025**.