

**The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education  
Request for Proposals  
2022 Summer Bridge Program Grants**

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) is soliciting proposals from Kentucky's public universities, the 16 Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) campuses, and the member institutions of the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities (AIKCU) for grants of up to \$200,000 to support summer bridge programs focused on improving college preparation and retention. These funds are made available to support new and/or existing efforts or expand the depth and scope of summer bridge program implementation efforts currently supported across the state targeted at Kentucky high school students who are incoming full-time, first-year students.

**I. Background**

CPE established an ambitious goal to raise the percentage of adults with a postsecondary degree or credential to 60% by the year 2030. Achieving this goal is critical if Kentucky hopes to remain economically competitive with surrounding states and attract more high-skill, high-wage employers. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on education at all levels. There have been postsecondary enrollment declines in all sectors, but particularly at our community and technical colleges. Students graduating from high school are facing greater challenges navigating the path from secondary to postsecondary education.

Intentional efforts to expand existing or develop new summer bridge programs will help achieve Council goals and the impacts of COVID-19 as the efforts will ease the transition to college and support postsecondary success by providing students with the academic skills and social resources needed to succeed in a college environment. These programs will be offered in the summer "bridge" period between high school and college. Although the content of summer bridge programs can vary across institutions and by the population served, they typically last from one to six weeks and involve (a) an in-depth orientation to college life and resources, (b) academic and career advising, (c) training in skills necessary for college success (e.g., time management and study skills), and/or (d) accelerated academic coursework.

**II. Funding Opportunity**

Funding is available from CPE through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund program and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to prevent, prepare for and respond to the novel coronavirus. The priority must be to provide the academic support necessary to improve college success and completion rates through summer bridge programming.

**III. Elements of Institutional Proposals**

Campuses are invited to submit proposals to develop or expand summer bridge programming with the intent of increasing college-going, improving first-year performance and enhancing student retention and success. The proposal, not to exceed five pages excluding the budget, shall demonstrate a commitment by the institution to:

- 1) Promote face-to-face college readiness and transition skills, academic readiness skills, social and emotional resources and development, and advising for incoming first-year students needed to succeed in a college environment.
- 2) Create a culture that encourages sociocultural adjustment through community-building and instills a sense of belonging.
- 3) Provide opportunities for career exploration and planning with a focus on in-demand academic and career pathways.
- 4) Incorporate financial literacy programming to include topics such as college affordability, financial aid resources and opportunities, and personal finances.
- 5) Afford students access to accelerated academic coursework.
- 6) Offer near-peer support by using student staff/volunteers.
- 7) Engage diverse partners such as employers, faculty, alumni and community-based organizations.
- 8) Commit to ongoing support and incentives for participating students.

#### **IV. Program Outcomes**

Proposals should strategically support summer bridge programming with the intent to:

- 1) Increase the number of students served face-to-face by summer bridge programming.
- 2) Reduce performance gaps in college course completion giving students a more equal opportunity to succeed.
- 3) Increase fall to spring retention rates of students participating in summer bridge programs, leading to improved graduation rates.

#### **V. Allowable Activities**

Below is a list of allowable activities that project dollars will fund:

- Personnel Compensation: Compensation would generally encompass a portion of salaries, wages and benefits of personnel, including, but not limited to, project director and support staff. Allowable compensation must be additional compensation that is not included as “regular salary” or included in the institutional budget.
- Grant funds are not to be used for payments to administrators and executives of colleges and universities.
- Equipment Usage and Consumable Supplies: Funds expended on equipment usage and consumable supplies must not exceed 15% of the total project budget.
- Fees to External Consultants: Consulting assistance would generally include, but not be limited to, hiring chaperones, instructors or student staff.
- Student Lodging and Meals
- Facilities Rental
- Other Direct Costs: Approval of expenditures for Other Direct Costs is at the discretion of the proposal evaluation committee. These costs must be specifically identified and justified in the project budget. Funds expended on field trips, community-building

activities and other group activities must include an educational component and collectively must not exceed 10% of the total project budget.

- Indirect costs will not be permitted.
- Campuses that include a fee can charge no more than \$500 per week for student participation in the program

## **VI. Reporting Schedule**

At a minimum, one mid-term progress report and one final program report shall be required and contain the elements of the institutional proposal listed above and the description of the summer bridge program being implemented, the number of students participating in programming, any course descriptions or curriculum used in the program, specific types of academic or social/emotional support programming provided to students in the program, number of faculty and staff participating in the program, descriptions of the professional learning experiences provided to faculty and staff supporting the program, and activities that occurred to date in implementing any summer bridge programming. The final report shall also include the information above and a progress analytics report outlining the successes and challenges faced in implementing the summer bridge program.

Final project analysis shall be provided to CPE no later than January 27, 2023. Additional updates may be requested by Council staff.

## **VII. Evaluation of Proposals**

- A. Project Description, Abstract and Narrative (50 points):** The project should outline the thematic focus of the program and disciplines to be addressed; list the name of the institution/departments involved; include the target number of students and proposed dates; describe the plan for student recruitment; demonstrate understanding of the academic support system or systems used to promote success that encourage a college-completion culture; provide a professional development model for faculty and support staff; list the contributing partners that will support student mentoring or faculty requirements; explain the proposed outcomes/learning objectives, and; create an evaluation model to be used to assess the impact of the program. Prioritization will be given to those programs that issue credit for summer bridge courses.
- B. Resources and Capacity (25):** The proposal provides evidence of a commitment of the institutional resources and personnel necessary to support the proposed activities, meet the project's objectives, and assess the impacts of the program. An explanation of the on-campus logistics of the program including: lodging, meals, facilities, etc. is provided. The proposal also clearly describes the qualifications of all key staff implementing the program, including education and/or work experience.
- C. Scalability and Ongoing Support (15):** Convincing and compelling evidence that the project can be implemented fully over the life of the grant and can be sustained after grant funds are expended. Applicants must provide a detailed plan for following up with participants throughout the school year.
- D. Budget (10):** The proposed budget is clear, concise and cost-effective. Costs are clearly justified in the budget narrative. Applicants must provide a detailed budget and a budget

narrative that justifies all costs and explains how the project will be sustained after grant dollars are expended. The budget should include a detailed funding of all activities included to support the per section cost for a summer bridge program with a justification of those costs. Prioritization will be given to applications that do not charge fees. Campuses that include a fee can charge no more than \$500 per week for student participation in the program. Indirect costs will not be permitted. An example budget format is included.

A review committee selected and coordinated by Council staff will be established to evaluate all proposals. Proposals must score at least 70 points to be considered for funding. The maximum number of grants is contingent upon the amount of funding available and confidence in the quality and feasibility of the programming proposed. The Council reserves the right, once an initial selection has been made, to negotiate the final terms of the agreement.

### **VIII. Funding**

The goal of this funding is to increase the number of students served by summer bridge programs. Grant funds will be awarded to eligible two- and four-year colleges and universities based on the proposal and the number of students served. All recipients of this funding will be required to participate in a community of practice (CoP) during the 2022-2023 academic year.

CPE will designate a selection committee to review all proposals and reserves the right to adjust proposed budgets and funding levels to maximize the impact of this project. If funded, the Council would be happy to share information, as requested, about the selection process.

### **IX. Submission of Proposals**

- A. Applicants must submit one complete electronic version of the proposal.
- B. Proposals should be no more than five pages in length, excluding the budget.
- C. Institutions may submit up to three proposals; however, awards will be issued based on available funding.
- D. Proposals must be received by 4:30 p.m. ET on February 18, 2022, by the following designee:

Joette Fields, Business Specialist  
P-20 Policy and Programs Unit  
[CPEP20@ky.gov](mailto:CPEP20@ky.gov)

Identify your submission with “RFP Summer Bridge Program” on the subject line of the email.

### **X. Award Notification**

All institutions submitting proposals will be notified in writing regarding the status of their proposal after all proposals have been evaluated. The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals in whole or in part and to negotiate any or all aspects of a proposal.

The Council bears no responsibility for any costs incurred while preparing any proposal.

The RFP can be viewed at <http://www.cpe.ky.gov/news/rfp>.

## **XI. Other Terms and Conditions**

This is a reimbursement grant and any unexpended funds remaining after the expiration of the agreement will be forfeited by the institution. Reimbursement invoice requirements will be disseminated upon award. No extensions will be permitted.

Indirect costs will not be funded.

The anticipated effective date of contracts resulting from this RFP is May 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.