Open Door Grant Program FAQ Webinar

Monday, September 27, 2021, 1:00 p.m. EDT

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Webinar Logistics

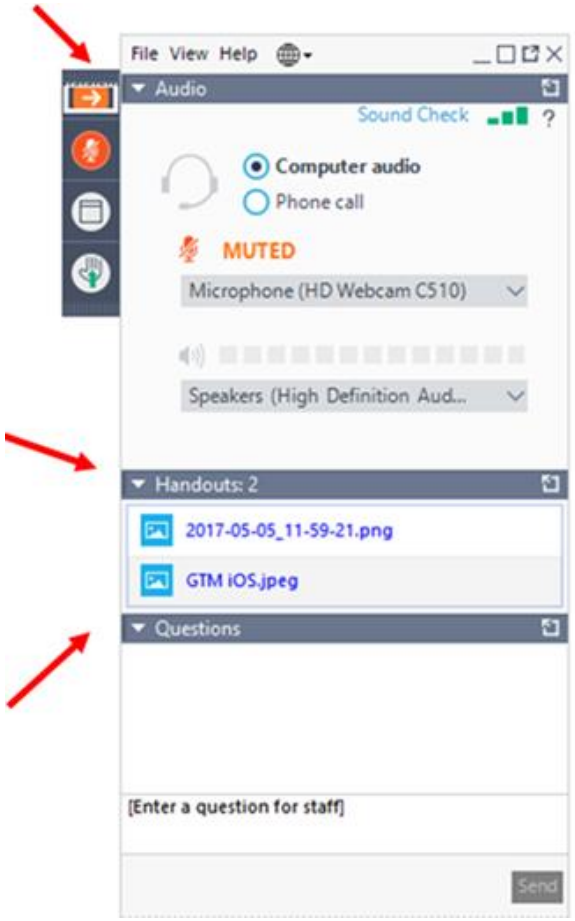
Participants will be on mute for the duration of the webinar.

Materials from today's webinar can be found in the handouts area:

- Today's presentation
- Request for Application (RFA)

How to submit questions:

To submit questions during the webinar, please utilize the Questions function. During the Q&A portion of the webinar, questions will be addressed.



Agenda

- Key Deadlines & Resources
- Frequently Asked Questions & Answers
- Next Steps

Key Deadlines

- **October 15, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. (EDT)** – Deadline to submit completed application to be considered in the first review period.
  - A completed application must be submitted via email to: opendoor@fldoe.org. Of the funds appropriated to the program, 25 percent will be reserved for rural institutions for applications received by this date.
- **November 1, 2021, at 5:00p.m. (EDT)** – Final deadline to submit a completed application to be considered for an Open Door grant allocation.
  - A completed application must be submitted via email to: opendoor@fldoe.org. Agencies that do not submit an application by this date will not be considered.
- Institutions will be notified of approval and allocation amount as soon as possible following conclusion of the second review.

Open Door Website Resources

- Open Door Website
  - www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/funding-opportunities/opendoor.stml

- Open Door Webinar – September 17
  - Recording: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8617025876759903503
  - Presentation: www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7515/urlt/OpenDoorWebinarSlideDeck.pdf

- Frequently Asked Questions – Updated September 28
  - www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7515/urlt/FAQ-OpenDoor.pdf

RFA Required Documents

- Request for Application (RFA)
  - www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7515/urlt/DOE900D-OpenDoor-RFA.pdf
- Excel Workbook with Budget Narrative 101S Form
  - www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7515/urlt/OpenDoorWorkbookBudgetNarrative.xlsx

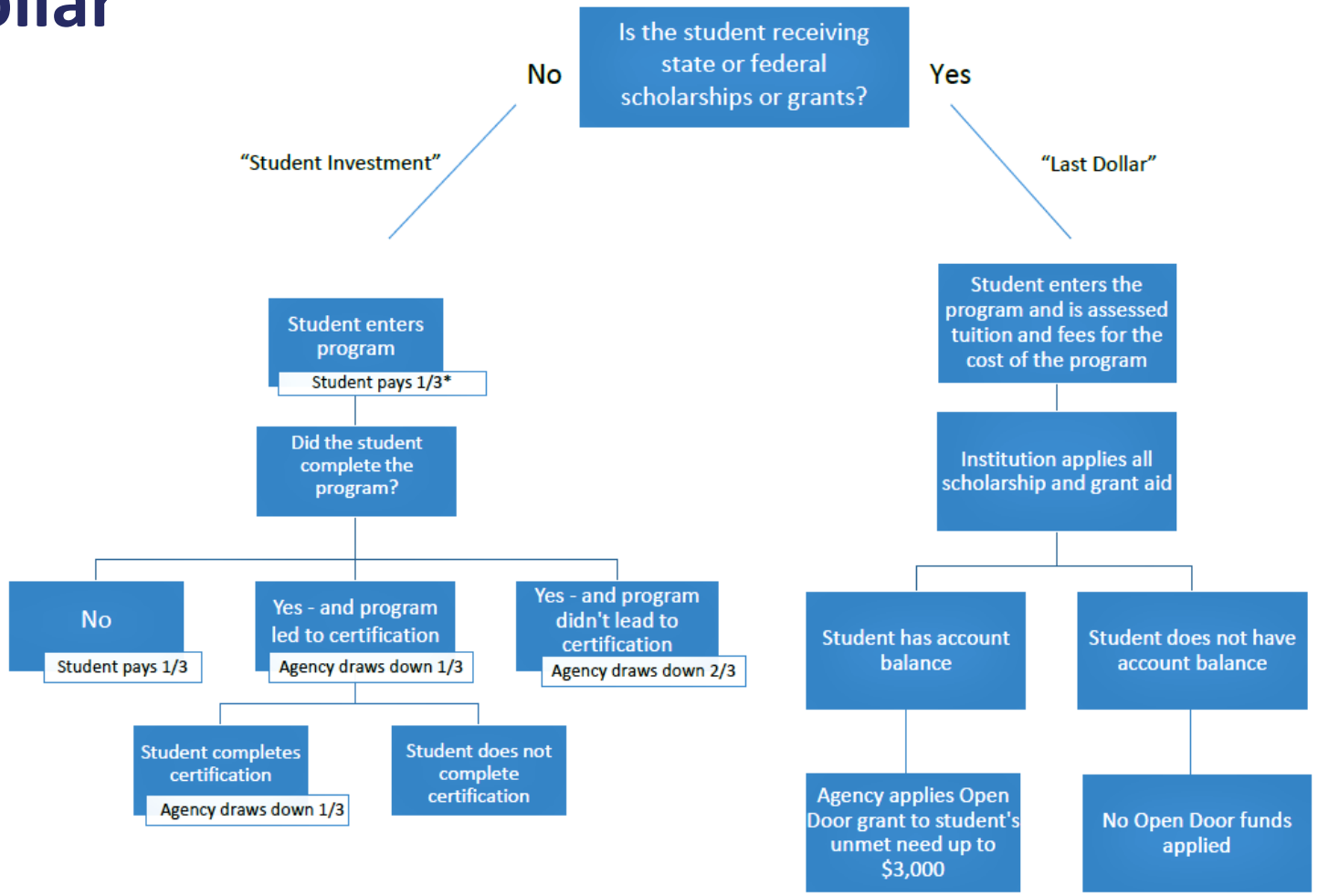
  Note: The Excel workbook was updated on 9/22/2021 to correct drop down lists on Tab B1 and the list of FDOE-approved IET programs
- DOE100A Project Application Form
  - www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7515/urlt/DOE100A-OpenDoorGrantProgram.doc

Q. Are agencies required to implement both the Last Dollar and Student Investment approach?

(FAQ #20)

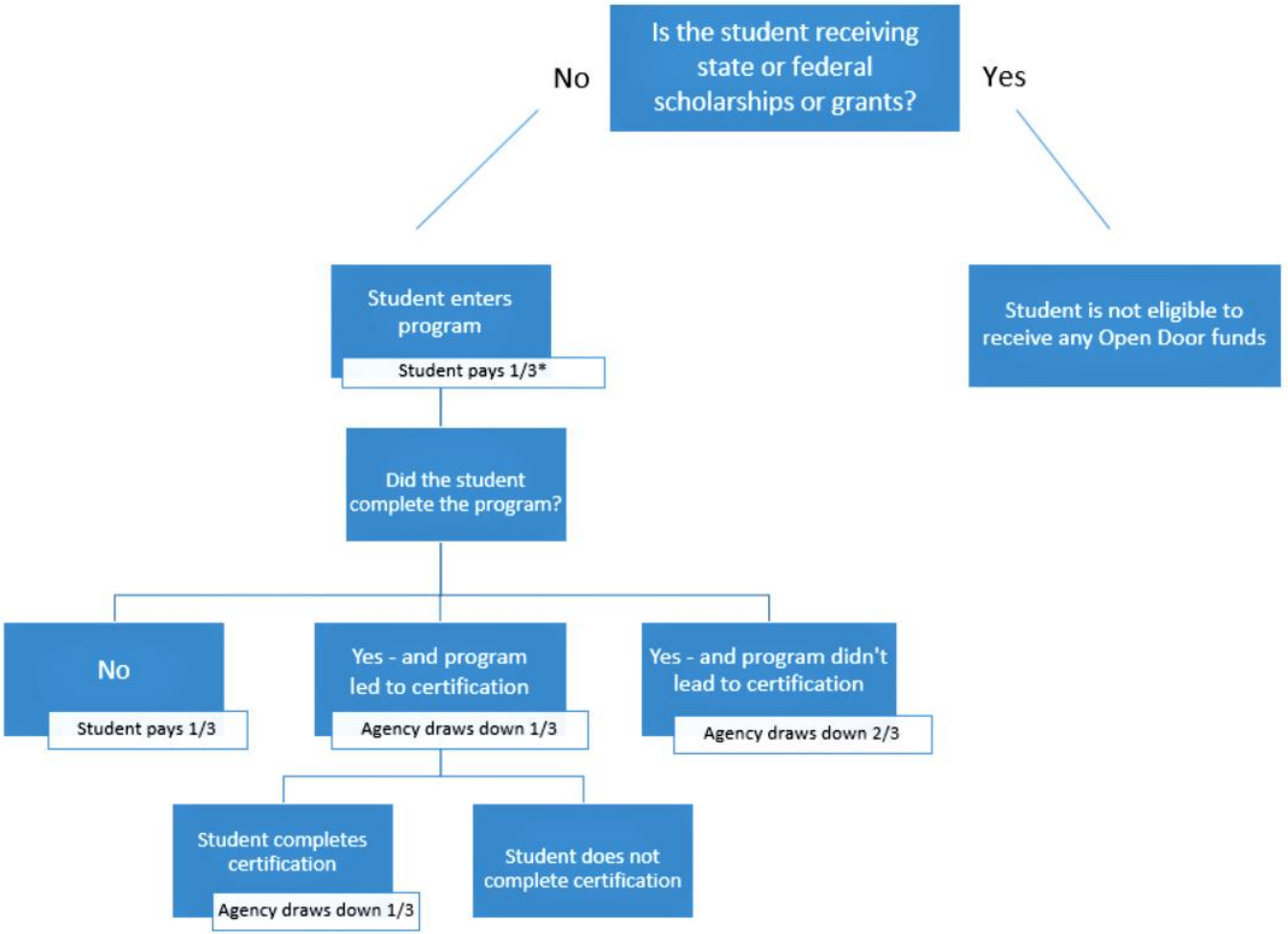
A. No. Agencies are able to implement either, or both, the Student Investment or Last Dollar approach. For each eligible program, agencies must indicate if they plan to use a Student Investment approach, a Last Dollar approach or a Student Investment and Last Dollar approach.

Program-Level: Student Investment and Last Dollar



*IET students 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.

Program-Level: Student Investment Only



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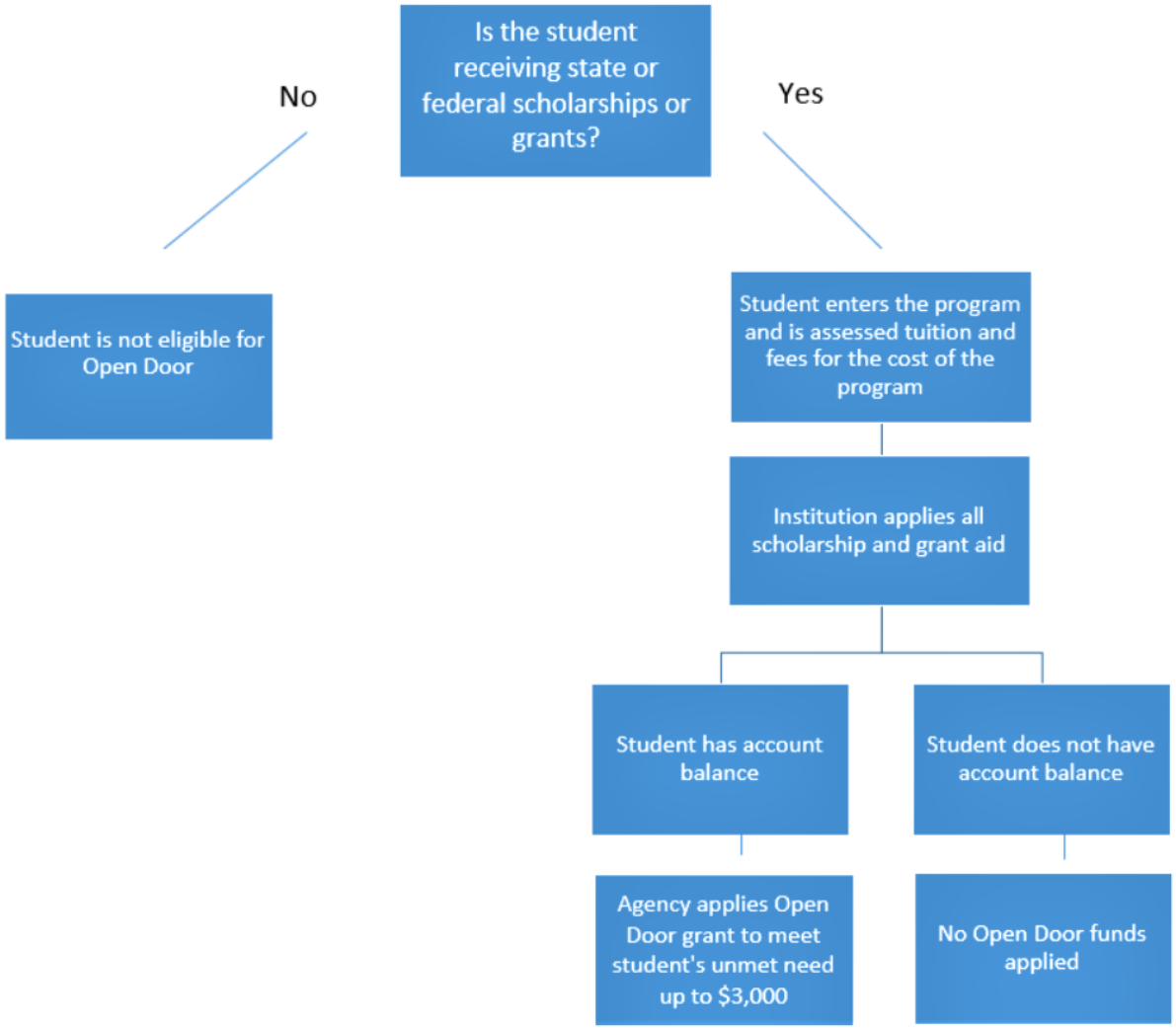
Program-Level: Last Dollar Only



Q. An eligible program is one that leads to the attainment of a credential on the Master Credentials List. Are there any approved programs which do not lead to a certification?

(FAQ #63)

A. For 2021-22, the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List and the CAPE Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List comprise the Master Credentials List.

For 2022-23 and beyond, the Credential Review Committee will publish the Master Credentials List that identifies the programs that meet the framework of quality standards used to identify credentials of value. If the Credential Review Committee adds a program to the Master Credentials List (2022-2023 and beyond) that does not lead to certification, this is when an agency would be able to draw down the additional funds, as indicated in the chart you provided.

Q. For the Last Dollar approach, how should we estimate the unmet need of students for the amount to be allocated?

(FAQ #4)

A. In determining the amount to request, agencies will be asked—for each program linked to a certification on the Master Credentials List—to identify the estimated number of students receiving Open Door dollars and the estimated amount of funds available to those students.

In determining the amount to request, agencies should consider that no student may receive more than $3,000 per program.

Q. What considerations should be given to grants or scholarships that are not state or federally funded in determining a recipient's award amount under Last Dollar?

(FAQ #23)

A. For a recipient in the Last Dollar approach, the student's grant and scholarship aid from all sources should be first applied towards the recipient's cost of the program.

After all scholarships and grants are applied, Last Dollar funds would then be used for the amount of the unmet need, not to exceed $3,000.

Q. Our workforce development department cannot accept Pell Grants. Does this mean that all our participants would fall under Student Investment?

(FAQ #54)

A. Students eligible for the Last Dollar approach are those enrolled in eligible programs and who are receiving state or federal financial aid. Rule 6A-20.045, 2(j) defines “state or federal financial aid” as 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.

Q. A non-credit, Student Investment recipient does not achieve their industry certification. How should the college handle the outstanding balance?

(FAQ #25)

A. A student who enrolls under Student Investment must pay one-third of the cost of the program and sign an agreement to either complete the program or pay an additional one-third of the cost of the program in the event of non-completion.

In the event of non-completion, agencies may collect on balances for only one-third the cost of the program in accordance with the agreement students signed upon entry.

Agencies are responsible for absorbing the final one-third cost of the program.

Q. If a credit student with state or federal financial aid wishes to enroll in an eligible non-credit program that does not accept financial aid, would that scenario qualify for the Student Investment portion of this grant?

(FAQ #61)

A. Yes, that scenario may qualify under the Student Investment portion of the Open Door Grant, if they meet all eligibility criteria and full-time status in the eligible program.

Q. How would it work to include a non-credit program in the Last Dollar scenario? Non-credit programs do not accept financial aid.

(FAQ #62)

A. While some programs may not be eligible for federal financial aid, the eligibility for Last Dollar can be extended to students in these programs if the student is in receipt of aid that has a state or federal fund source.

For the purposes of the Open Door Grant Program, “State or federal financial aid” means scholarships and grants whose fund sources are the state of Florida or the federal government. 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.

Q. In adding a program to the list based on an Occupational Completion Point (OCP), how do we determine the program cost? Should we include the hours for the entire program or just the hours of the specific OCP(s) eligible for Open Door?

(FAQ #58)

A. Because only Open Door eligible programs should be requested on the Excel Workbook, the cost of attendance would be linked to the cost to complete these OCPs, not the full cost of the career certificate.

Q. My agency offers a program that provides students with the opportunity to earn more than one approved industry certifications for Open Door. How should I complete the Excel Workbook to account for these certifications?

(FAQ #67)

A. For the Excel Workbook, agencies should list the program (column B) with just one of the approved industry certifications (column A). The Department will capture any additional certifications earned through the reporting process, so the data will be included in program outcomes.

Please note agencies should factor in any examination costs for these additional certifications into the total cost of attendance.

Q. My agency would like to request a Career Certificate Program with OCPs that allows a student to earn several certifications throughout the program. However, not all are included in an OCP approved for Open Door. Can all certifications be included in the program cost or just the ones included in the OCP?

(FAQ #59)

A. In deciding the total program cost for an Open Door eligible program OCP, only the certifications included in the OCP should be incorporated into the program cost.

Q. How should agencies confirm and document the FAFSA requirement for a student in continuing education courses who is not financial aid eligible?

(FAQ #60)

A. Rule 6A-20.045(7), F.A.C., specifies that institutions are responsible for developing policies and procedures to implement Open Door, which must include an application process for students.

Additionally, the rule states that institutions are responsible for verifying students have met the eligibility requirements, which include completion of the FAFSA.

Locally, institutions have the authority to determine the process by which they verify that students have met all eligibility requirements.

Q. What if a student recipient does not complete their program within the 12-month requirement?

(FAQ #55)

A. The agency will be responsible for monitoring student progress toward completion.

In doing so, agencies should consider the student's coursework, ensuring that students are enrolled in a course load that will facilitate completion within 12 months.

Since "full time" enrollment is part of the student's eligibility, a student enrolled for more than 12 months in the same program would no longer be eligible for the grant. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that institutions monitor student progress.

Q. Is there a timeframe or number of attempts allowed for a Student Investment recipient to earn their certification for the institution to be able draw down 1/3 of the funds?

(FAQ #50)

A. The statute and rule do not define the timeline for student completion of certifications and repeat attempts.

Institutions should establish local policies, giving consideration to the fact that the agency may only draw down the final 1/3 of funds until the student successfully completes the certification.

Q. What are allowable expenses?

(FAQs #35-39)

Allowable Expenses

- Program funds must be used solely for cost of tuition, fees, examination, books and materials to a student enrolled in an eligible program.
- Examination costs can include vouchers for third-party testing vendors.

Unallowable Expenses

- Expenses associated with administrative costs including **indirect costs are unallowable**.
- Expenses associated with equipment purchases are unallowable.
- Additional unallowable expenses may be found in the RFA.

Q. For a Student Investment recipient enrolled in non-credit workforce certification courses, how do we include certification test voucher fees as they are not calculated in tuition?

(FAQ #52)

A. In calculating the total student cost for the program, examination fees should be included. For Open Door funds, cost to the student is not limited to tuition.

Q. Since an institution cannot draw down funds for Student Investment until specific completion points, how can they show they are utilizing the awarded funds?

(FAQ #53)

A. Agencies will be required to submit quarterly reports detailing the eligibility status of each student who received a Student Investment Grant or Last Dollar Grant in the prior three months.

These reports will allow the Department to track anticipated completion points and subsequently, the funds expected to be drawn down for Student Investment.

Q. Since the budget period is through September 30, 2023, should we request funds for the 2022-23 school year as well?

(FAQ #56)

A. The application should reflect the entire award period which ends September 30, 2023.

Q. How will FDOE determine first-come, first serve?

(FAQ #5)

A. Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received based on the date a complete application was submitted to the department.

Complete applications include submission of all the required forms on the Application Review Criteria and Checklist. Agencies must have completed the required components in their entirety (e.g., all narrative sections addressed, all workbook tabs filled out, etc.) for the application to be considered complete.

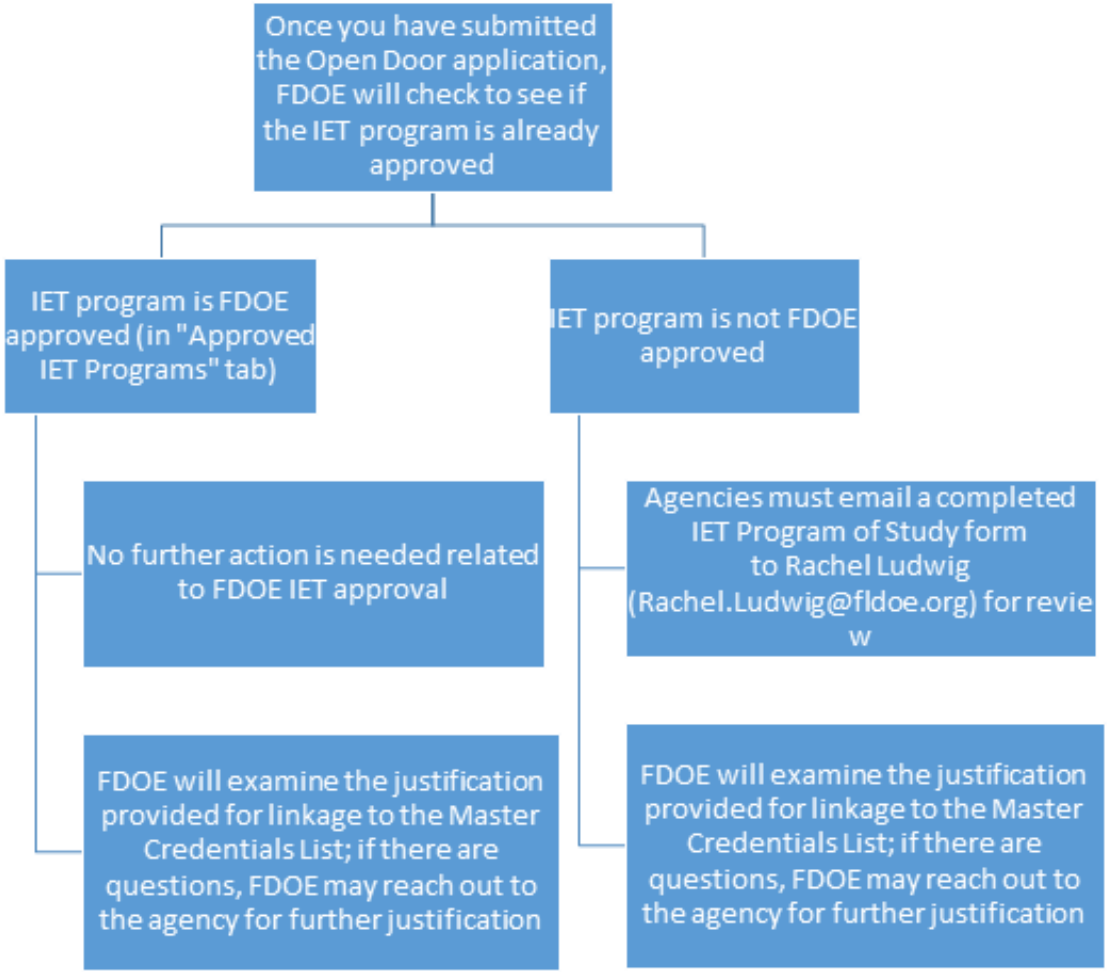
Q. Once an agency has been approved for Open Door, when will the funds be available for use?

(FAQ #57)

A. Awarded funds will be made available as soon as possible. Note that pre-award costs are allowed beginning on July 1, 2021, for students who met the eligibility criteria.

Q. Can you provide additional clarity on the IET approval process once an Open Door application has been submitted?

(FAQ #64)



Q. The Approved IET tab in the Excel workbook includes a linkage to an industry certification that is not being offered as part of my IET program. Is the program eligible for Open Door if it does not lead to the certification tied to my program on the "approved IET programs" tab?

(FAQ #65)

A. Eligibility for IET program is based on approval of the overall IET program by the Department and alignment to the Master Credentials List. If the IET Program of Study does not lead to the student's ability to obtain a credential on the Master Credentials List, then the IET program is not eligible for Open Door.

Your program is not limited to those pre-populated linkages; you may request a different credential of value linkage and provide a justification for that on the B3- IET Programs tab. You may reference the "IET Certifications" tab to identify eligible industry certifications (credentials of value) for which linkages may be made. All submissions for an IET program for Open Door must provide a justification for the linkage.

Q. What if my IET program only leads to completion of a portion of a credential on the Master Credentials List, but not the entire credential? For example, if my IET program results in a student earning the Microsoft Office Specialist credential, but not the Microsoft Office Master which requires the passage of multiple tests in different content areas?

(FAQ #66)

A. An IET program that only leads to a portion of a credential is not eligible for Open Door. In the example provided for Microsoft, the IET program of study would need to include all required exams for the Microsoft Office Master (MICRO017). If a provider would like to revise and expand their current IET program to result in a student earning a credential on the Master Credentials List, they are encouraged to go through the IET approval process explained in the RFA.

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Resources

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- Rule 6A-20.045, F.A.C.
  - https://www.flrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?id=6A-20.045

FDOE Contacts

Program Application Support

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