



Request for Grant Application

Maryland Charter Schools Program:
Grants for Expansion, Replication, and Start-up of
High Quality Public Charter Schools

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline for Submission
Thursday, August 13, 2020
by 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)
Electronic Submissions Only

Submit via [email](mailto:charter.msde@maryland.gov) to:
charter.msde@maryland.gov

This document is available in alternate formats upon request

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Application Overview

Program Overview

Authorized by Title IV, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, the Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) provides funding to state education agencies and state entities for the purpose of increasing the number of high quality public charter schools available to students across the nation. This is accomplished by providing financial assistance for planning, start-up, and implementation of new and expanding public charter schools.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) received a competitive CSP grant under this federal program in September 2017 for a five-year period. MSDE was awarded \$23 million to carry out the following objectives:

- **Create:** Increase the number of high quality public charter schools in Maryland.
- **Strengthen:** Strengthen the overall quality of Charter school authorizing in Maryland.
- **Share:** Promote the high quality dissemination of Charter school best practices, increasing collaboration between Charter and traditional public schools.

To help carry out these objectives, the MSDE is offering a competitive grant opportunity to qualified charter school operators and developers for the planning and early years of implementation of new, expanded, or replicated charter schools.

Program Purpose

The purpose of the Maryland Charter Schools Program is to award subgrants to eligible applicants to open and prepare for the operation of new charter schools; to open and prepare for the operation of replicated high quality charter schools; or expand high quality charter schools. (ESEA, 4303 (b)(1)(A-C). See page 7 for a definition of a high quality charter school in Maryland.

Authorization

Federal funds: CFDA #84.282A – Title IV, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

Summary of Dates

All applicants must be available for the dates listed for Interviews.

Release of Request for Grant Application: Friday, June 19, 2020

Pre-Application Technical Assistance Meeting: Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Deadline for Submission: Thursday, August 13, 2020, 5:00 P.M.

Interviews Date Range: Monday, September 21, 2020 through Wednesday, September 30, 2020

Award Notification: October 2020

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Funding and Length of Grant

Length of Grants: Up to three years

Anticipated number of awards: 5-8

Estimated Range of Grant awards (over 3 year period): \$500,000 to \$900,000

Maximum award: \$900,000

The MSDE reserves the right to make final determination of all grant awards and funding. The award amounts above are estimates and are not guaranteed. Individual school awards may vary based on projected or actual enrollment. All sub-grant budgets must be justified in terms of projected and actual enrollment, and adherence to federal and state guidelines for allowable costs.

Applicants should be aware that Maryland charter schools must submit an annual independent financial audit to the local board of education every year. In addition, federal regulations require a single audit of any federal grant exceeding \$750,000. More information can be found at the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse website](https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/), found at <https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/>.

Grant Period

Projected start and end dates: October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2023.

The grant period may start later if requested by the grantee and approved by the MSDE.

The effective date will be the date that final grant awards are approved by the MSDE and Notices of Grant Award (NOGA) are issued. The MSDE anticipates a grant start date of October 2020. Maryland Charter School Program grants are awarded for a three-year grant period. After the first year, additional years may be funded based on the grantee's successful completion of and compliance with all requirements, and the availability of continued federal funding.

This is a multi-year project with a combined maximum program performance period of 36 months. There are two allowable project periods:

- Planning and Program Design: Up to 18 months
 - The Planning and Program Design period is the period of up to 18 months before the opening of school.
- Implementation: Up to 36 months
 - The Implementation Period may begin three months prior to school opening and lasts no more than 36 months, less the Planning and Program Design Period.

If a grant application is approved, the grant planning and program design period may begin up to 18 months before the opening of the proposed charter school. Typically, this is the period between approval of the charter and the opening of the school. If the applicant requests that the Planning and Program Design period begin *before* approval of the charter, the applicant must ensure that the Planning and Program Design period will be 18 months or less, and that proposed expenditures are allowable, necessary, reasonable and allocable (page 9). Expenditures in the pre-charter approval phase may not exceed 25 percent of the total grant award. In this case, charter approval must be secured within nine months of the notice of grant approval. In special cases, the MSDE will consider an extension of up to three months. The applicant will be required to present a

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breakdown of the Planning and Program Design Period into two phases: the period from grant approval to final approval of the charter and the period from charter approval to the opening of the charter school.

Pre-Award Costs

If the applicant seeks to charge pre-award costs to the grant, this is allowable only in the following circumstances. If these conditions are not in place, costs incurred prior to the beginning of the grant period will not be reimbursed.

- The planned costs must be allowable, necessary, reasonable and allocable (page 9). The final determination of whether a cost is allowable, necessary, reasonable and allocable is made by the MSDE.
- The planned costs must be budgeted for within the subgrantee’s application.
- The costs cannot be for more than 90 days and cannot precede the date the subgrant application is submitted by an eligible applicant to the MSDE.

Estimated Number of Grants Awarded

Based on the range of possible grant awards and projected available funding, the MSDE anticipates making five (5) to eight (8) grant awards. All funding is contingent on the total federal allocation to the State.

Eligible Applicants

The term “eligible applicant” means a developer that has—

- (A) applied to an authorized public chartering authority to operate a charter school; and
- (B) provided adequate and timely notice to that authority (ESSA 4310 (6)).

“Providing timely notice to that authority” means that the applicant has notified the authorizer of its intention to apply for the Charter Schools Program Grant, and has provided a copy of the grant application to the authorizer.

One of the following conditions must be met:

- The applicant has submitted an application to operate or expand a charter school to a local board of education and the charter application has been approved by the local board; or
- The applicant has submitted an application to operate or expand a charter school to a local board of education and the charter application is pending; or
- The charter application has been denied and an appeal to the Maryland State Board of Education is pending; or
- The applicant is in year one or two of operating a new charter school, in year one or two of its approved expansion.

Prior to the initial Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) for each school selected for funding, the Office of School Innovations will verify the status of the application to operate or expand a public charter school in Maryland.

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Any person or organization that is debarred from receiving federal funds is not eligible to apply for a Charter Schools Program subgrant. For more information, view the [U.S. Department of Labor's OFCCP List of Debarred Companies](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/debarred-list), found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/debarred-list>.

Definitions

Operator: An entity that operates a public charter school in Maryland. For the purposes of this Request for Grant Applications, an operator may be the governing board of the charter school, or the governing board of a charter management organization.

Charter Application: The full and complete charter school application submitted to the local school board, including all attachments and addenda.

Charter Management Organization: A nonprofit entity that operates more than one charter school.

Educationally Disadvantaged Students: Maryland law defines a “disadvantaged student” as a child who “is subject to language, cultural, and economic disadvantages.” (Md. Educ. Art. § 8-101). The term includes the economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English learners, foster youth, and unaccompanied homeless youth.

Expansion: An increase in enrollment of 30% or more or the addition of one or more grades as a result of the expansion project.

High needs areas: Neighborhood or existing public school attendance areas where the median income is below that of jurisdiction (county or Baltimore City).

Public Charter School: Under Maryland Law (Md. Educ. Art. § 9-102) A public charter school is a public school that:

- (1) Is nonsectarian in all its programs, policies, and operations;
- (2) Is a school to which parents choose to send their children;
- (3) Except as provided in §§9-102.1, 9-102.2, and 9-102.3 of this title, is open to all students on a space-available basis and admits students on a lottery basis if more students apply than can be accommodated;
- (4) Is a new public school or a conversion of an existing public school;
- (5) Provides a program of elementary or secondary education or both;
- (6) Operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives;
- (7) Is tuition-free;
- (8) Is subject to federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination;
- (9) Is in compliance with all applicable health and safety laws;
- (10) Is in compliance with § 9-107 of this title;
- (11) Operates under the supervision of the public chartering authority from which its charter is granted and in accordance with its charter and, except as provided in §§ 9-104.1 and 9-106 of this title, the provisions of law and regulation governing other public schools;
- (12) Requires students to be physically present on school premises for a period of time substantially similar to that which other public school students spend on school premises; and
- (13) Is created in accordance with this title and the appropriate county board policy.

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To be eligible for funding in this grant program the public charter school must meet the federal definition of a *public charter school*, found in ESSA, Sec 4310 (2) (A-G). A public charter school is a public school that:

- (A) in accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the other requirements of this paragraph;
- (B) is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;
- (C) operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school's developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;
- (D) provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
- (E) is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
- (F) does not charge tuition;
- (G) complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (commonly referred to as the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974"), and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- (H) is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that— (i) admits students on the basis of a lottery, consistent with section 4303(c)(3)(A), if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated; or (ii) in the case of a school that has an affiliated charter school (such as a school that is part of the same network of schools), automatically enrolls students who are enrolled in the immediate prior grade level of the affiliated charter school and, for any additional student openings or student openings created through regular attrition in student enrollment in the affiliated charter school and the enrolling school, admits students on the basis of a lottery as described in clause (i);
- (I) agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such State audit requirements are waived by the State;
- (J) meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
- (K) operates in accordance with State law;
- (L) has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured in charter schools pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school; and
- (M) may serve students in early childhood education programs or postsecondary students.

Quality Charter School in Maryland:

1. The charter school has been in operation at least five years, or is in its fifth year of operation.
2. The charter school has submitted an annual independent audit to the authorizer each year of operation. (Federal Definition, ESSA Section 4310 (8) (B))
 - a. The auditor's report offers unqualified opinions and any management points were resolved by the subsequent audit.

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- b. Statements of cash flow indicate good performance on short term liquidity measures.
3. The student achievement data shows that proficiency, as defined by the Maryland State Board of Education, and/or the charter school's overall student growth percentile exceeds that of the local school system for the All Students group in the most recent year for which data is available. "Exceeds" means exceed, by any amount, the combined proficiency or growth in Reading and Math for all grades; (Federal Definition, ESSA Section 4310 (8) (A))
4. The charter school is in one of the top 2/3 by the State's indicator of progress. (Federal Definition, ESSA Section 4310 (8) (C) and (D))
5. For schools serving grades nine through twelve, the cohort graduation rate exceeds that of the local school system for the All Students group, in the most recent year for which data is available. (Federal Definition, ESSA Section 4310 (8) (D))
6. The charter school is not identified for comprehensive support and improvement, or targeted support and improvement, nor as a Priority or Focus school under the State's accountability system.
7. The charter school has no significant compliance issues in serving students with disabilities as reported by the local board.

Priorities

The State of Maryland has identified the following Absolute and Competitive Priorities for the Maryland Charter Schools Program. *Absolute Priorities* are those priorities which must be addressed by all applications; failure to do so will disqualify an application from consideration. *Competitive Priorities* are optional and, if addressed, may earn additional points as described in detail below.

State Absolute Priority

All applications must demonstrate how the charter school meets the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students from disadvantaged circumstances. This is addressed in the Project Narrative, B.4, page 12.

Competitive Priorities

An additional 5 points shall be given to applications addressing the following Competitive Priorities: (You may select more than one competitive priority)

- 1) A charter school program will be located in a county that does not currently have charter schools¹ or in a county that is mostly rural, as defined by the U.S. Census.²
- 2) A program focus on educationally disadvantaged students, through recruitment and programming.
- 3) Replication or expansion of a high quality charter school: An existing charter school that meets the criteria for a Maryland Quality Charter Schools (Page 7) that seeks grant support for expansion or replication.
- 4) Creation, replication, or expansion of a quality high school.

1 Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, Harford, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties.

2 Caroline, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot Counties.

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Allowable Activities and Costs

All expenditures must be allowable, necessary, reasonable and allocable. An eligible applicant receiving a subgrant shall use the funds for one or more of the following:

- 1) Preparing teachers, school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel, including through paying the costs associated with providing professional development, and hiring and compensating teachers, school leaders and specialized instructional support personnel during the planning period.
- 2) Acquiring supplies, training, equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials.
- 3) Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction).
- 4) Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school.
- 5) Carrying out community engagement activities which may include paying the cost of student and staff recruitment.
- 6) Providing for other appropriate, non-sustained costs related to the opening and preparation to open, replicate or expansion of a charter school (ESSA, Section 4303(h)).

Program funds must be used solely for activities that directly support the accomplishment of the program purpose, priorities and expected outcomes during the program period. Activities must be directly related to planning and design, and/or implementation of a new or replicating charter school, or an expansion of an existing charter school. Expenditures must be for planning or initial implementation, be consistent with the approved application, as well as applicable state and federal law, regulations, and guidance.

The Budget Guide lists the categories of expenses and examples of allowable expenses. This is not an all-inclusive list of unallowable items. Subgrantees should consult the MSDE Office of School Innovations with questions regarding allowable costs.

Unallowable costs include the following:

- Grant funds may not be used for construction.
- Personnel costs that are related to ongoing operations of the charter school may not be supported by the grant. Personnel expenses incurred before or after the school's opening are allowed as long as these expenses are associated with initial implementation activities.

Supplemental Resources

Specific technical assistance documents for this program may be found on the [Maryland Charter Schools Program Grants web site](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Charter-Schools/CSPGrant.aspx), found at <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Charter-Schools/CSPGrant.aspx>.

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Application Requirements and Outline

Requirements of the Application Package

To be considered for funding, applications must meet all of the requirements specifically set forth for in this Request for Grant Applications, provide supplementary information if requested to do so and be an eligible entity as described under Eligible Applicants, Page 5.

The applicant must convince the grant review team that the application will result in a quality educational program. Grant application reviewers will focus on the soundness of the applicant's planning. The applicant must link the activities described in the grant application to the charter school's mission and vision, and to support academic achievement for all students.

See Submission Requirements on page 19 for formatting requirements.

Application Checklist (Form)

Complete the *Application Checklist* form to ensure that all required sections are included in the grant application.

Each applicant must have a DUNS³ number which is active in SAM.gov in order submit a grant application. If the applicant does not have an active DUNS number, apply for one at the [DUN & Bradstreet web site](https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html), found at <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html>.

Application for Maryland Charter School Program Grant

The application **must** be submitted in the following outline:

A. Cover Page

Every application must begin with the standard *Application for Maryland Charter Schools Program Grant*. Download this from the [Maryland Charter Schools Program Grants website](http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Charter-Schools/CSPGrant.aspx), found at <http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Charter-Schools/CSPGrant.aspx>. No other page including title pages or illustrations may cover this form.

B. Project Narrative

(30 page limit, 1.5 line spacing and a type size of 12 point font). The 30 page limit does not include the budget, budget narrative or the executive summary.

Note: For applicants with an approved charter or that have submitted a charter application, the applicant's complete application to establish a charter school must be submitted with this application as Attachment 3.

³ Dun & Bradstreet unique identifier for businesses.

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In the project narrative, the applicant *may refer* to supplemental information in the completed application to operate a charter school, submitted to or approved by the local board of education. However, the applicant must ensure that the narrative in this grant application includes the key points and references the charter application clearly (Section, page number, etc). Ensure that the information in the charter application meets the requirements of the application for funding. If it does not, supplemental information must be provided in the narrative.

B.1 Executive Summary

(2 page limit, 1.5 line spacing and a type size of 12 point font). The executive summary is not included in the 30 page limit for the project narrative.

The executive summary succinctly describes the mission and vision of the proposed charter school, the needs of the community, and how the mission and vision address the needs of the community. The executive summary should list Grant Project Objectives and briefly explain how each supports the vision.

B.2 Grant Project Objectives

Identify three to five Grant Project Objectives and explain how each supports the planning and/or implementation of the proposed or expanding charter school. Proposed grant expenditures as detailed in the Budget Narrative must fit within one of the Grant Project Objectives.

At least one Grant Objective should address academic achievement as measured by State Assessments.

- Each goal should have clear metrics to measure progress.

B.3 Project Design (Including Evidence of Promise with Citations)

This section describes the core academic curriculum and school culture. Include the key components of the educational program and the research base for the choices made. Demonstrate alignment with the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS). Describe how the education program, including academic and behavioral interventions, meets the diverse needs of the student body.

Describe the instructional approach and methods. Describe how the school will use data and varied strategies to identify student needs, differentiate instruction and interventions, and plan for enrichment and electives.

Describe the school's approach to discipline, and how discipline practices will support keeping students in the classroom to the fullest extent possible. (ESSA, 4303(f)(1)(A)(viii)(II).

B.3.1 Enrollment and Lottery

Describe the plans for marketing, student recruitment, and management of the admissions lottery. Describe how the school will promote the inclusion of all students, including by eliminating any barriers to enrollment for educationally disadvantaged students. (ESSA, 4303(f)(1)(A)(viii)(I) If the school uses or proposes to use a weighted lottery, describe how the weighted lottery will be implemented in accordance with State and

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federal law. The use of a weighted lottery may give slightly better chances for admission to all, or a subset of educationally disadvantaged students. A weighted lottery may not be used to create a school that will exclusively serve a particular subset of students. (ESSA 4303(c)(3)(A); Md. Educ. Art. § 9-102.2)

Under Maryland law (Md. Educ. Art. § 9-102.2), a public charter school may give greater weight to a student's lottery status for certain students, including:

- 1) Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals;
- 2) A student with disabilities;
- 3) A student with limited English proficiency;
- 4) Homeless, as defined under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; or
- 5) A sibling of a student currently enrolled in the public charter school for which the sibling is applying.

The weighted lottery plan must be approved by the authorizer.

Describe how the school will make information publicly available to help parents make an informed choice about seeking enrollment in the charter school. This should include information on the educational program, student support services, any parent contract requirements, weights in the lottery, and annual performance and enrollment data. (ESSA, 4303 (f)(2)(G))

B.4 Educationally Disadvantaged Students

Describe the plan for engaging educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities, struggling learners, exceptional students, English language learners, students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMS), and students who are homeless or in foster care.

Include projections for enrollment and how the school will conduct outreach to ensure access for all students. Explain how the design of the educational program, interventions, and other plans will meet the needs of all students.

B.5 Professional Development

Provide a summary of the professional development plan for the Planning and Program Design Period and the Implementation Periods. Include an explanation of how staff is included in the planning. Explain the rationale and goals and list the activities that will ensure that the goals are met. Note the budget items that support the professional development plan.

B.6 Governance Plan and Accountability

Describe the composition of the governing board. Include whether or not stakeholder groups are represented on the board, such as parents and students. Describe the process for identification of needed expertise, and recruitment for board service, terms for members, and training provided to members of the board. Describe the roles and responsibilities of any partner organization, including charter management organizations. (Expand on the role of partners, including charter management organizations in section B.8.1.)

Describe how the Board will create and implement an accountability plan for the charter school. Include how the board will monitor progress and how progress will be shared with the community.

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Provide a list of board members, affiliations and terms as Attachment 9.

Describe the quality controls agreed to between the eligible applicant and the Local Education Agency⁴ (LEA) authorizer, including how the school's performance in the State's accountability system and impact on student achievement will be one of the most important factors for renewal or revocation of the school's charter. Show that the LEA authorizer reserves the right to revoke or not renew a school's charter based on financial, structural, or operational factors involving management of the school. (ESSA, 4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(II))

Describe the autonomy and flexibility granted to the charter school by the LEA authorizer. (ESSA, 4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(III))

Include the contract or a sample of the charter school performance contract as Attachment 5.

Include the Board's conflict of interest policy as Attachment 6.

Include the Board's procurement policy as Attachment 7.

B.7 Parent and Community Involvement

Describe how the applicant will solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community in the implementation and operation of the charter school. (ESSA 4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(IV))

Describe planning and activities that demonstrate the charter school's commitment to effective parent, family, and community engagement. For a school in operation, provide evidence of engagement such as parent/school activities or waitlist data for an existing school.

In addition to engagement of families and community members, identify areas where the school has or is seeking support from external partners to further the mission and vision of the school. These may include expertise from other charter schools, the local school system, academia, the business community, and/or national experts.

B.8 Management Plan and Leadership Team

The Management section describes how the subgrantee will manage the performance and financial aspects of the grant project. The plan should include an overall description of how the subgrant will be managed, including key personnel assigned to measure specific aspects of the grant. The management plan includes how performance will be tracked and measured against the Grant Project Objectives, including a timeline for the implementation of each.

Identify the project's leaders, including qualifications. Include a job description for each person playing a key role in the project as described in the management plan (such as executive director, board chair or member, leadership team). If the person for each key role has been selected, also append his/her resume. If there is a leadership position that has not been filled please describe qualifications.

Resumes for key personnel and job descriptions for unfilled positions must be provided as Attachment 8.

⁴ Local Education Agency or LEA is the term used by the U.S. Department of Education. In Maryland this is the same as the Local School System.

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Include the organization's procurement policy and procedures as Attachment 7.

B.8.1 Partners

Provide a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant, partner organizations, and any charter management organization. Describe administrative and contractual roles of such partners, including management fees. (ESSA, 4303 (f)(1)(C)) A partner is any organization other than the grantee that will actively contribute to the project. Partners include subcontractors, organizations that are under contract with the grantee to provide grant-funded activities or services. If a partner organization has been selected, describe the role of the partner and its contribution to meeting the goals of the project. If the partner has not been selected, describe the qualifications sought and the selection process.

B.9 Facilities

Whether a facility has been identified or is in the process of being secured, justify the appropriateness and safety of the facility in terms of the ages of the students served. Identify the site for school if known, or describe how the selection process will be managed. Show that the charter school, at a reasonable enrollment projection, can cover the initial cost of making the building ready for students.

B.10 Sustainability

Explain how the charter school will ensure continued quality implementation after the grant period. Include a plan for how the charter school board will sustain institutionalized practices begun during the grant period.

Include a one page pro-forma budget as Attachment 4 for the charter school at capacity enrollment that shows how the charter school is sustainable once grant funding has ended and per pupil revenue has begun.

C. Budget and Budget Narrative

This section describes the specific use of funds received through the grant to carry out the goals of the project. This section must demonstrate that there are sufficient resources to successfully implement the proposed program plan as described in the project narrative. Present a budget that is realistic and compliant with the federal regulations and the Non-regulatory Guidance for this program. For details visit the [U.S. Department of Education's Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance web page](https://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html), found at (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>). Use the categories listed. Ensure that costs are specific and that calculations (e.g. number of units times the cost per unit) are explained. Do not include construction or recurring costs once per pupil revenue is available.

C.1 Budget

Use the form provided. See the Budget Guide for examples of allowable expenses for each category. A sample may be found on the [Maryland Charter Schools Program Grants web page](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Charter-Schools/CSPGrant.aspx), at <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Charter-Schools/CSPGrant.aspx>. The Budget form is available in Excel upon request.

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The budget is divided into the Planning and Program Design Period of up to 18 months, and Implementation Periods of 12 -18 months, so that the total grant period is 36 months. If a grant application is approved, the grant planning and program design period may begin up to 18 months before the opening of the proposed charter school. Typically, this is the period between approval of the charter and the opening of the school.

If the subgrant application is approved, the applicant may propose that the Planning and Program Design Period begin before final approval of the charter by the local board of education. The applicant will be required to present a breakdown of the Planning and Program Design Period into two phases: the period from grant approval to final approval of the charter and the period from charter approval to the opening of the charter school. The amount of grant funding available for the Planning and Program Design Period before final approval of the charter by the local board is capped at 25 percent of the total grant award. For example, if the approved grant is \$700,000, up to \$175,000 will be available for approved expenses in this phase.

The charter approval must be secured within nine months of the notice of grant approval. In special cases, the MSDE will consider an extension of up to three months.

C.2 Budget Narrative

All expenditures must be allowable, necessary, reasonable and allocable. An eligible applicant receiving a subgrant shall use the funds for one or more of the following (ESSA, 4303 (h)):

- 1) Preparing teachers, school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel, including through paying the costs associated with providing professional development, and hiring and compensating teachers, school leaders and specialized instructional support personnel during the planning period.
- 2) Acquiring supplies, training, equipment (including technology), and educational materials
- 3) Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction).
- 4) Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school.
- 5) Carrying out community engagement activities which may include paying the cost of student and staff recruitment.
- 6) Providing for other appropriate, non-sustained costs related to the opening and preparation to open, replicate or expansion of a charter school.

The budget narrative must describe expenditures to support the activities to open and prepare for the operation of new charter schools; to open and prepare for the operation of replicated high quality charter schools; or expand high quality charter schools. (ESEA, 4303 (b)(1), and demonstrate the extent to which the proposed budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates any other sources of funding. All costs described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget worksheet. The budget narrative must justify any line item expenses that are not obvious from the project narrative and explain how the costs of all line items were estimated.

If the applicant is seeking other grant funding in addition to the CSP Grant, note this in the budget narrative. Please describe how the applicant charter school will ensure that grant management for the CSP grant will be separate from other grants.

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C.3 Charter School Operating Budget

Include a pro-forma of the charter schools operating budget in the first three years of operation, based on per pupil funding projections from the local school system. The operating budget should demonstrate how the school will maintain financial sustainability after the end of the grant period. (ESSA 4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(V))

Include the operating budget as Attachment 4.

D. Competitive Priorities

- 1) A charter school program will be located in a county that does not currently have charter schools or a rural area.
- 2) A program focus on educationally disadvantaged students, through recruitment and programming.
- 3) Replication or expansion of a high quality charter school: An existing charter school that meets the criteria for a Maryland Quality Charter Schools (page 7) that seeks grant support for expansion or replication.
- 4) Creation, replication, or expansion of a quality charter high school.

Identify the Competitive Priority and provide evidence that shows the applicant qualifies.

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Forms and Attachments

Forms for the Grant Application

These forms are available for download on the [Maryland Charter Schools Program Grants web page](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Charter-Schools/CSPGrant.aspx), found at <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Charter-Schools/CSPGrant.aspx>:

Application Checklist: Ensure that all required sections are included in your grant application.

Budget Guide: Explains allowable expenses in further detail. **Budget Form** is included in the Budget Guide; the Excel version is available upon request.

Cover Page: Application for Maryland Charter Schools Program Grant Cover Page. The Cover Page is required as the cover of the Grant Application.

Attachments

The application must include **ALL** of the following as attachments:

Attachment 1: Application Checklist (form provided)

Attachment 2: Signed Assurances (form provided)

Attachment 3: Charter School Application (one document – PDF)

Attachment 4: Charter Schools operating budget: Budget and actual expenditure for most recent fiscal year for schools that are in operation; pro-forma budget for the school at capacity for new schools.

Attachment 5: Charter or Performance Contract between the charter school and the LEA

Attachment 6: Conflict of Interest Policy

Attachment 7: Procurement Policy

Attachment 8: Resumes and/or job descriptions of leadership team/key personnel responsible for the grant project.

Attachment 9: Board Member list and affiliations

Attachment 10: Letters of Support

Attachment 11: GEPA Statement

Attachment 12: IRS 501 (c)(3) Determination Letter

Signed Assurances

The Board Chair of the grantee organization must sign and date the Assurances; please read all assurances carefully. These assurances dictate requirements that must be adhered to by the grantee. The signed assurances must be submitted as part of the application package.

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), Section 427

Each application must develop and describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the CSP grant project. The applicant should address the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

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Review and Evaluation of Grant Applications

Prescreen

Applications will be pre-screened for the following:

- Any application that is not complete will not be reviewed.
- Late applications will not be accepted or reviewed. Feedback will not be provided.
- Applicants will be notified that their application has been received and that it is or is not eligible for review.

Evaluation Process

- Review Panel Selection
 - The MSDE will publicly solicit, screen, and select impartial, qualified reviewers who are not employees of the MSDE to review and score applications. The MSDE will assemble review teams based on experience and geographic distribution.
- Application Review
 - Reviewers will individually read each application assigned to that team and assign each a numerical score using the Maryland Charter Schools program scoring rubric. Reviewers will meet in teams to arrive at consensus scores.
- Application Score
 - After the conclusion of the review process, applications will be ranked in order by total consensus score plus priority points.
- Interviews
 - Applicants may be required to participate in an interview. Please hold **September 21-30, 2020**, when these interviews/visits will occur.
 - Prior to the interview, applicants may be asked to respond to clarifying questions or concerns raised by the reviewers. The MSDE will forward the questions to the applicant before the interviews.
 - The purpose of the interview is:
 - To provide the leadership team and partners the opportunity to validate details about their proposed program;
 - To provide MSDE representatives and the review team an opportunity to discuss the written responses to interview questions with the leadership team and partners;
 - To communicate the aspects of their proposed program that may need clarification and improvement; and
 - To establish a timeline for required revisions, if any.

Awarding of Funds

The MSDE shall make final determination for awards based on the results of the peer review, the interview, and the availability of funds. Applications will be funded as the total federal allocation to the State allows. Applications selected for funding will be contacted for validation of the final budget in order to initiate receipt of the Maryland Notice of Grant Award (NOGA). No funds may be expended prior to the date on the NOGA. All funding is contingent on the annual awarding of federal funds to the MSDE.

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Submission Requirements

The Application for Maryland Charter Schools Program Grant Cover Page must be the first page of the application.

All pages of the Project Narrative must use one-inch margins and be numbered.

The Project Narrative must use line spacing of at least 1.5, and a 12-point font. Applications that fail to meet this requirement will be rejected.

Charts, worksheets, and tables may use single spacing and a 10-point font.

Applications must not exceed 30 pages. Additional pages that exceed the 30 page limit will not be read or scored. (This *excludes* the Application Cover Page, Application Checklist, table of contents, budget narrative, itemized budget form, and attachments.)

Submit *up to three* files in PDF format:

1. Cover Sheet, Narrative, Budget, and Budget Narrative
2. Required Attachments
3. Charter Application/Charter

Submit applications, in PDF format, electronically by Thursday, August 13, 2020, 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) to:

[Email](mailto:charter.msde@maryland.gov) to charter.msde@maryland.gov
Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Student, Family, and School Support
Office of School Innovations
Attention: Carol Beck

Non-Discrimination Statement

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