



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
August 27, 2021
by 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)
Electronic Submissions Only

Submit via email 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. The MSDE was awarded \$23 million to carry out the following objectives:

- Create: Increase the number of high quality public charter schools in Maryland; and
- Strengthen: Strengthen the overall quality of Charter school authorizing in Maryland; and
- 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 6 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, July 23, 2021

Pre-Application Technical Assistance Meeting: Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Deadline for Submission: Friday, August 27, 2021, 5:00 P.M.

Interviews Date Range: Friday, October 1 through Monday, October 11, 2021

Award Notification: November 2021

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Funding and Length of Grant

Length of Grants: Up to three years (See “Grant Period” below)

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. (See Allowable Costs Guidance; [Appendix A.](#))

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 obtained through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse website](#), which can be found at <https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/>. Copies of these audits and management cover letters, prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, must be submitted to the MSDE for all grant periods, and made publicly available on the subgrantee website.

Grant Period

Projected start and end dates: October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2024.

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 1, 2021, and an initial grant period of October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022. After the first year, additional grants will be contingent on the grantee’s successful completion of and compliance with all requirements, and on the availability of continued federal funding.

The performance period for the Charter Schools Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) ends on September 30, 2022. The MSDE will apply to USED for a no-cost extension of the grant in 2022. If approved, this would allow grantees in this competition to receive the same 12-month extension for their grant period to September 30, 2023. An additional extension will be sought to enable the completion of Year 3. Funding for grantees in this competition will be dependent on approval by USED of no cost extensions.

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

- Planning and Program Design: Up to 14 months
 - The Planning and Program Design period is the period of up to 14 months before the opening of school.
- Implementation I and II: Up to 22 months combined (10 and 12 month terms)

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- The Implementation Period may begin two months prior to school opening and lasts no more than 22 months.

If a grant application is approved, the grant planning and program design period may begin up to 14 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 14 months or less, and that proposed expenditures are allowable, necessary, reasonable and allocable ([Appendix A](#)). 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 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 ([Appendix A](#)). 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 grantee’s application.
- The costs cannot be for more than 90 days and cannot precede the date the grant 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 to eight 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:

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- 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, or in year one or two of its approved expansion.

In addition to the above, the following must be confirmed by the applicant:

The charter school has not received a Charter Schools Program grant in the last five years, including a Charter Schools program grant from the MSDE; or a charter school developer or Charter Management Organization (CMO) grant from USED. Receipt of a grant in these programs must be reported on the cover sheet for this grant application. The applicant will indicate any grant history on the cover page of the application package.

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

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). Under federal law (ESEA 1115(c)(2)), this includes children who are economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, migrant children, or English Learners, neglected or delinquent children, and homeless children.

Expansion: An increase in enrollment of 30 percent or more or the addition of one or more grades, within a timeline approved by the MSDE, as a result of the expansion project.

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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.

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-M), also included in Assurances; Attachment 2. 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

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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 Public Charter School:

Federal Definition (ESSA 4310(8)):

The term “high-quality charter school” means a charter school that—

- (A) shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth, as determined by a State;
- (B) has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance;
- (C) has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students served by the charter school; and
- (D) has demonstrated success in increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for each of the subgroups of students, as defined in section 1111(c)(2), except that such demonstration is not required in a case in which the number of students in a group is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

See also Quality Public Charter School; [Appendix B](#).

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.

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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 11.

Competitive Priorities

An additional five 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 6, [Definitions](#)) that seeks grant support for expansion or replication.
- 4) Creation of innovation high school options, including the ability to earn college credit during high school.

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 purposes listed in ESSA, Section 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 (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.

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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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.

Please refer to the Allowable Costs Guidance; Appendix A. 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; and
- 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; and
- Indirect costs may not be included.

Supplemental Resources

Specific technical assistance documents for this program may be found on the Maryland Charter Schools Program Grants web site, 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 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 3.

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](#), 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](#), 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

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

³ Dun & Bradstreet unique identifier for businesses.

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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. 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

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

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.

For expansion projects, show how the school meets the definition of a high quality charter school, including school-based data, and state assessment data, to the extent that it is available (see page 6, Definitions, and Appendix B).

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 progress, and how the school will use interim assessments, alternate metrics, and/or State Assessments to measure progress. Where current data is not available, include and explain the alternate metrics that you are using.

- 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

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electives. Describe how the charter school will add to the availability of diverse models within the local school system. Examples include full language immersion, Montessori, STEM, and arts infusion.

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). As applicable, show how the plan for professional development and the use of data will support the school’s approach to discipline.

B.3.1 Enrollment and Lottery

Describe the plans for marketing, student recruitment, management of the admissions lottery and enrollment practices. 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 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 (this should be included on the school’s web site) 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 including any financial obligations or fees, weights in the lottery, and annual performance and enrollment criteria and data. (ESSA, 4303 (f)(2)(G))

B.3.2 Student Transportation

Describe the plan for student transportation to and from school, including students in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Specify who will provide the service. Project the availability of transportation on the school’s recruitment efforts.

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.

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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. Include identification of students who need additional services and how interventions will be incorporated into the program described in B.3.

B.5 Professional Development

Provide a summary of the professional development plan for the Planning and Program Design Period and the Implementation Period. 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 partner organizations, charter management organizations, including the administrative and contractual roles and responsibilities of such partners. (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.

Provide a list of board members and their affiliations 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. Explain how 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))

- Expansion and Replication applicants: Include a summary of the most recent renewal report or other document that explains the renewal review; and
- New School applicants should include a renewal report from an existing charter school in the LEA; and
- New School applicants that would be the first charter school in the county should submit the county policy on renewal, if available.

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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Describe the autonomy and flexibility granted to the charter school by the LEA authorizer. Does it include a high degree of autonomy over budget and operations, including autonomy over personnel decisions? (ESSA, 4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(III))

If the charter has been approved by the LEA:

Include the contract or charter school performance agreement as Attachment 5. List any waivers requested and whether or not they were approved by the LEA.

If the charter has not been approved by the LEA:

Include the sample contract for the school system as Attachment 5. List any waivers that are requested as part of the charter application.

Required policies and organizational documents for all grant applicants:

Include the Board's Conflict of Interest policy as Attachment 6. Note that a signed copy of the Conflict of Interest policy for each Board Member will be required before a grant award is issued.

Include the organization's Procurement policy as Attachment 7.

Include the organization's Inventory and Asset Management policy as Attachment 14.

Include the organization's Depreciation policy as Attachment 15.

Each charter school receiving a grant must have policies and procedures in place that would govern school closure. The policy and procedures must include notification to the MSDE, disposition of assets purchased with federal or state funds, and a plan to facilitate student enrollment in other schools. Include as Attachment 16.

Include the organization's W-9 as Attachment 17.

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)) 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.

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.

Describe the plan for regular dissemination of information about the school including program and services, academic performance data, board of directors' members and meeting information, and independent financial audits, through website posting or other means.

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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.

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)) Explain how any management fee is determined, e.g. as a fixed percentage of the per pupil, based on set services, or other method. 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. A school in operation proposing an expansion or replication project should provide the operating budget (budget and actual expenditure) for the most recent fiscal year of the school's operation.

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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 Maryland CSP Allowable Costs Guidance; [Appendix A](#), 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.

The total grant period is 36 months. The first period, Planning and Program Design, is typically 12-14 months. Subsequent Implementation Periods are up to 10-12 months, so that the total grant period is no longer than 36 months. If a grant application is approved, the grant planning and program design period may begin up to 14 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 would be available for approved expenses in this phase.

In this case, the charter approval must be secured within nine months of the NOGA. 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)):

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- 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 high-quality charter school when such costs cannot be met from other sources.

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.

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 schools⁵ or a rural area.⁶
- 2) A program focus on educationally disadvantaged students, through recruitment and programming.

⁵ Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, Harford, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties.

⁶ Caroline, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot Counties.

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- 3) Replication or expansion of a high quality charter school: An existing charter school that meets the criteria for a Quality Public Charter Schools (page 6) that seeks grant support for expansion or replication.
- 4) Creation of innovation high school options, including the ability to earn college credit during 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 Format: Sample budget form. The Excel version is available upon request.

Budget Guide: Explains allowable expenses in further detail.

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. If the charter has not been approved by the LEA, provide the sample contract for the school system, if it is available.

Attachment 6: Signed 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 or Application

Attachment 13: Copy of most recent audit and management letter (single / annual)

Attachment 14: Inventory and Asset Management policy

Attachment 15: Depreciation policy

Attachment 16: Closure policy

Attachment 17: W-9

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; and
- Late applications will not be accepted or reviewed. Feedback will not be provided; and
- 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 will be required to participate in an interview. Please hold **October 1 - 11, 2021**, 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 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

Instructions

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 Friday, August 27, 2021, 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) to:

Email 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

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Finance and Administration
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 6th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595
410-767-0426 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD

Appendices

Appendix A – Allowable Costs Guidance

Allowable costs are organized into the two main categories: Classroom/Instructional and Administrative. Within these categories, allowable expenses may include Salaries and Wages, Contracted Services, Supplies and Materials, Equipment, and Other.

Some costs are not allowable within the CSP grant program. A list of unallowable costs is on page 4 of this guide.

This guide is meant to help schools determine whether a *type* of cost is allowable. To ensure sufficient detail is included when drafting a budget, please provide a complete budget narrative that describes the expense, how it was estimated, and how it supports your program.

Finally, *if an item or service is not listed in this document, contact your CSP grant team.* The team can help determine if a cost is allowable within the program.

Per the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 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. As recipients of federal funds, Charter School Program grantees are subject to two CFR § 200 - UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS.

If an applicant is awarded a grant, MSDE will review the budget with the applicant before final grant documents are issued. Expenditures that are not allowable, necessary, reasonable, and allocable will be excluded before final grant documents are issued.

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IMPORTANT:

- All proposed budget line items must be *reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable*.
- Budget requests must align with state and federal laws and guidance.
- Grantees may be required to provide additional documents to the MSDE Charter Schools Program at any time. All contracts \$25,000 and over must be submitted to MSDE for approval prior to ratification.
- **All costs submitted for CSP reimbursement must be included in the final approved budget.**

Cost Area	Descriptions	Examples of Acceptable Expenses
Salaries and Wages Administration	Staff essential for preparation and training in the planning period (pre-opening)	Executive Director during the pre-opening period
Salaries and Wages Classroom/Instructional	Staff onboarding pre-opening and while reaching capacity	Principal brought on for six months pre-opening to lead hiring, professional development, and on boarding with local school system Lead teachers paid a stipend for professional development and planning during the three months pre-opening
Contracted Services Administrative	Technology planning and installation, legal and financial, recruitment and outreach, organizational development	Audit in year 1 Board recruitment and training Financial services (pre-opening)
Contracted Services Classroom/Instructional	Training for instructional staff designed to contribute to their professional growth and competence. Curriculum design and methods of implementation	In service training, professional development, conferences, workshops, visits to other schools Consultant aligning curriculum with the Maryland College and Career Ready standards
Supplies Administrative	Software and licenses for assessment managed, finance, personnel	Office supplies Initial purchase and year one license for financial and administrative programs Office suite licenses for front desk and administrative staff Visitor registration system
Supplies Classroom/Instructional	Books and Curriculum	May include electronic media. If a license or subscription is required, renewals are not allowable.

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Cost Area	Descriptions	Examples of Acceptable Expenses
Supplies Classroom/Instructional (continued)	<p>Textbooks and curriculum packages Books Consumables</p> <p>Software and digital collections management systems for library, media centers</p> <p>Books for classroom libraries</p> <p>Instructional software, programs</p>	<p>Workbooks, testing instruments, materials with a reasonable life expectancy of less than one year. Consumables beyond start up may be considered ongoing operational costs and may be unallowable.</p> <p>Publishing and graphics software</p> <p>Encyclopedias and other reference works, book series including reference works, fiction, non-fiction, series, and other media for library.</p> <p>Supplemental literacy programs, tutoring programs</p>
Other Administrative	<p>Dues and fees</p> <p>Insurance and bond premiums</p> <p>Lease and rent</p>	<p>National Association of Public Charter Schools Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools National organizations/networks related to educational approach.</p> <p>First year, renewals are not allowed. One year may be pre-paid, once during planning or implementation for liability and property insurance.</p> <p>Lease payments for up to six months pre-opening A prorated portion of the rent may be approved as a grant expense if the school is growing to enrollment capacity.</p>
Other Classroom/Instructional	Student transportation	<p>Purchase of a bus Expansion of a transportation contract with the school system or other provider</p>
Equipment Administrative	Computers and peripherals, other equipment for the central office.	Desks, chairs, tables, filing (fireproof) cabinets
Equipment Classroom/Instructional	Computers and other electronic devices to support instruction.	<p>Laptops/cart, wireless access points Smartboards Lab equipment</p>

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Cost Area	Descriptions	Examples of Acceptable Expenses
Equipment Classroom/Instructional (Cont'd)	<p>Durable goods with reasonable life expectancy of over a year</p> <p>May include durable instructional equipment of special classes.</p> <p>Non computer hardware, furniture, and fixtures for centralized school library/media center use</p>	<p>Furniture, DVD players, paper cutters, label makers, book carts, binding equipment, laminators</p> <p>Furniture, media player, projectors, science equipment, physical education equipment, musical instruments</p> <p>Desks, chairs, tables, bookshelves, book displays, podiums,</p>
Equipment Plant/grounds	Equipment for outdoor use, not permanent	Playscapes, portable basketball hoops, tables for outdoor instruction

Cost Area	Examples of Unallowable Expenses
Recurring Expenses	<p>In general, once the charter school is open, or expansion is complete, recurring expenses must be sustainable by the Charter school in its operating budget and may not be supported with grant funds. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salaries ● Rent/Lease ● Operating expenses and utilities, equipment leases, and annual contracts ● Software license renewals ● Monthly fees such as those for payroll, management companies, utilities, trash disposal, etc. <p>The charter school grantee may request that a recurring expense be supported by grant funds if the school can show that the cost will be sustained when the school reaches full enrollment. In this case the amount to support the expense must step down from the first year of the grant.</p>
Renovations	<p>Capital renovations are not allowed as an expense of the grant. This includes –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structural repairs (roof, construction) ● Landscaping ● Permanent outdoor equipment
Salaries	After the school opens, or reaches capacity, salaries are not an allowable expense. See Recurring expenses, above.
Food	<p>Catered food for meetings is not allowable, even for marketing and recruiting. This includes beverage and snack supplies for staff.</p> <p>Restaurant meals are not permitted except within certain limits related to travel.</p>
Sales tax	As a nonprofit organization, sales tax should not be charged, and may not be included as a grant expense.
Apparel	<p>Student Uniforms</p> <p>Staff Uniforms – e.g. jackets, shirts, hats</p>

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Cost Area	Examples of Unallowable Expenses
Capital Improvements	Construction of new facility Construction on existing facility Building renovations, refurbishments, and restoration
Incentive and Promotional Items	Promotional materials (often imprinted), such as pencils, pens, balloons, and notepads. PROMOTIONAL ITEMS, AND FOOD/BEVERAGE ITEMS, ARE NOT ALLOWABLE UNDER ANY CATEGORY, <i>INCLUDING</i> OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT.
Indirect Costs	Indirect costs, usually a fixed percentage of total costs, may not be charged to the Charter Schools Program grant.

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Appendix B - Quality Public Charter School

Federal Definition (ESSA 4310(8)):

The term “high-quality charter school” means a charter school that—

- (A) shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth, as determined by a State;
- (B) has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance;
- (C) has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students served by the charter school; and
- (D) has demonstrated success in increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for each of the subgroups of students, as defined in section 1111(c)(2), except that such demonstration is not required in a case in which the number of students in a group is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

A Maryland charter school meets the federal definition of a high quality public charter school based the Maryland Report Card and its most recent renewal by the local authorizer, as noted below.

- (A) shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth, as determined by a State;
 - The Charter School is outpacing the local school system in the Academic Achievement Indicator;
 - The Charter School’s Academic Progress indicator is greater than that of the school system; The Charter School’s Student Growth Percentile is at or greater than 50; and
 - For charter schools serving high school grades, the school’s data shows that 75% or more of ninth graders are on-track to meet high school graduation requirements. “On track” ninth graders have earned at least four credits.
- (B) has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance;
 - The Charter Schools received the longest possible term in its last renewal review.
- (C) has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students served by the charter school; and
 - The 4 year adjusted cohort graduation rate is greater than 90%; and
 - The graduation rates for reported subgroups achieved target or showed improvement. The Maryland Accountability System sets annual targets for this measure based on a long-term goal.
- (D) has demonstrated success in increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for each of the subgroups of students, as defined in section 1111(c)(2), except that such demonstration is not required in a case in which the number of students in a group is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.
 - The charter school will show lessened gaps for students in all reported subgroups (all subgroups unless the number of students is below the reporting threshold to protect student identification).

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- For high schools, the graduation rates for reported subgroups achieved target or showed improvement. The Maryland Accountability System sets annual targets for this measure based on a long-term goal.

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Appendix C – 2021 Grants Evaluation Form

**Maryland Charter Schools Program
2021 Grants Evaluation Form**

Reviewers: Please read and score each section of the application using the guide below to ensure that requirements are met. These scores will provide an initial ranking of the applications received.

For each response the requirements that are listed must be addressed. Each item also includes “NOTES FOR REVIEWERS” which provide additional considerations for the Reviewer.

Comments are required. Comments must support your rating of the applicant on each question. Also include clarifying questions that should be explored during the validation interview.

If you have any questions, please contact Carol Beck at carol.beck@maryland.gov or by phone at (410) 767-3678.

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B. Project Narrative

B.1 Executive Summary

Requirements:

The Executive Summary succinctly describes the mission and vision of the proposed charter school. The executive summary includes:

- the needs of the community
- how the mission and vision address the needs of the community
- For expansion or replication, the Executive Summary should include how the school meets the definition of high quality.

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: The Executive Summary lists project goals and objectives and briefly explains how they support the vision. Do you have an overall understanding of what will happen if the grantee is successful? How many grades, students? What is the curriculum and approach? What are the unique aspects of the program?

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-2	Poorly developed
3-4	Adequately developed – all requirements included
5	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 5)	
Comments:	

B.2 Grant Project Objectives

Requirements:

- Three to five Grant Project Objectives and explain how each supports the planning and/or implementation of the proposed or expanding charter school
- At least one Grant Objective should address academic achievement as measured by State Assessments or interim progress data that identifies areas of need, trends.
- Each goal should have clear metrics to measure progress.

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: Applicants should address how the school will track student progress if State Assessment data is missing or incomplete. Applicants may not have access to trend data from State Assessments. E.g. A three year grant may include a year of planning, Year 1 of operation with students in K,1,2 and year 2 of operation with students in K,1,2,3. In this case, there will be no testing data in math or reading except for the 3rd graders in the last year of the grant. The applicant may describe other data and methods the school will use to measure progress.

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Objectives may be process goals that are key to success – e.g. recruitment and training of a full slate of Board members, professional development sessions. Each should include what evidence of completion will be available.

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-5	Poorly developed
6-10	Adequately developed – all requirements included
11-15	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 15)	
Comments:	

B.3 Project Design Requirements:

- Key components of the educational program and the research base for the choices made
- Alignment with the Maryland Standards for College and Career Readiness (MSCCR)
- How the education program, including academic and behavioral interventions, will meet diverse needs in the student body
- Methods and instructional approach
- How the school will use data and varied strategies to identify student needs, differentiate instruction and interventions and plan for enrichment and electives
- Plan for admissions lottery, including outreach; and
 - Note any plan to use lottery preferences. Which preferences are/will be used?
- Plan for how students will get to school/transportation

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: This section is worth 30 points and it is the core of the proposal.

Using published curriculum components is fine. There should be a clear rationale for those choices, and a plan that coordinates all components – instruction and interventions. If the curricular choices are not clearly shown as aligned to the Maryland State College and Career Ready Standards (MSCCR), the planning year should include this task/goal. The alignment can be demonstrated with sample grades. Does the school increase the diversity of programs available? E.g., Bringing the Montessori model to the public system, theme that responds to community or Local School System (LSS) input.

Does the applicant address planning for transportation? Does the school plan to directly assist with transportation? While the school is not required to provide transportation, how students will get to school should be considered. Will there be a partnership with the LSS? Other arrangements with families? Notes should include indicators that the team has thought through this need as it relates to target families.

Does the applicant plan to implement a weighted lottery? Note any weights that the school seeks to deploy and the status of approval from the LSS.

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Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-10	Poorly developed
11-20	Adequately developed – all requirements included
21-30	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 30)	
Comments:	

B.4 Educationally Disadvantaged Students
Requirements:

- Plan for engaging educationally disadvantaged students
- Plan includes students with disabilities, struggling learners, exceptional students, English language learners, students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals, and students who are homeless or in foster care

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-5	Poorly developed
6-10	Adequately developed – all requirements included
11-15	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 15)	
Comments:	

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: This section is extremely important. Look for affirmation that there is a commitment to serving all students and note any flags that indicate the applicant does not fully embrace serving all students, e.g. “students with modest special education needs” or “will refer students back to the system” and other limiting language. At a minimum, the team should show that it will follow the law and is prepared to ensure that staff are trained to do so. Look for outreach and recruitment that is broad and inclusive.

B.5 Professional Development
Requirements:

- Summary of the professional development plan for the planning and implementation periods
- Explanation of how staff is included in the planning
- Rationale and goals and list of activities that will ensure that the goals are met
- Items in the budget that relate to professional development are explained

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: Does the professional development plan support the curriculum design described in B.3 and supports for all students as described in B.4? For Students with Disabilities (SWD), will the applicant rely only on the LSS for professional development or will they supplement that?

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Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-3	Poorly developed
4-6	Adequately developed – all requirements included
7-10	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 10)	
Comments:	

B.6 Governance Plan and Accountability

Requirements:

- Composition of the governing board
- Process for identification of needed expertise, and recruitment for board service
- Terms for members
- Training provided to members of the board
- Roles and responsibilities of any partner organization, including charter management organizations
- How the Board will create and implement an accountability plan for the charter school
- Board member list with affiliations is included as Attachment 9
- Describe the school’s autonomy and flexibility, consistent with the Federal definition of a charter school.

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: Does the plan reflect understanding of autonomies and the limits of working within the school system? Is there a plan for organizational development and board training?

Flags – Is the management plan top-heavy? Does it seem that there are too many roles with titles relative to the school size? Are board members local? There is no prohibition against out-of-state board members, but it should be noted. Does the proposal note key areas where board expertise will be recruited? For Board members identified, are there any notable areas of expertise lacking? (E.g. Finance, teaching and learning, organizational development). Does the board list demonstrate a range of knowledge and skills? Lacking expertise with plan to address it can be a strength, showing awareness and a strategy. If the Board is not fully recruited, what is the plan?

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-5	Poorly developed
6-10	Adequately developed – all requirements included
11-15	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 15)	
Comments:	

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B.7 Parent and Community Involvement

Requirements:

- Planning and activities demonstrate the charter school’s commitment to broad community engagement
- Evidence of engagement such as parent/school activities or waitlist data for an existing school;
- Identify areas where the school has or is seeking support from external partners to further the mission and vision of the school.
- Plan for dissemination of information about the school to parents and public: academic data, enrollment, audits through website postings, newsletter or other means

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: Are there specific tools/methods noted for community engagement? Does the answer include a plan for dissemination of information? What information will be on the website – Board members, Board meetings, performance, other?

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-3	Poorly developed
4-6	Adequately developed – all requirements included
7-10	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 10)	
Comments:	

B.8 Management Plan and Leadership Team

Requirements:

- Description of how the performance and financial aspects of the grant project will be managed
- Key personnel assigned to measure specific aspects of the grant
- Timeline for the implementation of the Grant Project Objectives
- Resumes for key personnel and job descriptions for unfilled positions are provided as Attachment 8.
- The organization’s procurement policy and procedures are included as Attachment 7.

B.8.1 Partners

Requirements:

- Description of roles of any charter management organization, operator or other partners that will have an ongoing relationship with the charter school
- Are contractual relationships described?
- Please note if any partners or subcontractors will provide grant-funded services.

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: Are managerial duties overly reliant on one or a few people? If the application indicates that the team is small, is there a plan for growth? Does the team include a range of needed expertise?

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For partners: Partners can be a vague term. Look for a plan to contract out any major functions and look for the rationale, contractual requirements, etc. If there is a charter management organization (any organization that operates more than one school) note what the financial relationship is. Is there evidence of contractors that are related to founders/board members?

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-3	Poorly developed
4-6	Adequately developed – all requirements included
7-10	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 10)	
Comments:	

B.9 Facility Requirements:

- Facility status - whether a facility has been identified or is in process of being secured, justify the appropriateness and safety of the facility in terms of the ages of the students served
- Identification of the site for school if known, or description of how the selection process will be managed
- How will the school ensure compliance with health and safety standards in law and regulation and with the American with Disabilities Act?

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: Does the applicant understand the approval process that the LSS will use to approve a facility? Many charter schools finance acquisition/renovations, but note if mentioned in the application so that it can be explored further in the validation interview.

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-2	Poorly developed
3-4	Adequately developed – all requirements included
5	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 5)	
Comments:	

B.10 Sustainability Requirements:

- Plan for how the charter school board will sustain and institutionalize practices begun during the grant period

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

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: Is there overreliance on grant funding after the grant period? The pro-forma budget should show that operations of the school are sustainable on the per pupil allocation.

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-2	Poorly developed
3-4	Adequately developed – all requirements included
5	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 5)	
Comments:	

C. Budget and Budget Narrative

C. Budget and Budget Narrative Requirements:

- Budget is in format provided
- Budget narrative demonstrates 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 appear in the budget narrative and have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget worksheet.

NOTES FOR REVIEWERS: Are there items in the budget that are not supported with a narrative? Are there estimates that are vague? Are they reasonable, based on quotes or other evidence? Are there any key parts of the plan that are not supported in the budget? Is it top heavy?

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0	Not addressed
1-7	Poorly developed
8-14	Adequately developed – all requirements included
15-20	Well developed – response is clear and thorough
Points Assigned (out of 20)	
Comments:	

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D. Competitive Priorities

Identify the Competitive Priorities

Requirements:

The applicant has provided evidence of meeting the competitive priority. For example:

- 1) A charter school program will be located in a county that does not currently have charter schools.
- 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 that seeks grant support for expansion or replication.
- 4) Creation or expansion of a quality high school

Points	Range for Assigning Points
0 or 5	A charter school program will be located in a county that does not currently have charter schools.
0 or 5	A program focus on educationally disadvantaged students, through recruitment and programming
0 or 5	Replication or expansion of a high quality charter school
0 or 5	Creation of innovation high school options, including the ability to earn college credit during high school.
Points Assigned (out of 20)	
Comments:	

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Summary of Points Assigned by this Reviewer

Application Requirements	Points Assigned	Total Points Possible
Executive Summary		5
Grant Project Objectives		15
Project Design		30
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		15
Professional Development		10
Governance Plan and Accountability		15
Parent and Community Involvement		10
Management and Leadership		10
Facility		5
Sustainability		5
Budget and Budget Narrative		20
SUBTOTAL for Sections B and C		140
Competitive Priorities (Section D)		20
TOTAL possible for Application		160

Comments:

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