

# Competency-Based Diploma 18+ Pilot Program Guidance Document

## Overview

As passed in House Bill 33, the competency-based diploma 18+ pilot program is for individuals who are at least 18 years old, but under 22 years old. The 18+ pilot program is aligned with the rules and standards adopted under sections [3314.38](#), [3317.23](#), [3317.231](#), [3317.24](#), and [3345.86](#) of the Revised Code for the adult 22+ high school diploma program.

The 18+ pilot program will operate in the fiscal years 2024 and 2025. The Department of Education and Workforce will issue and post a report regarding the pilot program by July 30, 2025. The system currently used for adult providers and students will also be used for the 18+ pilot program. However, the 18+ pilot program will be distinct from 22+ with separate funding and reporting. The student applications for the 18+ pilot program will open on January 10, 2024, and close June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, based on available funding.

All current 22+ providers were given the opportunity to opt into the pilot program. To express interest in participating, the 22+ providers had to notify the Department. The providers will be evaluated continuously to ensure potential participants are provided a quality experience.

## Participant Eligibility

Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 21 and officially withdrawn from high school. While individuals between the ages of 18 and 21 are eligible, providers should avoid recruiting students currently enrolled in high school and dropout recovery schools.

## Impact on District Graduation Rates

When students withdraw from high school, it can have an impact on the district's graduation rates. As a result, it is crucial for districts and providers to work collaboratively with students to ensure referring students to the 18+ pilot program is the most advantageous option for the student to earn a high school diploma.

## Role of Provider Working with Potential Participant

Providers should collaborate with participants, parents, families, caregivers, and school and district staff to assess whether the 18+ pilot program is the best option for participant to earn a high school diploma. Providers should discuss the following items with all parties involved with a potential participant:

1. The number of outstanding credits and assessments needed to earn high school diploma.

2. The ability to complete all necessary credits and assessments in two consecutive fiscal years.
3. The participants ability to work in a competency-based model.
4. The ability for participants to receive personalized and one on one instruction.
5. Participants not being able to graduate with their high school peers.
6. The high school diploma being issued by the participant's district of residence.

Based on the discussion of items identified above, the provider should work collaboratively with the potential participant and support network in determining if the 18+ pilot program is the best option to earn a high school diploma. In some cases, it will be advantageous for the potential participant to stay enrolled in high school or a dropout recovery school.

## Considerations of Enrolling Students with Disabilities

The provider needs to ensure the potential participant and parents, families, and caregivers understand the implications of a participant with disabilities who enrolls in the 18+ pilot program. There are several considerations for students with Individualized Education Program (IEP) who are age 18 and above.

Within the pilot program, the student will not receive special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. In other words, the student will not receive services and support through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Provider will not be able to provide access to graduation options available only to students with IEPs in Ohio.

Specifically, the student could not use IEP goals to meet course requirements, participate in the Ohio Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities, or be excused from earning the required score on state tests to demonstrate competency. The student, aged 18- 22, may contact their school district of residence if they would like to be considered for special education services. After self-disclosing a disability to the provider, the student may be eligible for services and protections through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The student's IEP could be used to inform the provider as to the types of support that may be needed.

## Funding

The 18+ pilot program providers will receive funds to implement the pilot program. The appropriation in House Bill 33 was \$2.5 million. The funds will be allocated equally among the 18+ pilot program providers. The funds will be available through June 30, 2025, or when funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first.

## Reporting

The Department must submit and post a detailed, data-driven report on the Department's website by July 30, 2025, of the 18+ pilot program. Providers must collect data on participant feedback, wrap around services, terminated applications and post program placement for the 18+ pilot program. Therefore, providers must collect data throughout the pilot program and submit a quarterly summary to the Department on the following items:

- Acceptance of all participants that apply to the program, regardless of remaining credits and/or assessments.
- Evaluation of each participant needs for necessary wrap around services (i.e., childcare, transportation, computer skills, career counseling, parenting classes, etc.)
- Documentation of appropriate referrals and wrap around services.
- Creation of a documented terminated application process outlining the steps taken to ensure participants are actively engaged in completing the credit recovery plan.
- Notification of the termination process during enrollment.
- Documentation of identifying the frequency and methods used to remain in contact with the participant to reduce the number of dropouts.
- Conduct and submit to the Department written exit interviews with each participant.
- Conduct and submit post program placement documentation to the Department within six months of participants completing the program.