

Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS) Applications Planning Guidance Application Cycle 2025-2026

CIHS PLANNING GUIDANCE

PART A – INITIAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

Provide proposed school name, planned location and physical address, LEA name and number, IHE partner name and other program collaborators. Indicate previous status and whether you are requesting additional state funds.

PART B – BASIC OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CIHS

Provide primary contact information. Provide a summary description of the CIHS (less than 150 words). Indicate student target populations to be served. Indicate grade levels to be offered and program focus. Describe the student enrollment and admissions process; include specific criteria and recruitment efforts.

- **School Design**
 - Cooperative innovative high school – A high school that meets the following criteria (G.S. 115C-238.50A.):
 - It has no more than 100 students per grade level.
 - It partners with an institution of higher education to enable students to concurrently obtain a high school diploma and begin or complete an associate degree program, master a certificate or vocational program, or earn up to two years of college credit within five years.
 - It is located on the campus of the institution of higher education, unless the governing board specifically waives the requirement through adoption of a formal resolution. As initial discussions are held about the development of new CIHS programs, a decision will need to be made about whether or not the school will be on a college campus. If the CIHS will not be on a college campus, a location waiver should be included in the CIHS application.
- **Target Populations** – CIHS legislation establishes the CIHS target populations listed below. Your CIHS application should check the boxes identifying which of the CIHS target student populations the proposed CIHS will recruit, enroll, and serve:

- High school students who are at risk of dropping out of school before attaining a high school diploma.
- (2) High school students with parents who did not continue education beyond high school.
- (3) High school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction. (G.S. 115C-238.50.)

This section of the application includes this question:

“If the CIHS application does not indicate the intent to serve all three CIHS target populations, please provide the reasons for limiting this opportunity.”

NCDPI strongly encourages all CIHS applicants to plan to serve all three legislated CIHS target populations. If the applicant partners do not intend to serve all target populations, the application should explain the reasons for limiting this opportunity to only one or two target populations.

- **Student Enrollment**

- **Eligibility**

- Eligibility requirements for Cooperative Innovative High School programs are established jointly by local boards of trustees in accordance with G.S. 115C-238.50.
- Local boards of trustees should identify how students will demonstrate college readiness.
 - **How will the CIHS develop methods for early identification of potential participating students and provide outreach to promote academic preparation and awareness of the CIHS program?**
 - Will the current eligibility requirements listed in the CCP Operating Procedures be used or will another local plan be developed to determine which students demonstrate readiness for this opportunity?
 - CIHS students are not required to meet eligibility requirements listed in the CCP Operating Procedures for participation in the College Transfer and Career and Technical Education CCP pathways. CIHS students are required to meet course eligibility requirements established by the NC Community College System.

- **Student Selection and Admission Process**

- **How aligned is the selection process to intentionally recruiting students who match the target population?**
- The selection process should not exclude students and should be legally defensible.

- The selection process should take into consideration the local context of the school and encourage match of student needs and motivation to CIHS opportunities.

This section of the application should be aligned with the section identifying the CIHS target populations the planned CIHS will serve. This section includes the following statement that all applicant teams should note:

““If the CIHS application indicates the intent to serve all CIHS target populations, the recruitment strategies and admissions process should reflect that intention and should not create barriers to the enrollment of any target population.”

PART C – PROGRAM INFORMATION

Comprehensive Description: Describe fully the CIHS, addressing all relevant purposes outlined in the [N.C.G.S. 115C-238.50](#) (a,b). How will this proposed CIHS better prepare students to be college and career ready?

- **Justification for additional CIHS: If the CIHS will be located in an LEA that already operates one or more CIHS, and if existing CIHS are serving less than 100 students per grade level, what are the reasons for proposing an additional CIHS?**
- **What will the proposed CIHS be able to achieve that is not already available through CCP Pathways (CTP and CTE)?**

Response to Region’s Economic Vision

- **Employers/Community Focus**
 - **How does the school relate to the Economic Vision Plan adopted by the regional economic development commission for the economic development region where the school will be located?**
 - **How will you engage employers and the community as you develop the plan for this school?**
 - **Who are the community partners that should be at the table?** (Example: County commissioners, economic development partners, agencies that could support the mission and curriculum needs of the school, etc.)
 - **What role will employers and the community-at-large play in the planning process and how will on-going interaction and support for the school be developed?**

Curriculum

The curriculum design of the school should provide structured opportunities for students to complete a degree, diploma or certificate. Consider the following questions as you develop your curriculum model for your CIHS application:

- **What will the curriculum focus be for the school?** (STEM, business, technology, health sciences, engineering, public service technologies, sustainable agriculture, etc.)
- **Provide a description of the overall instructional program and how it will introduce innovation into the classroom.**
- **What programs of study will be offered to students?**
 - **Is the college approved to offer all programs of study that will be included in the CIHS application?** If not, the college should apply to become approved for the program before it is included in the CIHS application.
 - **What credentials or other certifications will students have a chance to earn?**
 - **Will the school focus on transfer degrees or CTE certificates, diplomas, or degrees – or both?** Currently, CIHS programs can offer AAS, AA, or AS degrees. Students can earn a certificate and/or diploma as they work towards an AAS degree.
- **How will your curriculum connect to local industry needs?**
 - How will the CIHS involve local industry in the planning process for this school to establish partnerships for work-based learning opportunities, job shadowing, apprenticeship, etc.?
 - If transfer programs are offered to students, how will individual advising be handled to address questions about transfer?
 - A “one-size-fits all” model is not considered to be appropriate for the curriculum design for transfer programs within the CIHS application. A specific plan should be developed to ensure that students in a transfer degree will have individual advising to meet their needs beyond UGETC courses.
 - **Will a college liaison be hired for this school?** If so, it should be included in the budget portion of the CIHS application.
 - **What type of academic supports are in place and incorporated into the master schedule?**
- **Curriculum Maps**

Develop a proposed curriculum map for the CIHS. Include courses that will support completion of a high school diploma and the IHE program of study aligned to the CIHS program configuration. Submit a completed CIHS Curriculum Map with this application. Templates are available in a separate document.

 - Curriculum maps must align with graduation requirements and IHE curriculum standards.

Student Goals/Expectations

- **How will student progress be measured?**
- **What plan for completion (benchmarks) will be set for students?**
 - Percentage earning a degree
 - Percentage earning a diploma
 - Percentage earning a certificate
 - Percentage earning an industry certification/credential
 - Etc.
- **How will the school address academic concerns if a student falls below a 2.0 in their college classes?**
- **How will the school address academic concerns if a student is not passing their high school courses?**
- **How will the school/college/LEA offer intentional advising for transfer and/or career development?**

Parent/Family Involvement

- A plan for parent involvement should be discussed as it is a requirement within the CIHS application. Emphasize parental involvement and provide consistent counseling, advising, and parent conferencing so that parents and students can make responsible decisions regarding course taking and can track the students' academic progress and success. (G.S. 115C-238.50.)
- **How will parent involvement be measured and reported?**

School Effectiveness Measures

- **Completion and Accountability**
- **How will the school, school district, and partner institution measure the school's effectiveness with respect to meeting the purposes specified in GS 115C-238.50; i.e. accountability results, CTE post-assessment performance, employer surveys, dropout rates, graduation rates, post-secondary college-going rates, enrollment into a four-year institution, etc?**

PART D – OPERATIONS

Budget Development

- **Budget**
- For those requesting funds, please note that Average Daily Membership (ADM) and Full-time Equivalents (FTE) will be calculated according to existing procedures and formulas for determining these budget elements.

- Identify the funds and fund sources to be used for school operations. Identify all funds, including CIHS allotments (PRC 055), FTE reimbursements, grant/gift funds, as well as other state and/or local funds.
 - The proposed budget that will be included in the CIHS application must provide a proposed annual budget for the first five (5) years of school operations.
 - Specific positions and minimum qualifications of employees in the program (e.g. principal or director, support staff, teachers, paraprofessionals/teaching assistants, and clerical) must also be included in the application. Qualifications should align with the academic program offered.
- **Funding for Programs**
 - If the CIHS is approved by the General Assembly, NCDPI will assign a school code for the CIHS through the appropriate EDDIE process initiated by the LEA. If the school is approved by the General Assembly to open and receive funding, CIHS funding (PRC 055) will be allotted to the LEA when funds are available. Average daily membership (ADM) will also be reported by the LEA.
 - CIHS programs that have a community college as their partner institution of higher education and were approved under G.S. 115C-238.51A(c) can earn budget FTEs.
 - CIHS programs that have a university as their partner institution of higher education and were approved under G.S. 115C-238.51A(c) will have tuition reimbursed by NCDPI based on the outlined process.
 - **Textbooks and College Fees**
 - A plan for who will pay for college textbooks should be developed with the LEA. Some LEAs use CIHS funding (if available) to pay for student textbooks.
 - Some colleges choose to waive fees for CIHS students.

Personnel Qualifications

Describe the specific positions and qualifications of employees in the program.

Student Transportation

- A plan for transportation should be discussed with LEA partners.
- Some LEAs provide transportation to the college and some do not. CIHS funding (if available) could be used to pay for transportation, but at no additional cost to students.

Operating Procedures

- Explain the CIHS operating procedures, including calendar, provision of student meals and hours of operations.

- Distance instruction – Online or information highway classes could help to solve some issues around location and course scheduling.
- A school calendar and hours of operation should be determined.