



The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Request for Proposals

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## Summer Bridge Program Grants

**Deadline: Friday, April 16, 2021**

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 \$100,000 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 graduated in spring 2020 or are graduating in spring 2021.

### I. Background

The 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 Council's 2016-21 Strategic Agenda establishes three broad goals: 1) increasing access to a postsecondary credential or degree; 2) increasing student success by raising college completion rates and ensuring graduates are prepared for life and work; and 3) increasing the impact of postsecondary institutions on Kentucky's economy and communities through basic and applied research, outreach, and public service.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on education at all levels. Students have experienced school closures, learning loss and reduced availability of wraparound supports. 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, or between the first and second year of 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 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 the CPE through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund program to prevent, prepare for and respond to the novel coronavirus. The priority must be to provide the academic supports 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 encouraging first to second year retention. The proposal, not to exceed five pages, shall demonstrate a commitment by the institution to:

- 1) Promote college and career readiness skills, academic skills, social and emotional resources, and advising for incoming college freshmen or sophomores needed to succeed in a college environment.
- 2) Focus on promoting face-to-face student transition-related support and awareness of financial opportunities over one to six weeks.
- 3) Offer near-peer support by using student staff/volunteers.
- 4) Highlight employability skills, in demand careers and financial aid resources.
- 5) Afford students access to accelerated academic coursework.
- 6) Use diverse partners such as employers, faculty, alumni, local two-year degree and certificate institutions and community-based organizations.
- 7) 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) Narrow performance gaps in college course completion between prepared and underprepared students, giving students a more equal opportunity to succeed.
- 3) Increase first-year to second-year retention rates of students participating in summer bridge programs. Increased retention rates are highly correlated with increased 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 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 (on campus)
- 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 Proposal budget.
- Indirect costs will not be permitted.

## **VI. Reporting Schedule**

At a minimum, one mid-term progress report and one final program report shall be required and contain all 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.

The CPE requires that all reports be submitted on a schedule established in the award letter, or as modified in subsequent correspondence. 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; 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-going 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 impact of the program.
- 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 on-campus logistics of the program including: lodging, meals and 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 justification of those costs. Prioritization will be given to applications that do not charge fees or charge no more than \$500 per week for student participation in the program. Indirect costs will not be permitted.

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 are contingent upon the amount of funding available and confidence in the quality and feasibility of programming proposed. The Council reserves the right, once an initial selection has been made, to negotiate the final terms of the agreement.

## **VIII. Submission of Proposals**

- A. Applicants must submit one complete electronic version of the proposal.
- B. Only one application from each institution will be accepted.
- C. Proposals must be received by 4:30 pm ET on April 16, 2021, by the following designee:

Dr. Jennifer Fraker, Executive Director

[Jennifer.Fraker@ky.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Fraker@ky.gov)

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

## **IX. 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>.

## **X. 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.

Indirect costs will not be funded.

The anticipated effective date of contracts resulting from this RFP is June 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.