



## **Notice of Grant Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2025: Some College, No Degree Institutional Grant and Evaluation Program**

**Application Deadline: 5pm on Monday, September 23, 2024**

In order to meet projected workforce needs and close equity gaps in degree attainment, New Jersey remains committed to improving pathways and expanding opportunities with a focus on students with some college credit, but no degree. Building on the State's multi-faceted Some College, No Degree (SCND) initiative, these efforts will continue to focus on re-engaging and supporting students in persisting to earn their degree and a boost in the current job market. The SCND program can potentially transform individual lives and the State's economy as the State strives to meet the ambitious attainment goal of 65% of working-age residents with a high-quality credential by 2025.

In recognition of the time and resources necessary to successfully serve this population, OSHE announces a grant opportunity for New Jersey public institutions of higher education and independent-public mission institutions of higher education that receive State operating aid. Eligible institutions must be committed to re-engaging SCND students to re-enroll and complete. This year's grant program incorporates a required data component in collaboration with Ithaka S+R to help improve support to stopped out students by studying the impact of institutional and state-wide policies.

### **Purpose of Grants:**

The grant aims for institutions to build capacity, address institutional barriers to re-enrolling and completing, foster innovative ways to serve SCND students, and enhance the Statewide SCND initiative. This specific population of students requires multi-pronged and interdisciplinary approaches to directly support the unique and varied needs in re-engaging and persisting in higher education.<sup>1</sup>

The FY25 SCND Grant consists of two key components: (1) student-focused incentive funding, and (2) institution-focused funding.

### ***Student-Focused Incentive Funding***

Institutions are required to designate at least one-quarter of the grant funding to be allocated to students for direct benefits or incentives. Eligible use of funding may include:

- Basic needs supports or unexpected expenses;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nga.org/publications/state-strategies-to-re-engage-students-with-some-college-and-no-degree/>

- Student incentives for participation, re-enrollment, or persistency;
- Application fee waivers;
- Credit for prior learning assessment vouchers.

Funding may not be used for direct financial aid applied to a student's direct costs of Tuition or Fees.

### *Institution-Focused Funding*

Institutions should consider comprehensive and evidence-based best practices and multi-faceted supports when developing an application. The funding must be used to further the State's FY2025 goals to help re-engage SCND students and support these students through completion. Institutions should consider evidence-based best practices in serving this population.

Eligible uses of funding may include:

- Creating communications and marketing materials geared toward SCND individuals/stop outs;
- Establishing a customized website for this student population;
- Developing a centralized one-stop/hub to address the needs of this specific population;
- Hosting special events, such as a SCND orientation or information sessions;
- Extending hours for key student support programs;
- Reviewing and updating programs to be more schedule friendly;
- Paying staff working with this population, beyond their normal hours;
- Providing improved career services and specialized career advising; and
- Reviewing and adapting policies to be more inclusive of adult learners.

Institutions selected for the grant will also participate in assessment activities with OSHE and Ithaca S+R as part of the grant reporting requirements.

### **Distribution Methodology:**

The FY2025 SCND grant opportunity is open to New Jersey public institutions of higher education and independent-public mission institutions of higher education that receive State operating aid. The State has made \$1,665,625 available for the FY25 SCND grant program.

Institutions may apply for a SCND Grant up to the thresholds below based on Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) size category classifications. OSHE will be utilizing the 12 month FTE enrollment for 2022-2023:

<b>IPEDS Size Category</b>	<b>Maximum Grant Award</b>
Small (4,999 or fewer)	\$75,000
Medium (5,000 –9,999)	\$100,000

Large (10,000 or greater)	\$125,000
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As an example, an institution designated ‘small’ may apply for a total award of \$75,000. Within their budget, *a minimum of \$18,750 (25%)* must go to student-focused incentives, while the remaining \$56,250 may go to institution-focused initiatives.

Institutions will be required to expend their funds by June 30, 2025. Please consider this date in determining an adequate award amount that can be utilized in its entirety by the established deadline. The final amount awarded may vary based on the number and quality of applications. Institutions may be asked to revise their budgets and projects based on the final amount awarded. This is a competitive grant award and final decisions will be made based on considerations to ensure sector and geographic diversity.

### **Evaluation and Reporting Activities**

As part of the statewide initiative, OSHE is working with [Ithaka S+R](#) to provide institutional and state-wide reflection on how to improve support to stopped-out students, with a focus on re-enrollment, SCND grants, and administrative holds. This work will include reviewing current initiatives across the State in supporting SCND students, better understanding the scope of administrative holds and past due balances in NJ through identifying and analyzing available data, proposing ways to improve and build on existing student-focused incentive funding interventions, and continuing to build on the statewide community of practice. All selected grantees will participate in the evaluation as part of the grant agreement reporting requirements.

The data collected will not include personal identifiable information from students and will be reported in aggregate (see Appendix A). Ithaka S+R is available to help institutions compile the data requested as needed. Information collected will be used in a policy and practice brief, as well as community of practice events. Ithaka S+R is a non-profit organization providing strategic advice and support services to help academic and cultural communities to broaden access to education and improve student outcomes.

### **Application Instructions: Due by 5pm on Monday, September 23, 2024**

Eligible NJ public institutions of higher education include all public and independent public-mission colleges that receive state operating aid. An institution may submit no more than one complete application. Please note the information provided should be able to be publicly disclosed and not contain any confidential, proprietary, or business sensitive information.

Applications from each institution must include two documents: 1) Grant Narrative; and 2) Budget Justification Template

#### *Grant Narrative:*

Use the headings listed below within the application. Institutions must abide by the word limit indicated per section. Any information beyond the word limit will not be reviewed. The grant narrative must include:

- **Contact(s) Information:** Name, title, phone number, and email of the grant manager(s). Include no more than (3) contacts for the submission.

- **Letter of Commitment from the Institution’s President/Chancellor or Designee:** Detail how grant participation will align with institutional strategic priorities, as well as confirm institution participation and role in SCND evaluation.
  - Word limit: 500 words.
- **Statement of Alignment with State SCND Goals:** Demonstrate how the institution has been working to support SCND students and how these additional funds can further strategic priorities and goals at the institution and for the State.
  - Word limit: 500 words.
- **Project Goals:** List at least 3 goals of the project and describe how they align with the institution’s goals to serve the Some College, No Degree student population or subset within this population. Goals should be results-oriented and quantify where possible. Selected institutions will be expected to report on goal progress and outcomes in required reporting.
  - Word limit: 250 words each.
- **Project Activity Plan:** Provide a brief description of your institution’s proposed project plan for both the institution and student portion of the grant. Indicate how the institution would successfully implement within the grant cycle, including suggested project activities with clear ties to the budget proposed, parties responsible (person or office) for implementing, and timetable.
  - Word limit: 750 words each.
- **Project Evaluation:** Include how the institution plans to evaluate the impact of the grant at the institution level with baseline data, appropriate milestones, and measurable impacts related to the Some College, No Degree population. Please note, institutions will be expected to report on the goals set in application, as well as participate in the Statewide evaluation described above.
  - Word limit: 500 words each.
- **Project Sustainability:** Detail how the institution will sustain the project at the end of the grant cycle and how this project will lead to long-term change at the institution.
  - Word limit: 250 words.

***Budget:***

The budget portion of the application must be submitted as an Excel spreadsheet utilizing the template provided. In the budget template, institutions should complete these areas: contact information, original budget column, and narrative budget description column only. A key component of the budget template is the field designated for the “Narrative Budget Description.” For each category of budgeted expenses, institutions must provide a “Narrative Description” consisting of a detailed list and justification for each expense. The funding should be clearly tied to grant deliverables and outcomes and any items charged must be grant-specific. If the “Narrative Budget Description” cannot be provided within the space allowed within the template, institutions may submit a secondary spreadsheet tab with this detail, but all submissions must be in an Excel spreadsheet format.

The budget includes a category for the Student-Focused Incentive Funding which should be allotted at minimum 25% of the total budget and included in the narrative details on how the funding would be utilized.

Please note Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A/Indirect costs) are not allowable expenses.

In recognition of capacity constraints, institutions may utilize funding for staff time beyond typical duties to further the goals and purpose of this initiative. Funding should not be used for new permanent staff positions.

Funding must abide by State guidelines and be fully expended by June 30, 2025. Note that this project should not supplant another initiative but demonstrate a bold and innovative approach to an identified barrier.

Budgets will be reviewed for reasonable and eligible expenses. Institutions may be asked to revise their budgets and projects based on the final amount awarded.

Link to Budget Template: [https://www.nj.gov/highereducation/documents/pdf/some-college/FY2025SCNDBudgetTemplate\\_Final.xlsx](https://www.nj.gov/highereducation/documents/pdf/some-college/FY2025SCNDBudgetTemplate_Final.xlsx)

**Submission of Application: Due by 5pm on Monday, September 23**

The above requested information should be submitted as two files (one budget as an Excel spreadsheet and one PDF grant narrative) to **both** Stefani Thachik at [Stefani.Thachik@oshe.nj.gov](mailto:Stefani.Thachik@oshe.nj.gov) and [Sara.Lipsett@oshe.nj.gov](mailto:Sara.Lipsett@oshe.nj.gov) with the subject line “Institution Name\_FY25\_SCND.” OSHE will send an email confirming receipt. Budgets will be reviewed for reasonable and eligible expenses.

Applications are due by **5 p.m., Monday, September 23.**

***Questions:***

Additional questions about the FY2025 Some College, No Degree grant opportunity can be directed to Stefani Thachik, OSHE Senior Advisor, [Stefani.Thachik@oshe.nj.gov](mailto:Stefani.Thachik@oshe.nj.gov).

***Additional Resources:***

Consider reviewing the NJ OSHE Some College, No Degree website for additional information about the statewide initiative: <https://nj.gov/highereducation/somecollegenodegree.shtml>.

## Appendix A

### Institutional Data Collection: Administrative and Policy/Practice Data

For the below data elements, stopped out students are defined as students who enrolled at your institution for at least one term between Fall 2013 and Fall 2023, did not complete a credential, and did not enroll in the Spring 2024 or later terms (all stopped out students should meet those three criteria to be counted). Students whose only term of enrollment ends prematurely with a full institutional withdrawal should not be included.

The data collected does not include personal identifiable information and will be collected/reported in aggregate.

#### Administrative Data

Total number of stopped out students

Number of stopped out students with transcript holds

Number of stopped out students with registration holds

Total amount of debt owed by stopped out students (This includes only institutional debt, including debt classified as Return to Title IV and owed to your institution. This is the principal balance owed and should exclude interest, fees, or other charges added to the original balance.)

Average percentage of debt collected when a student stops out and their account enters collections, whether internally or externally. (If this data is unavailable, you may provide an approximate value.)

Total amount of debt collected (dollar amount) from stopped out students (If this data is unavailable, you may provide an approximate value.)

#### Policy/Practice Data

How is your institution currently re-engaging stopped-out students?

Which practices have helped students re-enroll when a hold is on their account?

How has your institution implemented the Department of Education's new transcript withholding regulations? Which decisions still need to be made?

Prior to the new federal regulation that took effect July 1, 2024, what was your transcript withholding policy in regard to past due balances?

Prior to July 1, 2024, what dollar amount, if any, triggered a transcript hold?

What is your current transcript withholding policy in regard to past due balances?

What dollar amount triggers a transcript hold?

What dollar amount triggers a registration hold?

What dollar amount and time threshold results in a student being sent to outside collections?

After how many years is debt written off?

When a student is sent to outside collections:

- What percentage of students ultimately make some form of payment?
- On average, what percentage of the debt is recouped?

When a student is NOT sent to outside collections:

- What percentage of students ultimately make some form of payment?
- On average, what percentage of the debt is recouped?