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DFC Memorandum Number: 2021-10

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Florida College System Presidents
School District Superintendents
District Career and Technical Education Directors

FROM: Kathryn S. Hebda, Chancellor, Florida College System 
Henry Mack, Chancellor, Career and Adult Education

DATE: August 19, 2021

SUBJECT: **Approval of New Rule 6A-20.045, Florida Administrative Code, Open Door Grant Program**

On August 18, 2021, the State Board of Education approved Rule 6A-20.045, Florida Administrative Code, Open Door Grant Program. The rule sets forth the requirements relating to the Open Door Grant Program, which the Florida Legislature established through House Bill 1507 (Chapter No. 2021-164, Laws of Florida) to create a demand-driven supply of credentialed workers for high-demand occupations.

School district postsecondary technical career centers under section (s.) 1001.44, Florida Statutes (F.S.), charter technical career centers under s. 1002.34, F.S., and Florida College System (FCS) institutions under s. 1000.21(3), F.S., are eligible to apply for the program. The Florida Legislature appropriated \$20 million for FCS institutions and \$15 million for career centers. Each institution should thoroughly review the attached statute and rule in anticipation of the application materials becoming available.

Application materials will be made available at <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/funding-opportunities/> by September 15. The first review date will be October 15. Applications will continue to be accepted until November 1, 2021, or until all appropriated funds are awarded, whichever comes first.

To assist institutions in the application process, the department is hosting a webinar on Friday, September 17, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. EDT. Participants may register for the webinar at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/232937452655308304>. Please email opendoor@fldoe.org to submit questions about the program.

For questions regarding the rule, please contact Carrie Henderson at Carrie.Henderson@fldoe.org or Tara Goodman at Tara.Goodman@fldoe.org.

HM/hl

Cc: Jacob Oliva, Chancellor, Division of Public Schools
Carrie Henderson, Ph.D., Executive Vice Chancellor, Florida College System
Tara Goodman, Vice Chancellor, Division of Career and Technical Education

6A-20.045 Open Door “~~Last Dollar~~” Grant Program

(1) Purpose. The purpose of this rule is to set forth the requirements relating to the Open Door Grant Program, which creates a demand-driven supply of credentialed workers for high-demand occupations and expands the affordability of workforce training, certification and credentialing programs.

(2) Definitions.

(a) “Cost of the program” means the cost of tuition, fees, examination, books and materials. Examination costs can include vouchers for third-party testing vendors.

(b) “Department” means the Florida Department of Education.

(c) “Eligible institution” means a school district postsecondary technical career center under Section 1001.44, F.S., a Florida College System institution under Section 1000.21(3), F.S., or a charter technical career center under Section 1002.34, F.S.

(d) “Eligible program” means integrated education and training (IET) programs and the following short-term workforce education programs that lead to the attainment of credentials on the Master Credential List under Section 445.004(4), F.S.: clock-hour career certificate programs less than or equal to nine-hundred (900) clock hours; for-credit career and technical education programs less than or equal to 30 credit hours; or, noncredit industry certification preparation less than or equal to the equivalent of 900 clock hours or 30 credit hours.

(e) “Full time” means enrollment in courses or training that can be completed in a twelve (12) month timeframe.

(f) “Integrated Education and Training” (IET) means programs that provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training, as defined by 34 CFR Part 463, Subpart D, (link). These federal regulations are incorporated by reference and may be obtained by contacting the Division of Florida Colleges, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

(g) “Last Dollar Grants” means grants issued to institutions for eligible students who are enrolled in eligible programs and who are receiving state or federal financial aid.

(h) “Master Credential List” means the list of nondegree and degree programs under Section 445.004(4), F.S., determined by the Credentials Review Committee that result in a credential of value. For the 2021-2022 school year, the Master Credentials List is the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List and the CAPE Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List incorporated in Rules 6A-6.0573 and 6A-6.0574, F.A.C. A list linking certifications to

programs of study for the 2021-2022 school year will be made available by September 15, 2021, at

<https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/funding-opportunities/>.

(i) “Rural institution” means a school district postsecondary technical career center under Section 1001.44, F.S., and a charter technical career center under Section 1002.34, F.S., that serve a county as defined by Section 288.0656(1)(e)1. or 2., F.S., or a Florida College System institution under Section 1000.21(3), F.S., that is designated by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) as subtypes 31, 32, 33, 41, 42 and 43. The NCES Locale Classifications and Criteria (link) is incorporated by reference and may be obtained by contacting the Division of Florida Colleges, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

(j) “State or federal financial aid” means scholarships and grants whose fund sources are the State of Florida or the federal government. For the purposes of this program, institutional aid that can be sourced to the State of Florida or the federal government and other financial assistance provided under the State of Florida or federal programs for student education and training are considered state or federal aid.

(k) “Student Investment Grants” means grants issued to institutions for eligible students who are enrolled in eligible programs and who are not in receipt of state or federal financial aid.

(3) Student Eligibility. Subject to the availability of funds, students must meet the following criteria in order to receive funds under the both the Student Investment Grant and the Last Dollar Grant programs set forth in subsections (4) and (5):

(a) Be admitted to and enrolled full-time in an eligible program at an eligible institution;

(b) Be a resident of this state as determined under Section 1009.21, F.S.;

(c) Be unemployed, underemployed or furloughed;

(d) Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for each academic year in which the grant is sought; and

(e) Meet all requirements set by the student’s institution to document compliance with the items in subparagraphs (3)(a)-(d).

(4) Student Investment Grants.

(a) Subject to the availability of funds, a student who is not in receipt of federal or state financial aid may apply for a Student Investment Grant from their institution and must, at the time of enrollment in an eligible program:

1. Pay one-third of the cost of the program, unless subject to an exception listed in subparagraph (4)(c), and

2. Sign an agreement that requires the student to pay an additional one-third of the cost of the program in the event the student does not successfully complete the program.

(b) The required contribution of one-third the cost of the program by the student may be paid by the student, the employer or any other private source.

(c) A student in an IET program or a student who does not have a high school diploma is exempt from the requirement to pay one-third of the cost of the program upon enrollment, and may use grant funds to cover this cost, if the student signs an agreement that he or she will pay this cost should the student fail to successfully complete the program.

(d) Limitations on Student Investment Grant Funds to Institutions.

1. For courses or programs that do not lead to certification or licensure, the institution is eligible to receive grant funds to cover two-thirds the cost, not to exceed three-thousand dollars (\$3,000), once the student successfully completes the course or program.

2. For courses or programs that lead to certification or licensure, the institution is eligible to receive grant funds to cover one-third the cost once the student successfully completes the course or program. The institution is eligible to receive the additional one-third the cost once the student receives the certification or license. The total amount received must not exceed three-thousand dollars (\$3,000) per student per eligible program.

(5) Last Dollar Grants.

(a) Subject to the availability of funds, students who are receiving federal or state financial aid may apply for a Last Dollar Grant from their institution to cover any unmet need of the cost of the program after the application of all eligible financial aid.

(b) Individual Last Dollar Grant awards made to students cannot exceed \$3,000 and the amount of the student's unmet need, which means the difference between:

1. The total cost of the eligible program the student incurs at the time of enrollment; and,
2. The total value of all grants and scholarships received by the recipient to attend the institution.

(6) Application. If funds are designated in the General Appropriations Act, the Department will solicit from all eligible institutions an application for participation in the program. Application materials will be made available at <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/funding-opportunities/> by September 15. The first review date will

be October 15. Applications will continue to be accepted until November 1, or until all appropriated funds are awarded, whichever comes first.

(a) The institutional applications shall include:

1. Narrative describing the institution's compliance with the items in subparagraphs (7)(a)-(d).

2. The total amount of funds requested.

3. A list of all eligible programs and associated industry certifications, if applicable, offered by the institution for which the grant will be applied.

4. The cost to the student for each eligible program.

5. The projected number of students that will be served by the Last Dollar and/or Student Investment Grants and the time period the awards will be made, by program.

6. Any partnership agreements between the institution and local workforce development boards, community- or faith-based organizations, employers, or other economic development agencies that describes roles and responsibilities, including any funds provided for students participating in the program.

7. The strategies that will be used to increase awareness of the Last Dollar and Student Investment Grants.

8. The anticipated source of funds that will be used to fund the student portion of the Student Investment Grant, if applicable.

9. Statement of assurances that statutory requirements will be satisfied.

(b) Awards. Institutional allocations will be prioritized according to the date the completed application was approved by the Department. The Department will notify the institution of the approved amount and disbursement and reporting requirements.

1. Of the funds appropriated to the program, 25 percent will be reserved for rural institutions for applications received by October 15. After that date, all funds will be eligible for any institution demonstrating demand for grants.

2. No institution may receive more than 25 percent of the total appropriation.

(7) Institutional Requirements. Any institution selected for the Open Door Grant Program must satisfy all requirements set forth in the grant application and is required to:

(a) Establish policies or procedures to implement the program, which must include:

1. An application process for students.

2. An agreement requiring a recipient of the Student Investment Grant who does not successfully complete a

course or program to pay one third of the cost of the program covered by grant funds, as provided in subparagraph (4)(a)2. and paragraph (4)(c).

3. Appeal procedures for students.

(b) Advertise the program and application process.

(c) Verify students have met the eligibility requirements.

(d) Comply with the Department's reporting requirements.

(8) Required Reporting.

(a) Quarterly, participating institutions must report to the Department the eligibility status of each student who received a Student Investment Grant or Last Dollar Grant in the prior three months. Quarterly submissions are due on January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15 of each year. No later than 30 days before the submission deadline, the Department will release guidelines for institutions to securely transmit an electronic file reporting each student's name and demographic information, eligible program, grant amount awarded, and grant type received (Student Investment or Last Dollar).

(b) Annually, by August 20, participating institutions must report to the Department all information required by Sections 1009.895(7)(d) and (8), F.S. No later than 30 days before the submission deadline, the Department will release guidelines for institutions to transmit an electronic file to meet this requirement.

Rulemaking Authority 1009.895(9), 1001.02(1), 1001.02(2)(n), F.S. Law Implemented 1009.895, F.S. History–New