

## Office of School Choice

# Request for Applications (RFA)

## Expanding Opportunities Through Quality Charter School Programs

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### Purpose

The Louisiana Department of Education’s (LDOE) guiding philosophy holds that parents and educators, who know children best, should be empowered to identify and implement the educational pathways that best meet their needs. By authorizing high-quality charter schools, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and local school boards enable local educators to meet student needs where they live.

In 2015, CREDO released a study that examined the performance of charter schools in 41 metropolitan regions, including New Orleans.<sup>1</sup> The study found positive impacts of enrollment in a New Orleans charter school on both reading and math outcomes. On average, New Orleans charter school students gained roughly 63 days of learning in reading and 86 days in math compared to students attending traditional public schools in the region. In 2022, CREDO published a “City Study” examining the impact of enrollment at a Baton Rouge charter school on student learning outcomes. Researchers found that black students attending Baton Rouge charters gained an average of ten days of learning in reading and an average of 53 days of learning in math compared with the statewide average of black students, economically disadvantaged students attending Baton Rouge charters gained an average of 14 days of learning in reading and an average of 56 days of learning in math, and students with disabilities attending Baton Rouge charters gained an average of 30 days of learning in reading and an average of 49 days of learning in math.

The preponderance of Louisiana’s charter schools is clustered in the state’s urban hubs, as examined by CREDO’s researchers. Accordingly, LDOE’s project design is also underpinned by research highlighting the benefits of increased access to high-quality public school choice options in rural communities. Rural communities with more robust access to high-quality public school choice options are benefiting from a “rising tide that lifts all boats,” according to a 2023 report from the Heritage Foundation. The report’s authors found that rural schools, districts, and counties in Arizona — the state in which the largest percentage of students have access to at least one charter school in their zip code — have continually shown high levels of academic growth on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) relative to their rural peers across the nation.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, a recently published study showed that expansive school choice policies in Florida, which have led charter enrollment in rural counties to double between 2011 and 2021, have not precipitated a dramatic decline in traditional public school enrollment within

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<sup>1</sup>CREDO (2015). Urban Charter School Study Report on 41 Regions.

<https://urbancharters.stanford.edu/download/Urban%20Charter%20School%20Study%20Report%20on%2041%20Regions.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Bedrick, J., & Ladner, M. (2023). Rustic renaissance: Education choice in rural America. The Heritage Foundation.

<https://www.heritage.org/education/report/rustic-renaissance-education-choice-rural-america>

those communities.<sup>3</sup> A 2019 study in the *Journal of School Choice* examined how rural charter schools “used their flexibilities” to craft “individualized approaches” that meet the needs of their specific student populations, an approach that “particularly benefited students with disabilities.”<sup>4</sup>

In September 2023, the Louisiana Department of Education was awarded a \$55.5 million federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant to support Louisiana’s charter school movement. Through the Louisiana Public Charter Schools Program (LPCSP), the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) will catalyze charter growth in other high-need communities to meet insistent parental demand for these schools. Over the five-year project period, LDOE will support the addition of over 5,000 seats at 25 new, expanding, or replicating charter schools that are primarily located in districts where multiple schools have been designated as being in Academically Unacceptable Status for three or more years, districts receiving state letter grades of ‘D’ or ‘F’, rural districts, and districts where free public school choice options are currently limited.

The LPCSP project — which addresses the Absolute Priority and all five Competitive Preference Priorities — will pursue three overriding objectives: (1) broadening access to high-quality public school seats for educationally disadvantaged students throughout Louisiana; (2) improving educational outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students attending Louisiana charter schools; and (3) enhancing the quality of charter school authorizing across Louisiana. Through LPCSP, LDOE will work on a systematic basis to solicit parental input; cultivate pipelines of innovative, capable charter school developers; provide essential start-up support, impactful technical assistance, and efficient monitoring; and systematically build the human, organizational, policy, and resource capacity of all public chartering agencies across the state.

Through LPCSP, we will work to cultivate pipelines of charter school developers capable of opening and operating innovative schools that meet these needs. To ensure schools are well-positioned to navigate start-up challenges, we will provide essential start-up funding and leverage the collective capacity within LDOE and among quality project partners to deliver impactful support and efficient monitoring, ensuring schools are not only able to meet the educational needs of their students but are organizationally sound and financially viable. LPCSP subgrants may be used during the Pre-opening period and the first two years of operation<sup>5</sup>.

## LPCSP Priorities

In keeping with grant objectives, priority will be given to any approved charter school located in at least one of the following:

- A district where multiple schools have been designated as AUS 3+;
- A ‘D’ or ‘F’ rated district;
- A rural district; **or**
- A district where free public school choice options are currently limited.

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<sup>3</sup> Matus, R., & Hankerson, D. (2022). Rerouting the myths of rural educational choice. Step Up for Students. <https://www.reimaginedonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Rerouting-the-Myths-of-Rural-Educaton-Choice.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> McKittrick, L., Gill, S., Opalka, A., Tuchman, S., & Kothari, S. (2019). A “can-do” attitude for students with disabilities: Special education in rural charter schools. *Journal of School Choice*, 13(4), 537–554.

<sup>5</sup> List of eligible expenditures taken directly from ESEA, Section 5204(f)(3)

## Eligibility

Any applicant for a new, replication, or expansion grant must meet the federal definition of a “charter school” and a “developer.” See Additional Information (Page 21).

A new charter is in the pre-opening phase or has been operational for less than 18 months. If an existing school wants to expand or replicate, it must also meet the federal definition of a “high-quality charter school”<sup>6</sup> and LDOE’s definition of a “high-quality” charter school.

There are additional requirements for expansion applicants if they have received previous CSP funding.<sup>7</sup> See **Application Process Pathways** on page 17 for more information.

Expansion Type	Description	Allocation Amount	Duration of LPCSP Subgrant <sup>8</sup> (to include planning and implementation)
New Charter	A public school that, by 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.	Up to \$2 Million	Up to 42 months (to include planning and implementation)
Expansion <sup>9</sup>	To significantly increase enrollment or add one or more grades to the high-quality charter school.		Up to 24 months (to include implementation)
Replication <sup>10</sup>	To open a new charter school, or a new campus of a high-quality charter school, based on the educational model of an existing high-quality charter school, under an existing charter or an additional charter.		Up to 42 months (to include planning and implementation)

<sup>6</sup> See “Federal Definition of a Charter School” in the Definitions section of the document.

<sup>7</sup> ESEA § 4303 (e)(2) LIMITATIONS. — (2) SUBGRANTS. — An eligible applicant may not receive more than 1 subgrant under this section for each individual charter school for a 5-year period, unless the eligible applicant demonstrates to the State Entity that such individual charter school has at least 3 years of improved educational results for students enrolled in such charter school with respect to the elements described in subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section 4310(8).

<sup>8</sup>ESEA § 4303 (d)(1)(B) SUBGRANTS.

<sup>9</sup> ESEA § 4310 (7) EXPAND.

<sup>10</sup> ESEA § 4310 (9) REPLICATE.

## Eligible Expenditures

### Planning Funds

Planning funds may be used during the Pre-opening period prior to the charter school's launch. If the school plans to open in the upcoming school year, funds may be used for a minimum of six months and a maximum of nine months. If the school plans to open the following school year, funds may be used for a minimum of six months and a maximum of 18 months. All funds are provided to subgrantees on a reimbursement basis through the agency's Electronic Grant Management System (eGMS). The subgrantee budget should align with the reimbursement requests. During the planning period, subgrant recipients may only spend funds on federally permitted planning activities, including:

- Pre-opening salaries for essential staff;
- Refinement of the desired educational results and the method for measuring progress toward achieving those results; **and**
- Professional development of teachers and other staff who will work in the charter school.

### Implementation Funds

Implementation funds may be used during the first 24 months of operation, in which year one does not exceed the first 12 months of operation and year two does not exceed the second 12 months of operation. The entire grant period should not exceed 42 months. All funds are provided to subgrantees on a reimbursement basis through the agency's Electronic Grant Management System (eGMS). The subgrantee budget should align with the reimbursement requests. During an implementation period, subgrant recipients may only spend funds on federally permitted implementation activities, including:

- Informing the community about the school;
- Acquiring necessary equipment and educational materials, and supplies;
- Acquiring or developing curriculum materials; and
- Other initial operational costs<sup>11</sup>, such as
  - Support costs associated with wireless infrastructure (which is costlier in less densely populated areas);
  - 1:1 student and staff technology;
  - Student and staff recruitment;
  - Professional development;
  - Classroom supplies and materials; **and**
  - One-time investments in transportation (the purchase of buses).

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<sup>11</sup> ESEA § 4303 (B) SUBGRANTS..— A subgrant awarded by a State entity under this section shall be for a period of not more than 5 years, of which an eligible applicant may use not more than 18 months for planning and program design.

## Awards

Subgrant applications will undergo a technical review by LDOE staff to check compliance with state law and policy, and adherence to federal CSP guidelines. Upon completion of the Technical Review, the applicant will receive an email notification if any corrections are necessary to comply with state law and policy or to adhere to federal CSP guidelines, including allowable expenditures. Applicants will have seven (7) calendar days to correct and resubmit the application.

Subgrant applications will undergo a quality review by an independent panel of peer reviewers to assess all proposed projects according to a rubric aligned with the Competitive Preference Priority. The peer reviewers will be disinterested members of the Louisiana charter school community who possess expertise in academic leadership, operations, and school finance (e.g., superintendents, principals, local authorizers, and community partners). The peer reviewers will assess the quality of the project and budget narratives. Capacity interviews will be scheduled with each applicant, affording the applicant an opportunity to further demonstrate their organization's ability to carry out the project goals identified in the application.

A score will be calculated for each application. Due to the limited number of available awards, applicants who receive the highest scores during each competition cycle will be recommended for awards.

- Awards to schools that do not meet at least one of the LPCSP Priorities (page 2), as stated in the approved application, will be limited to 50% of total awards.

The LPCSP subgrant can be for no more than 42 months. Planning subgrants for new, expanding, or replicating charter schools can be for no more than 18 months. BESE will allocate LPCSP subgrants to LEAs. Awards on behalf of Type 1 and Type 3 charter schools will be allocated to each charter school's LEA on the condition, required by federal guidelines, that LEAs may not deduct administrative fees unless as part of an arrangement for administrative services to which the charter school and LEA have mutually agreed. Planning and implementation subgrants must be drawn down in accordance with the aforementioned funding periods. All funds must be drawn down within the subgrant duration, contingent upon LDOE having an active CSP Grant.

## Application Components

LPCSP subgrant applications are to be submitted via email to [CSPGrant@la.gov](mailto:CSPGrant@la.gov). Complete applications consist of the following components, described in more detail on the next page.

### Application Narrative:

- Cover Page
- Executive Summary (1-2 pages)
- Project Narrative (10-15 pages)
- Budget Narrative (2-5 pages)

### Appendices (\*if applicable):

- **Appendix A:** CSP Budget Form
- **Appendix B:** Contingency Plan<sup>12</sup>
- **Appendix C:** Evidence of Community Support
- **Appendix D:** Family and Community Engagement Plan
- **Appendix E:** Lottery Plan
- **Appendix F:** Management Organization Relationship\*
- **Appendix G:** Management Organization Contract\*
- **Appendix H:** Rosters

### Appendices related to locally authorized schools:

- **Appendix I:** Approved Charter School Application
- **Appendix J:** Approved Financial Plan
- **Appendix K:** Authorizer's Pre-opening Checklist
- **Appendix L:** Authorizer's Performance Framework
- **Appendix M:** Authorizer's Oversight and Accountability Policy
- **Appendix N:** Authorizer's contract or policy that describes the administrative relationship between the authorizer and the charter school

### Assurances

- See page 13 for Assurances.

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<sup>12</sup> ESEA § 4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(II)

# Application Instructions

## Cover Page - [Template](#) Executive Summary

- Describes the model, mission, and vision of the charter school. Include a description of how the autonomy and flexibility granted by the authorizer will contribute to the charter school's model, mission, and/or vision in a manner consistent with the definition of a charter school. Key innovations should be identified and supported by the operator's historical performance or relevant research.

## Project Narrative

### Planning and Implementation

#### Responses must align with the submitted charter application.

- Describe the goals that a CSP planning and implementation subgrant will enable your school to achieve. Goals should be aligned with all relevant Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) CSP performance measures (pages 19-20) and consider the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE)'s CSP priorities (page 20). The narrative should describe the process that your school will use to collect data and measure progress toward achieving its goals. Additionally, include evidence of the organization's capacity to complete project goals. Identify individuals who will be responsible for carrying out each of the activities required to achieve project goals. Planned activities should put your school on a path to satisfy the LDOE's definition of a high-quality charter school, defined in the **Additional Information** section on page 21.

### Needs Analysis

- Explain how the proposed project would serve the interests and meet the needs of students and families in the communities the charter school intends to serve.
- Describe how the plans for the operation of the charter school will support and reflect the needs of students and families in the community, including consideration of district or community assets and how the school's location, or anticipated location if a facility has not been secured, will facilitate access for the targeted student population (e.g., access to public transportation or other transportation options, the demographics of neighborhoods within walking distance of the school, and transportation plans and costs for students who are not able to walk or use public transportation to access the school). Regarding transportation needs, cite specific evidence as it was included in the charter application transportation plan.
- Explain the action steps taken to ensure that the proposed project:
  - would not hamper, delay, or negatively affect any desegregation efforts in the community in which the charter school would be located and the public school districts from which students are, or would be, drawn to attend the charter school, including efforts to comply with a court order, statutory obligation, or voluntary efforts to create and maintain desegregated public schools; and
  - to ensure that the proposed project would not otherwise increase racial or socio-economic segregation or isolation in the schools from which the students are, or would be, drawn to attend the charter school.

## Serving Special Populations

- Provide your school's target percentages of economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. Enrollment projections should always ensure that the number of students in a grade is at least as many as the number of students in the previous grade in the year before.
- If you anticipate that the school will be unlikely to establish and maintain a diverse student population, you must also answer the following:
  - Why it is unlikely to be able to establish and maintain a racially and socio-economically diverse student body at the proposed charter school;
  - How the anticipated racial and socio-economic makeup of the student body would promote the purposes of the CSP to provide high-quality educational opportunities to all students, which may include a specialized educational program or mission; **and**
  - The anticipated impact of the proposed charter school on the racial and socio-economic diversity of the public schools and school districts from which students would be drawn to attend the charter school.
- Provide information on the proposed charter school's projected student enrollment and evidence to support the projected enrollment based on the needs analysis and other relevant data and factors. If used, include the methodology and calculations.
- Describe how the school will meet the educational needs of its students, including students with disabilities and English learners.
- Provide a detailed description of your school's admission process, admission requirements, recruitment, and enrollment procedures.
- Briefly describe the school's approach to student discipline, behavior intervention, and classroom management.

## Budget Narrative

- Provide a budget narrative that describes how the activities of the CSP planning and implementation subgrant will enable you to achieve project goals that you would have been unable to achieve otherwise. Include:
  - An explanation of how each planning activity aligns with an eligible planning expenditure and how each implementation activity aligns with an eligible implementation expenditure. Note that the response must clearly distinguish between planning and implementation. See page 4 for reference.
  - A detailed description of the purpose of each expenditure, including:
    - Assumptions showing that all funds will be spent on one-time start-up activities, as opposed to ongoing operational activities, and including, if applicable, only the percentage of an employee's time devoted to start-up activities;<sup>13</sup> **and**
    - The incremental impact each activity will have on your ability to achieve project goals.
  - A clear plan for maintaining financial sustainability after the end of the grant.
  - If applicable, a description of how CSP Planning and Implementation funds will be used in coordination with other state and federal grants.

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<sup>13</sup> ESEA §4303 (h)(1)(B)

## Appendices

Each of the appendices below must be included in your submission and contain the information below.

- **Appendix A**
  - Complete the [CSP Budget Form](#). The budget form should be submitted as an Excel file, and the file name should indicate the LEA name, Appendix A, and Budget Form. See Additional Resources for more information.
- **Appendix B**
  - Provide a contingency plan if the actual revenues are lower or the expenses are higher than anticipated in the financial model.
- **Appendix C**
  - Submit documents that provide evidence of community support. Such information may include information on waiting lists for the proposed charter school, existing charter schools, or traditional public schools, data on access to seats in high-quality public schools in the districts from which the charter school expects to draw students, and/or family interest in specialized instructional approaches proposed to be implemented at the charter school.
- **Appendix D**
  - Provide a robust family and community engagement plan designed to ensure the active participation of families and the community, which includes the following:
    - How families and the community were, are, or will be engaged in determining the vision and design for the charter school, including specific examples of how families and the community's input was, is, or is expected to be incorporated into the vision and design for the charter school;
    - How the charter school will meaningfully engage with both families and the community to create strong and ongoing partnerships;
    - How the charter school will foster a collaborative culture that involves the families of all students, including underserved students, in ensuring their ongoing input in school decision-making;
    - How the charter school's recruitment, admissions, enrollment, and retention processes will engage and accommodate families from various backgrounds, including English learners, students with disabilities, and students of color, including by holding enrollment and recruitment events on weekends or during non-standard work hours, making interpreters available, and providing enrollment and recruitment information in widely accessible formats (e.g., hard copy and online in multiple languages; as appropriate, large print or braille for visually-impaired individuals) through widely available and transparent means (e.g., online and at community locations);
    - How the charter school has engaged or will engage families and the community to develop an instructional model to best serve the targeted student population and their families, including students with disabilities and English learners; and

- **Appendix E**

- Provide a detailed description of the lottery plan the charter school will employ if the number of applicants exceeds the number of seats available to students. State law permits the use of weighted lotteries for educationally disadvantaged students. CSP subgrantees must adhere to the federal definition of a weighted lottery, which provides *slightly* better chances of admission for educationally disadvantaged<sup>14</sup> students. The lottery plan must include:
  - Use of a statistically random method to select students for available seats at the charter school;
  - Waitlist procedures;
  - Enrollment preferences (lottery exemptions) in keeping with federal guidelines<sup>15</sup>;
  - Includes all qualified students, regardless of any student demographic
  - Timeline

- **Appendix F (if applicable)**

- Charter Management Organization (CMO), Management Organization (MO), or Education Service Provider (ESP): A description of any business or financial relationship between the charter school developer and the management organization, including payments, contract terms, and any property owned, operated, or controlled by the management organization or related individuals or entities that will be used by the charter school.
  - Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved. Describe the governance structure and duties of the charter board.
  - Explain how the charter will ensure that the management contract is severable, severing the management contract will not cause the proposed charter school to close, the duration of the management contract will not extend beyond the expiration date of the school's charter, and renewal of the management contract will not occur without approval and affirmative action by the governing board of the charter school.
  - A description of how the applicant will ensure that members of the governing board of the charter school are not selected, removed, controlled, or employed by the management organization and that the charter school's legal, accounting, and auditing services will be procured independently from the management organization.
  - A description of the steps the applicant will take to ensure that it maintains control over all student records and has a process in place to provide those records to another public school or school district promptly upon the transfer of a student from the charter school to another public school, including due to the closure of the charter school, under section 4308 of the ESEA.

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<sup>14</sup> See "Definitions" for *Educationally Disadvantaged*

<sup>15</sup> See "Definitions" for *Allowable Enrollment Preferences*

- **Appendix G** (if applicable)
  - A copy of any existing or proposed contract between the charter and a for-profit management organization (including a non-profit management organization operated by or on behalf of a for-profit entity). Include:
    - The cost;
    - The amount of CSP funds proposed to be used toward such costs; **and**
    - The percentage of such costs represents the school's overall funding.
  - The duration of the contract; **and**
  - Roles and responsibilities of the management organization.
    - The administrative and contractual roles and responsibilities of such partners
    - Steps the applicant will take to ensure that it pays fair market value for any services or other items purchased or leased from the management organization, makes all programmatic decisions, maintains control over all CSP funds, and directly administers or supervises the grant's administration under 34 CFR 75.701.  
NOTE: Applicants contracting with a CMO will need to provide other assurances during the eligibility determination.
- **Appendix H**
  - The board member roster includes each person's role, the management organization's officers, chief administrator, or other administrators, and any staff involved in approving or executing the management contract.

## Appendices Related to Local Authorizing

CSP subgrants may only be awarded to eligible applicants who have (A) applied for and been approved by an authorized public chartering authority to operate a charter school; and (B) provided adequate and timely notice to that authority.<sup>16</sup> Type 1 and Type 3 charter schools should submit the following documents, which will be assessed against authorizer quality standards. Each document should be saved as a PDF file, except for the financial plan, which should be submitted as a separate Excel file. Document file names should include the appendix letter, LEA name, and document name.

- **Appendix I:** The charter school's approved charter school application
- **Appendix J:** The charter school's approved financial plan
- **Appendix K:** The local school board's charter school pre-opening checklist
- **Appendix L:** The local school board's performance framework, describing its academic, financial, and organizational performance expectations for the charter school.
- **Appendix M:** The local school board's charter school oversight and accountability policy, including:
  - Policy for reviewing and evaluating charter schools under their jurisdiction at least once every five years
  - Policy for revoking or not renewing a school's charter based on financial, structural, or operational factors
- **Appendix N:** The local school board's charter contract with the charter school or, if the contract has not yet been entered into, a copy of the local school board policy that describes the administrative relationship between the charter school and the local school board.

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<sup>16</sup> ESEA § 4310 (6) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT.

## Assurances

Please review the statements below and indicate whether each is true, and will hold true if the application is approved.

If the answer to any item below is “No”, please submit a statement of explanation as an attachment.

	Yes	No
1. The charter school does not request any waivers of any federal statutory or regulatory provisions. It does not believe that such waivers are necessary for the school’s successful operation. In addition, it understands that RS 17:3996 describes the state rules, generally applicable to public schools, from which charter schools are exempt.		
2. The charter school will submit to the authorizer, for review, independent annual audits of financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and ensure such audits are publicly reported.		
3. The charter school meets the definition of a “developer” according to ESEA § 4310(5).		
4. The charter school will make the annual state report card publicly available, including on the school’s website, and information to help parents make informed decisions about the education options available to their children, including the information required in ESEA § 4303 (f)(2)(G).		
5. The charter school will solicit and consider input from parents and other community members throughout the school’s CSP project.		
6. The charter school will annually provide the LDOE, and through it the USDOE, with such information as may be required to determine whether the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving its objectives.		
7. The charter school will cooperate with the LDOE, and through it, the USDOE, in evaluating the school’s CSP project.		
8. [If applicable – district-authorized charter schools only] The charter school has provided a copy of its CSP Planning and Implementation subgrant Application to its authorizer.		
9. The charter school must follow the minimum academic requirements for renewal as listed in <a href="#">Louisiana’s Charter Schools Performance Compact</a> .		
10. The governing board of the charter school will participate in governance training as provided at no cost by the selected CSP vendor.		

# LPCSP Subgrant Checklists and Rubrics

## Technical Review Checklist

Subgrant applications will undergo a technical review by LDOE staff to check eligibility, compliance with state law and policy, and adherence to federal CSP guidelines. Upon completion of the Technical Review, the applicant will receive an email notification if any corrections are necessary to comply with state law and policy or to adhere to federal CSP guidelines, including allowable expenditures. Applicants will have seven (7) calendar days to correct and resubmit the application.

### Completeness

1. Does the application include the required components?

Components Required of All Applicants		Additional Components Required of Locally-Authorized Applicants	
	Cover Page		Appendix I - Approved Charter School Application
	Executive Summary		
	Project Narrative		Appendix J - Approved Financial Plan
	Budget Narrative		Appendix K - Authorizer's Pre-Opening Checklist
	Assurances		
	Appendix A - Budget Form		Appendix L - Authorizer's Performance Framework
	Appendix B - Contingency Plan		
	Appendix C - Evidence of Community Support		Appendix M - Authorizer's Oversight and Accountability Policy
	Appendix D - Family and Community Engagement Plan		
	Appendix E - Lottery Plan		Appendix N - Authorizer's contract or policy that describes the administrative relationship between the authorizer and the charter school
	Appendix F (if applicable) - Management Organization Relationship		
	Appendix G (if applicable) - Management Organization Contract		
	Appendix H - Roster		

### Compliance with state law and policy

1. Does the application comply with state law and policy?

### Adherence to federal CSP guidelines

1. Does the applicant adhere to federal CSP guidelines, including the following
  - a. All expenditures are one-time start-up costs.
  - b. All expenditures follow supplement vs. supplant guidelines.

## Peer Review Rubric

To receive funding, CSP applicants must meet all standards for which they are eligible. To be considered met, the standards must be rated as “well developed” or “adequately developed”.

Criteria	Not Addressed	Partially Developed	Adequately Developed	Well Developed
Point Range	0	1-5	6-7	8-10
1. The executive summary describes the charter school’s model, mission, and vision. Identifies key innovations supported by the operator’s historical performance or relevant research.				
2. Project goals are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) and will contribute to the progress of CSP Performance Measures.				
3. Identifies measurable milestones – including dates and intermediate outcomes – that will be utilized to keep the school on track to achieve its project goals.				
4. Identifies the specific individuals responsible for carrying out all activities required to achieve project goals.				
5. The charter school clearly describes how the CSP project will enable it to serve the interests and meet the needs of students and families in the communities it intends to serve.				
6. The charter school ensures that the proposed project will not hamper, delay, or otherwise negatively affect any desegregation efforts in the community where the charter school would be located, and will not otherwise increase racial or socio-economic segregation or isolation in the schools from which the students are, or would be, drawn.				

Criteria	Not Addressed	Partially Developed	Adequately Developed	Well Developed
Point Range	0	1-5	6-7	8-10
7. Evidence of community support is legitimate and provides proof that the school is needed and/or welcomed in the community (Appendix C).				
8. The proposed project includes a family and engagement plan (Appendix D), which describes the project's vision and design, including, if applicable, engagement strategies; how it will foster a collaborative culture; the recruitment, admissions, enrollment, and retention processes; and engagement strategies for the targeted population.				
9. Provides an overview of how the project will impact the educational needs of all students, including educationally disadvantaged students.				
10. Projected expenditures will help the school achieve project goals that it otherwise would not have been able to meet.				
11. Description of the incremental impact each expenditure/activity will have on meeting goals.				
12. Description of how financial stability will be maintained after the end of the subgrant period.				

**120 Possible Points**

# Application Process Pathways

## New Charter School

- Complete BESE’s RFA process
  - Letter of Intent
  - Eligibility Determination
  - BESE New Charter Application
  - Completeness Check
  - 7-page Response
  - Capacity Interview
  - BESE PPT Presentation
  - 2-Page Response
- Complete Subgrantee’s RFA process
  - Letter of Intent
  - Eligibility Determination
  - CSP Application
  - Capacity Interview
    - Schools can be represented by various key stakeholders, including board members, administrators, educators, and key CSP Project Narrative support personnel.

## Expanding Charter School

- Complete BESE’s RFA process
  - Letter of Intent
  - Eligibility Determination
  - BESE Experienced Charter Application
  - Completeness Check
  - 7-page Response
  - Capacity Interview
  - BESE PPT Presentation
  - 2-Page Response
- Complete Sub-Grantee’s RFA process
  - Letter of Intent
  - Eligibility Determination
    - Questions to be answered:
      - If “yes” is the answer to more than one of the items below, the applicant is ineligible. If “yes” is the answer to one question, the applicant will require additional oversight.
        - Have you had any significant adverse findings or incidents of organizational non-compliance over the past three years?
        - Do you have any active Notices of Concern or Breach regarding student safety, school finance, or compliance with regulations regarding services for students with disabilities or English Learners?
        - Have you been identified for targeted support and improvement under Louisiana’s ESSA Plan?
        - Have you received CSP funding through either the CMO or Developer competition?



## Overview of LPCSP Performance Measures

Objective 1: Broaden access to high-quality public school seats for educationally disadvantaged students throughout Louisiana.

- **PM 1a:** During the project period, the Executive Director of New School Strategy will conduct direct outreach to at least 50 charter entities (e.g., high-quality CMOs, single-site charters, local and national operators, etc.) to share details about Louisiana’s charter school application process and CSP grant.
- **PM 1b:** During the project period, LDOE will award 25 subgrants to new, replicating, or expanding schools.
- **PM 1c:** During the project period, LDOE will support the addition of at least 5,000 high-quality public school seats through the LPCSP project.
- **PM 1d:** During the project period, 60% of subgrant applicants will be located in either (a) a district where multiple schools have been designated as AUS 3+, (b) a ‘D’ or ‘F’ rated district, (c) a rural district, or (d) a district where free public school choice options are currently limited.
- **PM 1e:** During the project period, 50% of subgrant recipients will be located in either (a) a district where multiple schools have been designated as AUS 3+, (b) a ‘D’ or ‘F’ rated district, (c) a rural district, or (d) a district where free public school choice options are currently limited.

Objective 2: Improve educational outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students attending Louisiana charter schools:

- **PM 2a:** During each year of the project period, 100% of active subgrantees will meet, or be on track to meet, academic requirements for renewal.
- **PM 2b:** During each year of the project period, 90% of active subgrantees will receive a Progress Index Letter Grade Equivalent of ‘A’ or ‘B’.
- **PM 2c:** During each year of the project period, 75% of subgrantees will perform at or above the local system level as measured by the subgrantee’s School Performance Score (SPS) compared to the local system’s District Performance Score (DPS).
- **PM 2d:** During each year of the project period, 75% of subgrantees will meet or exceed economically disadvantaged student enrollment targets as outlined by LDOE.
- **PM 2e:** During each year of the project period, 90% of subgrantees will meet all or meet most financial expectations as outlined by the charter school’s authorizer.
- **PM 2f:** During the project period, 100% of subgrantee charter boards will receive at least four board observations with feedback.
- **PM 2g:** During each year of the project period, the average subgroup performance of Economically Disadvantaged charter school students in Louisiana will increase by at least 3 percentage points.
- **PM 2h:** To promote collaboration amongst LEAs and sharing of best practices, before the end of the project term, 100% of CSP subgrantees must submit a presentation proposal to share best practices at Louisiana’s Teacher Leader Summit throughout the grant period.

Objective 3: Enhance the quality of charter school authorizing across Louisiana:

- **PM 3a:** Create a Louisiana Authorizer Community of Practice that convenes bimonthly throughout the project period.
- **PM 3b:** Create a Louisiana Authorizer Toolkit and add at least three model policies/tools/training annually throughout the project period.

- **PM 3c:** By the end of the project period, 75% of local authorizers will agree that the Louisiana Authorizer Toolkit is a helpful resource, has expanded their capacity to conduct quality oversight, and has made them more effective at being an authorizer
- **PM 3d:** By the end of the project period, 75% of authorizers in Louisiana will endorse a Louisiana version of NACSA's Principles and Standards for Quality Authorizing that has been developed through the work of the Community of Practice.
- **PM 3e:** During the project period, at least 5 subgrant awards will be issued to schools authorized by local chartering districts whose leaders participated in the Excellence in Authorizing Fellowship.

## LDOE CSP Priorities

In keeping with the Competitive Preference Priorities, specifically to improve struggling schools and LEAs and serve at-risk students, the LDOE has identified several models that produce improved educational outcomes for Louisiana students. Scoring in the Technical Review Rubric will align with these priorities to provide preference to applicants that incorporate one or more of the following models:

- Transformative models, i.e., Classical Education
- Foundational skills/content mastery/course proficiency
- Career and technical education (CTE)-focus/Career-focused high school
- Turn-around of an academically unacceptable school (AUS 4+)

# Additional Information

## Definitions

### Federal Definition of a Charter School (ESEA § 4310 (2))

The term “charter school” means a public school that —

- In accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, it 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
- is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
- does not charge tuition;
- 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;
- is a school to which parents choose to send their children and that —
  - 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
  - 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 above;
- 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;
- meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
- operates in accordance with State law;
- 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
- may serve students in early childhood education programs or postsecondary students.

### Federal Definition of a Developer (ESEA § 4310(5))

The term “developer” means an individual or group of individuals (including a public or private nonprofit organization), which may include teachers, administrators, and other school staff, parents, or other members of the local community in which a charter school project will be carried out.

### **Federal Definition of a High-Quality Charter School (ESEA § 4310 (8))**

The term high-quality charter school means a charter school that:

- Shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth, as determined by a State;
- has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance;
- has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students served by the charter school; and
- 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.

### **State Definition of a High-Quality Charter School**

To qualify as a high-quality charter school<sup>17</sup>, a Louisiana charter school must meet the federal definition of a charter school<sup>18</sup> and satisfy at least one of the following conditions:

- Received an “A” letter grade in the most recent school year, as measured by 2025 school performance;
- School Performance Score exceeds statewide performance or the District Performance Score of the district in which the charter school is located in the most recent school year, as measured by 2025 performance;
- BESE-approved alternative charter meeting the top tier of expectations on an Alternative Charter Evaluation Framework, as measured by 2025 performance;
- Received a “B” or “C” letter grade in the most recent school year, as measured by 2025 school performance, AND one of the additional criteria below:
  - A majority of grade 3-8 students meet or exceed growth expectations in ELA, as determined by Louisiana’s school-level value-added model, as measured by 2025 performance;
  - A majority of grade 3-8 students meet or exceed growth expectations in math, as determined by Louisiana’s school-level value-added model, as measured by 2025 performance;
  - The school’s most recent graduating cohort’s ACT composite score average meets or exceeds the state average; or
  - The school’s high school progress index meets or exceeds the state average, as measured by 2025 performance.

**In addition, all high-quality charter schools must satisfy their enrollment requirements and may not have any outstanding notices of concern or breach issued by their authorizer.**

### **Federal Definition of Lottery**

A lottery is a random selection process by which applicants are admitted to the charter school. 20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)(H).

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<sup>17</sup> ESEA § 4310 (8) HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL.

<sup>18</sup> ESEA § 4310 (2) CHARTER SCHOOL.

### **Federal Definition: Educationally Disadvantaged**

Children who are economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, migrant children, English Learners, neglected or delinquent children, homeless children, or children in foster care.<sup>19</sup>

### **Federal Definition of Allowable Enrollment Preferences (Lottery Exemptions)**

- Students who are enrolled in a public school at the time it is converted into a public charter school;
- Students who are eligible to attend, and are living in the attendance area of, a public school at the time it is converted into a public charter school;
- Siblings of students already admitted to or attending the same charter school;
- Children of a charter school's founders, teachers, and staff (so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of the school's total enrollment);  
or
- Children of employees in a work-site charter school, so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of the school's total enrollment.

## **Additional Resources**

For additional information, please refer to the following

- [Fiscal Review Guidance](#) (LDOE),
- [LAUGH](#) (LDOE),
- [Non-Regulatory Guidance](#) (USDOE),
- [Part C - Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools](#) (USDOE).
- [Allowable Cost Guide](#)