



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FY 2026 GRANTS**

**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION
OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS
PROGRAM**

APPLICATIONS DUE

**Monday, October 6, 2025
4:00 PM**

**Maryland Higher Education Commission
Office of Outreach and Grants Management
217 E. Redwood St., Suite 2100
Baltimore, MD 21202**

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

TIMETABLE.....	3
OVERVIEW	4
PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION	4
PROGRAM PURPOSE	4
ELIGIBILITY	4
FUNDING.....	4
USE OF FUNDS.....	5
REQUIRED MATCH.....	5
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.....	5
PROGRAM CONTACT	5
PROPOSAL FORMAT & REQUIREMENTS	6
GENERAL FORMAT REQUIREMENTS	6
PROPOSAL COMPONENTS	6
PROPOSAL NARRATIVE.....	7
A. NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....	7
B. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY	7
C. PROJECT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES.....	7
D. OPERATIONS PLAN.....	7
E. MANAGEMENT PLAN.....	8
F. PROJECT EVALUATION	8
BUDGET AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS	8
A. BUDGET SUMMARY	8
B. BUDGET NARRATIVE	8
APPLICATION SUBMISSION	10
SELECTION CRITERIA	11
REVIEW PROCESS.....	11
POST-AWARD GRANT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES.....	12
FISCAL PROCEDURES.....	12
POST-AWARD CHANGES	12
PROJECT CLOSEOUT, SUSPENSION, TERMINATION.....	12
RECORDS	13
REPORTING	13
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SUPPORT AND DISCLAIMER.....	14
COVER SHEET.....	16
ABSTRACT.....	17
BUDGET SUMMARY.....	19
STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES.....	21

**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM
TIMETABLE**

Request for Proposals Issued	September 11, 2025
Technical Assistance	For technical assistance, contact Anthony Reiner at Anthony.Reiner@Maryland.gov
Proposals Due to MHEC by 4:00 p.m.	October 6, 2025
Award Notifications (via email prior to midnight)	October 15, 2025
Grant Project Start Date	October 16, 2025
First Payment – 50% Grant Award	November 2025
Interim Report Due	March 16, 2026
Second Payment – 50% Grant Award	March 23, 2026
Grant Project End Date	June 30, 2026
Final Report Due	September 30, 2026

Submit proposals to
Anthony Reiner
Anthony.Reiner@Maryland.gov

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) is accepting applications for projects at eligible nonprofit organizations to provide statewide outreach efforts to support and encourage low-income Maryland high school students to attend and complete college. The goal of the Maryland Higher Education Outreach and College Access Program (MD-HEOCAP) is to increase the number of low-income students attending and succeeding in college. Through this grant, funds are provided to eligible nonprofit organizations to carry out statewide outreach efforts on college access and completion. These outreach efforts support and encourage low-income high school students to attend and complete college. Grant funding of up to \$100,000 will be awarded to eligible nonprofit organizations on a competitive basis. MD-HEOCAP projects are funded for a twelve (12) month grant period.

PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION

Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Subtitle 11. Maryland Higher Education Outreach and College Access Program, §§ 11-1101 through 11-1107.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the Maryland Higher Education Outreach and College Access Program is to:

- Encourage low-income Maryland high school students to attend and complete college;
- Connect potential college and university students with nonprofit organizations that have a history of successful higher education outcomes for low-income high school students;
- Create a matching fund for nonprofit organizations to increase outreach efforts for low-income students;
- Provide funding for nonprofit organizations that are established in the community to provide targeted outreach to encourage low-income students to enroll in college; and
- Increase the number of low-income students attending and succeeding in college.

ELIGIBILITY

501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that have been in existence for five (5) or more consecutive years that meet the following minimum criteria:

- Located in Maryland;
- Have established partnership(s) with a local school system and/or higher education institution;
- Provide college access activities, communication, and services with a proven track record of success; and
- Offer services to enhance and increase college access and completion for low-income Maryland high school students.

FUNDING

Grant funding for the Maryland Higher Education Outreach and College Access Program (MD-HEOCAP) is available to eligible nonprofit organizations on a competitive basis. Grants of up to \$100,000 will be awarded to support a twelve (12) month grant period. Final grant awards are subject to the availability of state funds.

USE OF FUNDS

Grant funding awarded under this program may only be used for costs directly related to project activities and services. Budgets must be based on the actual costs necessary to support the project. These costs may include personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, consultant and contractual services, and all other justified costs required for the efficient and successful implementation of the project. All planned costs must be included in the proposal budget for approval. Indirect costs of up to 8% may be charged to the grant.

REQUIRED MATCH

Nonprofit organizations are required to provide one-to-one matching funds equal to the total grant funds requested. For example, if the total grant funds requested is \$20,000, organizations are required to provide a \$20,000 match. Details of the required match must be included in the proposal budget.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance will be provided on an as needed basis. Please contact Anthony Reiner at Anthony.Reiner@Maryland.gov for more information.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Anthony Reiner
Anthony.Reiner@Maryland.gov
(410) 767-3087

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

PROPOSAL FORMAT & REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

- Proposal narrative is limited to a maximum of fifteen (15) single-spaced pages. The page limit excludes the cover sheet, abstract, budget, assurances, résumés, and appendices.
- Proposal narrative pages must be numbered.
- Pages must be 8 ½ x 11 inches in size.
- Pages must have one-inch margins.
- Font must be in 12-point Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri or similar font type.
- All proposal components must be submitted together using appropriate forms.
- An electronic copy of the proposal in PDF format must be submitted to Anthony Reiner at Anthony.Reiner@maryland.gov. A copy of the abstract must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

All proposals should include the following components, in this order. Use appropriate forms when provided.

- COVER SHEET: (Required) (Appendix A): Must use form provided in Appendix A.
- ABSTRACT: (Required) (Appendix A): Must use format provided in Appendix A.
- TABLE OF CONTENTS: (Required)
- PROPOSAL NARRATIVE: (Required) Detailed instructions provided in section titled “Proposal Narrative”
- BUDGET SUMMARY: (Required) (Appendix B): Must use format provided in Appendix B.
- BUDGET NARRATIVE: (Required) Detailed instructions provided in section titled “Budget Narrative.”
- STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES: (Required) (Appendix C): Must use form provided in Appendix C.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

The proposal narrative (not to exceed 15 single-spaced pages) should address the following:

A. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Briefly detail the need for the proposed project. Identify the target population. Address the size, demographics, and needs of the target population. Provide supporting data. Describe the impact of the proposed project on the target population. The State of Maryland is taking an all-of-government approach to addressing child poverty and promoting economic mobility in the areas of greatest need across the state. Applicants targeting communities with the highest rates of concentrated child poverty in each county will receive priority. These include communities in counties that are eligible under the Governor's Office for Children's Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments and Households (ENOUGH) Grant Program. In counties without eligible communities, applicants may target communities where the rate of child poverty is the highest for that respective county. Proposals are encouraged to include strategies that expand access to postsecondary education and training—particularly for young men and boys, who are often underrepresented in college enrollment and completion and disproportionately impacted by poverty. If applicable, summarize how your proposal will benefit one of these communities and/or upload a letter of support from relevant stakeholders (e.g., ENOUGH Community Quarterbacks) in the designated community.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Describe the organization's mission, projects, and service area. Detail the organizational capacity to implement the proposed project. Provide a description of your organization's prior work with college access and completion for low-income Maryland high school students. Include an overview of your partnerships (current and planned) with local school systems and higher education institutions.

C. PROJECT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES

Detail the goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes for the proposed project. Project outcomes should be quantifiable and measurable. All applications must demonstrate their organization's contribution to the overarching goal to encourage low-income Maryland high school students to attend and complete college. The proposal must include the goals listed below.

- Goal 1: Students will demonstrate a greater awareness of postsecondary opportunities and college admission requirements through surveys and/or pre- and post-assessments.
- Goal 2: Students will demonstrate a greater awareness of the FAFSA and financial aid through surveys and/or pre- and post-assessments.

D. OPERATIONS PLAN

Describe the operations plan for implementing the project. Detail the activities that will achieve the project goals, objectives and outcomes. Describe each activity/strategy and the key personnel responsible for each. Provide a timeline for implementation of project activities. Detail the appropriateness of project activities/strategies in achieving project outcomes. The operations plan should be presented as a narrative. A table may be added to support the narrative.

E. MANAGEMENT PLAN

Describe the management plan for implementation of the project. Detail the roles, responsibilities, and background of key personnel. Include a biography for the project director that demonstrates he/she has the qualifications necessary to implement the proposed project. Provide a clear organizational structure, a timeline for management actions, and milestones for accomplishing management actions. Demonstrate the project director and other staff have sufficient time to conduct the project efficiently and according to the established timeline. Include resumes/CVs for all key personnel in an appendix. The management plan should be presented as a narrative. A table may be added to support the narrative.

F. PROJECT EVALUATION

Describe how the overall effectiveness of the project will be assessed. Discuss the methodology that will be used for evaluating whether the project meets its stated goals and objectives. Discuss what data will be collected and analyzed. Grantees will be required to report the number of students served, the number of students who applied to college, and the number of students who enrolled in college. Evaluation results are reported in the interim and final project reports. The evaluation plan should link to project goals, objectives, and outcomes.

BUDGET AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS

Develop a budget for the project. The budget should be justifiable in terms of the scope of the proposed project. Costs should be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary. Proposed budgets will be reviewed as part of the application process. Costs deemed excessive or inappropriate will be removed and the budget adjusted accordingly.

A. BUDGET SUMMARY

Provide a budget summary outlining all project costs by line item. Organizations must use the form provided in Appendix B.

B. BUDGET NARRATIVE

Provide a budget narrative to support all costs included in the budget summary. Explain the rationale for each line of the budget summary, both for grant expenditures and organizational and other contributions. The narrative, organized by the corresponding line item on the budget summary, must show how the costs were calculated. An explanation of budget categories and proposal expectations follows.

SALARIES & WAGES

Professional Personnel: List individually, all key personnel and the requested salary amounts by indicating what percent of the individual's annual time will be committed to the project.

Other Personnel: List individually, all support personnel by support category and the requested rate of pay. Support personnel must be clearly justified.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Fringe benefits are calculated at the costs normally paid by the organization for the salaried members of its staff who will be involved in the project. The amount of fringe requested in the proposal should represent the percentage of effort on the project.

TRAVEL

Enter travel costs for essential personnel to conduct project activities. Mileage allowances may not exceed the state's approved rate for mileage reimbursement at the time of travel. All travel funding must be specifically designated by place, for whom, approximate date, distance, and method of travel.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment means an article of non-expendable tangible property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost per unit that is consistent with organizational policy. Equipment expenses must be documented with written estimates, invoices, etc. and be purchased in compliance with organizational procurement procedures. Discuss the "life expectancy" of any grant purchased equipment, role of the equipment in the project, any maintenance plans if applicable, and how equipment will be used after the grant period has ended.

SUPPLIES

Supplies refer to expendable and non-expendable supplies, including but not limited to books, computer software, operating supplies, and other items necessary for the effective implementation of the project.

CONSULTANT AND CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

Use of consultants or other contractual services must be justified and reasonable. Consultant pay must be a reflection of time spent delivering direct services. Travel and per diem expenses for consultants should not exceed the organizational or state rate, or that allowed by federal OMB circulars, whichever is least. Preparation time for consultants will not be paid by the grant. Properly documented contractual agreements for expenditures to consultants or outside agencies for fees, travel, and routine supplies must be filed per organizational policy; and contractual payments cannot exceed organizational salary levels for similar work. All contractual services must be procured in accordance with organizational procurement requirements and procedures.

OTHER (SPECIFY)

All expenditures that do not fall into any of the above budget categories should be detailed in the OTHER category. List each expenditure separately. Explain why these costs are necessary for the implementation of the project. Detail how costs were computed.

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS

Enter the sum of Items A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.

TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs charged to the grant cannot exceed 8%.

TOTAL

Enter the sum of Item H and I. Be sure to reconcile the total in each line and each column.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

An electronic copy of the proposal in PDF format must be submitted to Anthony Reiner at Anthony.Reiner@Maryland.gov by 4 p.m., October 6, 2025. Please submit a copy of the abstract as a Microsoft Word document.

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be carefully reviewed and evaluated by a review panel that includes panel members with expertise in higher education, outreach and college access. Proposals will be scored according to the following scoring rubric:

Proposal Scoring Rubric (100 Points)

- Needs Assessment (10 points)
- Organizational Capacity (10 points)
- Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes (15 points)
- Operations Plan (15 points)
- Management Plan (10 points)
- Project Evaluation (20 points)
- Budget and Budget Narrative (20 points)

REVIEW PROCESS

The review process consists of the following phases:

1. Initial Review: Proposals will be reviewed for formatting and completeness. Any proposal determined to be incorrectly formatted or incomplete may be rejected. Applicants will be provided an opportunity to correct any non-material proposal issues.
2. Review Panel Evaluation: Review panel members will individually evaluate and score each proposal that passes initial review. Points will be awarded according to the criteria outlined in this RFP. The review panel will meet to collectively review each proposal and discuss any requests for additional information, project changes and funding recommendations.
3. Request for Additional Information/Project Changes: Applicants will be notified of any requests for additional information/project changes.
4. Funding Recommendation Approval: The review panel funding recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of Higher Education (or designee) for final approval.
5. Grant Award: Award letters and notice of grant awards are issued for funded proposals.

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

POST-AWARD GRANT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

FISCAL PROCEDURES

All state funds under this program must be assigned to a specific account. Grant awards will be disbursed in two payments. The first payment, 50% of the grant award, will be disbursed upon award. The second payment for the remaining balance will be disbursed upon receipt and approval of the interim report. Expenditures exceeding the approved budget are the responsibility of the grantee.

POST-AWARD CHANGES

The grant recipient shall obtain prior written approval for any change to the scope of the approved project. The request must include an explanation of the specific project changes and a revised budget, if applicable. If project activity dates have changed significantly since the proposal submission, you must submit a revised calendar of activity dates.

The grant recipient shall also obtain prior written approval from the Office of Outreach and Grants Management to:

1. Continue the project during any continuous period of more than three (3) months without the active direction of an approved project director;
2. Replace the project director (or any other persons named and expressly identified as key personnel in the proposal) or to permit any such person to devote substantially less effort to the project than was anticipated when the grant was awarded;
3. Make changes resulting in the addition or deletion of staff or consultants related to or resulting in a need for budget reallocation; and
4. Make budget changes exceeding \$1,000 or 10% in any category, whichever is greater.

Grantees must also request written approval to extend the expiration date of the grant if additional time beyond the established grant end date is required to ensure adequate completion of project activities with the funds already made available. A single extension may be made for this purpose and must be requested no less than one (1) month prior to the originally established expiration date. The request must explain the need for the extension and include an estimate of the unobligated funds remaining and a plan for their use. The fact that unobligated funds may remain at the expiration of the grant is not in itself sufficient justification for an extension. The plan must adhere to the previously approved goals and objectives of the project.

PROJECT CLOSEOUT, SUSPENSION, TERMINATION

CLOSEOUT: Each grant shall be closed out as promptly as feasible after expiration or termination. In closing out the grant, the following shall be observed:

- The grant recipient shall immediately refund, in accordance with instructions from MHEC, any unobligated balance of cash advanced to the grant recipient.
- The grant recipient shall submit all financial, performance, evaluation, and other reports required by the terms of the grant within 90 days of the date of expiration or termination.

- The closeout of a grant does not affect the retention period for state and/or federal rights of access to grant records.

SUSPENSION: When a grant recipient has materially failed to comply with the terms of a grant, MHEC may, upon reasonable notice to the grant recipient, suspend the grant in whole or in part. The notice of suspension will state the reasons for the suspension, any corrective action required of the grant recipient, and the effective date. Suspensions shall remain in effect until the grant recipient has taken action satisfactory to MHEC or given evidence satisfactory to MHEC that such corrective action will be taken or until MHEC terminates the grant.

TERMINATION: MHEC may terminate any grant in whole or in part at any time before the date of expiration, whenever MHEC determines that the grant recipient has materially failed to comply with the terms of the grant. MHEC shall promptly notify the grant recipient in writing of the termination and the reasons for the termination, together with the effective date. The grant recipient may terminate the grant in whole or in part upon written notification to MHEC setting forth the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and in the case of partial terminations, the portion to be terminated. In the case of a partial termination, if MHEC determines that the remaining portion of the grant will not accomplish the purposes for which the grant was made; MHEC may terminate the grant.

Closeout of a grant does not affect the right of MHEC to disallow costs and recover funds on the basis of a later audit or review, nor does closeout affect the grantee's obligation to return any funds due as a result of later refunds, corrections, or other transactions.

RECORDS

A grant recipient shall retain the following records for a period of five (5) years after completion of the grant project:

- Records of significant project activities and results.
- Records that fully show amount of funds under the grant, how the funds were used, total cost of projects, all costs provided from other sources, and other records to facilitate an effective audit.
- Records to show the grant recipient's compliance with program requirements.
- Records of participant data.

REPORTING

To ensure accountability and sound fiscal management, the Office of Outreach and Grants Management serves as the state monitor of grant activities funded under this program. In addition to requiring interim and final reports, MHEC staff may conduct site visits, undertake telephone interviews, or request written materials for this purpose.

Interim and final reports are required from all grantees. The interim report includes both a financial and narrative report. The interim report should provide evidence that the project is progressing with sufficient effectiveness to continue grant activities. At the end of the grant, both a final financial and narrative report will be due to the Office of Outreach and Grants Management. Grantees who do not submit a final report may be ineligible to apply for future grants.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SUPPORT AND DISCLAIMER

An acknowledgment of the Maryland Higher Education Commission must appear in any publication of materials based on or developed under this program.

Materials must also contain the following disclaimer:

“Opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and no official endorsement should be inferred.”

All media announcements and public information pertaining to activities funded by this grant program should acknowledge support of the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

If any article resulting from work under this grant is published in a professional journal or publication, two reprints of the publication should be sent to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, Office of Outreach and Grants Management, and clearly labeled with appropriate identifying information.

APPENDIX A

COVERSHEET ABSTRACT

**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM
COVER SHEET**

Organization:

Project Title:

Project Director Name and Title:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Mailing Address:

Office Contact Name and Title:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Mailing Address:

Finance or Business Contact Name and Title:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Mailing Address:

Certification by authorizing official Name and Title (V.P. level or above):

Signature: _____

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM
ABSTRACT

Organization: _____

Project Title: _____

Provide a summary (250-300 words) of the proposed project's needs, purpose, and projected outcomes.
(Please note this abstract may be reproduced as is or edited by MHEC staff for inclusion in press releases and other publications describing the grant project.)

APPENDIX B

BUDGET SUMMARY

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

BUDGET SUMMARY

Organization: _____

SOURCE OF FUNDS				
	COLUMN 1 Grant Funds Requested	COLUMN 2 Organization Contributions	COLUMN 3 Other Contributions	COLUMN 4 Totals
A. Salaries & Wages				
Professional Personnel [List each by name followed by title in brackets]				
1				
2				
3				
4				
Other Personnel (list categories & # of each in brackets)				
5. []				
6. []				
7. []				
8. []				
Total Salaries and Wages	0		0	
B. Fringe Benefits				
C. Travel				
D. Equipment				
1				
2				
E. Materials and Supplies				
F. Consultant and Contractual Services				
G. Other (specify)				
1				
2				
H. Total Direct Costs (A through G)	0		0	
I. Total Indirect Costs (max. 8% of H)	0		0	
J. Total (H and I)	0		0	

APPENDIX C
STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

The Applicant hereby affirms and certifies that it will comply with all applicable regulations, policies, guidelines, and requirements of the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the State of Maryland as they relate to the application, acceptance, and use of Maryland Higher Education Outreach and College Access Program funds.

The Applicant affirms and certifies that:

1. It possesses legal authority to apply for the grant; e.g., an official act of the applicant's governing body has been duly adopted or passed, authorizing filing of the application, including all understandings and assurances contained therein and directing and authorizing the person identified as the official representative of the application and to provide such additional information as may be required.
2. It will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d) prohibiting employment discrimination where discriminatory employment practices will result in unequal treatment of persons who are or should be benefiting from the grant-aided activity.
3. It will comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and any and all amendments to the ADA.
4. It will expend funds to supplement new and/or existing programs and not use these funds to supplant non-grant funds or for any purpose other than those specified in this grant.
5. It will participate in any statewide assessment program or other evaluation program as required by MHEC.
6. It will give MHEC and/or a representative from the Office of Legislative Audits, through any authorized representative, the right of access to, and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the grant. It will maintain all records pertaining to this grant for a period of five (5) years.
7. It will comply with all requirements imposed by MHEC concerning special requirements of law and other administrative requirements.

Organization: _____

Signature of Authorized Official (President, VP level, or above)

Date

Name and Title, Printed

