

Iowa Charter Start Up and Expansion Grant Program

Grant Application 2024 Packet: Start Up and Expansion

Closing date: July 16, 2024 at 11:59pm



****Applications are open to any newly authorized or currently operating charter school. See applications for eligibility and requirement details. The grant application timeline is as follows:**

Grant Application Released: Start Up and Expansion. **June 3, 2024**

Application Due to DE: **July 16, 2024**

Application Review Completed by DE: **August 19, 2024**

Award funds available: **August 21, 2024**

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I. Grant Information

A. Overview

One of Governor Reynolds' education priorities is to increase access to high-quality public charter schools. Charter schools are tuition-free public schools that provide unique educational experiences. Charter schools are complementary and supportive of district public and nonpublic schools, providing additional choice for families and students. A focus on charter schools will increase access to educational options for more Iowans and better prepare students for their future. To bolster this effort Governor Reynolds announced \$7 million for the **Iowa Charter School Start Up and Expansion Grant Program** to support the expansion of high-performing existing, or the launch of newly authorized, charter schools.

The purpose of this grant is to assist Iowa's high performing, existing charter schools in the improvement or expansion of their offerings and to assist Iowa's newly authorized charter schools in their preparation for operation.

Funds for this one-year grant must be used for one-time costs and infrastructure needs. Funding amount and expenditure deadlines are in Table 1: Funds Available.

Table 1. Funds Available

Grant Type	Total Funds Available	Total Award Amount per applicant
Start Up	\$6,000,000	Up to \$500,000
Expansion	\$1,000,000	Up to \$200,000

Award year for these funds is 2024-2025

Access the [Charter School page on the IDE website](#) for general information about this opportunity, as well as access to common questions. For inquiries about the grant application, please contact Iowa's Charter School Team at charters@iowa.gov. *Charter Team:* Barbara Ohlund and Stacie Stokes.

B. Eligibility and Requirements

All Iowa charter schools currently in operation, or newly authorized, are eligible to apply for grant funds. Matching funds are not required.

Start Up funds are to support the readiness of newly authorized charter schools to open and prepare for operation. Funds must be used for one-time purchase or infrastructure needs as identified in the charter's established *Pre-Opening Checklist*. All 8 newly authorized charters that intend to open doors on or after August 2024 are eligible to apply for **Start Up** funds.

- Great Oaks High School and Career Center
- Empower Excellence Charter School
- CIVICA Cedar Rapids Elementary Charter School
- CIVICA Des Moines Elementary Charter School
- Quest Forward Charter School - Cedar Rapids
- Quest Forward Charter School - Des Moines
- Scholarship Prep - Des Moines K-5 Charter School
- Scholarship Prep - Des Moines 6-8 Charter School

Expansion funds are to expand the impact of existing high quality charter schools. Expansion means to broaden or improve existing programming, add new programs, increase enrollment in currently offered grade levels or add one or more grades to a *high-quality charter school*. To increase program access, a Charter school must submit a needs assessment that demonstrates demand for the proposed program. All 5 charter schools open before August 2024 are eligible to apply for **Expansion** funds

- Storm Lake Charter School
- West Central Charter School
- Horizon Charter School
- Choice Charter School
- Hamburg Charter School

Definitions

Charter School A charter school is defined as any Iowa State Board authorized charter. This includes charter schools authorized under [256F](#) and [256E](#), including both school board and founding group models.

Expansion Expansion means to broaden or improve existing programming, add new programs, increase enrollment in currently offered grade levels or add one or more grades to a *high-quality charter school*.

One-Time Costs Funds may be spent on one-time costs with the exception of leasing space. Specific fund categories are as follows:

1. **Equipment and Supplies** Acquiring supplies, equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials).
2. **Leasing/Purchasing Charter Space** Costs related to leasing or purchasing space for charter school operation.
3. **Transportation** Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school including purchasing a vehicle for student transportation.
4. **Infrastructure** Infrastructure that is not an improvement to leased real property, items that can be removed at the end of a lease without damage to the real property (e.g., removable fixtures, attachable ramp, modular walls) are permissible. In a public district charter wherein the district owns the charter school building, infrastructure investment is permissible.

Funds may not be used for:

- ***Professional Development***
- ***Salaries and benefits***
- ***Operational Costs***
- ***Any costs previously paid prior to the Grant Application release of June 3, 2024***
- ***Recurring costs of any kind***

Funding Restrictions

The funds for this award are provided by the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF), part of the American Rescue Plan. The spending window for funds begins on the release date of this grant (June 3, 2024) and must be spent in 2024-2025. Any award funds not obligated or expended within these timeframes must be returned to the State. Recipients of these funds will be held accountable to these funding timeframes.

Funds may not be accessed until an established grant agreement is on file at the Department. Funds must be used for expenses paid after the Grant Application release date of June 3. Funds may not be used for costs

previously paid prior to the Grant Application release of June 3, to offset operational costs of the school, professional development, faculty/staff salaries, or any recurring costs. Matching funds are not required, however it is required that applicants provide their current total charter school budget within their proposal for these funds, including operational costs and invested funds.

For the purposes of this grant opportunity, all funds must be expended in the 2024-2025 year. Charter schools receiving a grant under this program shall (a) follow all federal procurement requirements, (b) use funds for one-time or infrastructure costs as defined in this application, (c) if applying for **Start Up** funds, use funds to increase school readiness as reflected in the *Pre-Opening Checklist*, (d) if applying for **Expansion**, use funds related to broadening or improving existing programming, adding new programs, increasing enrollment in currently offered grade levels or adding one or more grades, and (e) **not** use funds to offset operational costs of the school, professional development, faculty/staff salaries, costs incurred prior to June 3, 2024, or any recurring costs. Further, the grant is implemented on a reimbursement basis, which requires claims to be submitted on either a monthly or quarterly basis to the Department. Once grant funds are awarded, information, training and support will be provided.

Reporting

Charter schools will provide a year-end report, as well as quarterly updates, to the Department documenting the amount of funds they have spent in each allowable category. Charter schools will account for grant expenditures on an ongoing basis, as the SLFRF-ARP funds allow the Secretary of Education to require additional reports from states on a more frequent basis at his discretion. In that case, the Department will ask charter schools to provide spending information more frequently. Grant funds are subject to all provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), as well as all federal laws, requirements and regulations for procurement procedures for acquiring property or services. Further, the following are required data points for reporting purposes to the federal government:

- **Start Up**: Percentage of grant awardees open to students on time (new charters)
- **Expansion**: Percentage of grant awardees to expand program offerings in charter schools

C. Application Submission Procedures

The Charter School Grant Program for **Start Up** and **Expansion** application is available on the IowaGrants.gov site on June 3, 2024. To access the application, go to [iowaGrants.gov](https://iowagrants.gov):

- Click on view current funding opportunities
- Find the **Iowa Charter Start Up and Expansion Grant** opportunity
- Click into the opportunity for posting information
- Start the application

To learn more about how to submit an application within IowaGrants, please access:

- IowaGrant instructions: <https://dom.iowa.gov/media/157/download?inline> (PDF)
- Video Briefs: <https://youtu.be/mK9haaQRd9E?list=PLsPlh8CWN5ur1ReGSVmSW5CfDs52amJp5> (Video playlists)

The deadline for submission is July 16, 2024 at 11:59pm.

Application Submission Checklist

Applications will be reviewed for completeness and to ensure all areas have been addressed. Complete every section, including the cover page and assurances:

- ☐ Cover Page
- ☐ Assurances
- ☐ A. Executive Summary/Purpose of Grant Fund Request
- ☐ B. Rationale and Needs Assessment
- ☐ C. Action/Management Plan
- ☐ D. Need and Engagement - Expansion only
- ☐ E. Budget/Budget Narrative

II. Section Overview

Table 2 below provides brief descriptions of each required section.

Table 2. Required Sections

Required Section	Description
Cover Page	Applicant type and contact information.
Assurances	Assurances. The assurance section will be at the very end of the application submission process in IowaGrants, following the <i>Minority Impact Statement (MIS)</i> . There are two questions within the MIS - select no for each.
A. Executive Summary/ Purpose Statement	Summary of the application across charter needs, proposed purpose, and activities.
B. Rationale and Needs Assessment	Description of: - Needs assessment; Start Up applications reference needs in <i>Pre-Opening Checklist</i>, program Expansion grants provide student course request survey results or other evidence of student need for the program (see Section E) - How activities/funds are directly related to the grant purpose.
C. Action or Management Plan	Description of: - Activities that are clearly described with defined responsibilities and timelines for each selected funding category. - How each activity described is: - Tied to the related allowable fund category; - Justified, necessary, or critical one-time costs, and related to the purpose of the grant; and - Unable to be met by other resources. - The process to procure and purchase services, including vetting processes and criteria to evaluate the quality of those services or potential services.

	*Applicants for Start Up funds must link activities to their established <i>Pre-Opening Checklist</i> .
D. Need and Engagement - Expansion only	Description of: • Evidence of student/family interest to expand enrollment or programs (e.g. survey results, event attendance numbers, student schedule request forms) ○ Inventory of student access to a wide variety of programming within a geographic area, ensuring that existing unfilled programs are not duplicated in charter schools, and demonstrating demand for new programming at the charter school. • Resident district/non-public engagement in determining need in the overall portfolio of school program offerings in the geographic area - specifically seeking input from the resident district superintendent, educators, staff, students or families of the resident district/non-public to assess programmatic need.
E. Budget and Budget Narrative	Provide an itemized budget for each funding category with clear justifications. In addition, it is required that applicants provide their current total charter school budget within their proposal for these funds, including operational costs and invested funds. *Applicants for Start Up funds must link the budget to their established <i>Pre-Opening Checklist</i>.

III. Grant Application Sections

Below provides the applicant the information required for each section as it appears in IowaGrants.gov. Feel free to use this section to draft the application prior to submission.

i. Cover Page

1. Select the fund type from the options below:

- ☐ Start Up
☐ Expansion

2. Select the charter school type from the options below:

- ☐ Charter school authorized under 256F
☐ Charter school authorized under 256E: Founding Group Model
☐ Charter school authorized under 256E: School Board Model

3. Provide the appropriate charter school contact information as indicated:

Resident District Name:

Charter School Name:

Governing Board President:
Governing Board President Email:
Governing Board President Number:
Charter School Director/Superintendent:
Charter School Director/Superintendent Email:
Charter School Director/Superintendent Phone:
School Business Officer Name:
School Business Officer Email:
School Business Officer Phone:
Grant Program Contact Name:
Grant Program Contact Email:
Grant Program Contact Phone:

ii. Assurances

Review all assurances carefully before answering. Each assurance must be answered in order for the application to be considered for review. Note that assurances are the final step in IowaGrants, coming after all other sections.

1. If awarded a grant under the Charter School Grant for either Start Up or Expansion, the charter will use funds only for activities allowable in the grant as outlined in Definitions: One-Time Costs.
☐ Yes
☐ No
2. The Charter will follow all federal laws, requirements and regulations for procurement procedures for acquiring property or services. (Note these must be consistent with state, local, and tribal laws and regulations, and conform to the procurement standards identified in §§ 200.317 through 200.327).
☐ Yes
☐ No
3. The Charter will cooperate with any examination of the grant records supported by SLFRF-ARP funds (including financial records related to use of grant funds) by making both records available for inspection, production, and examination; and authorized individuals available for interview and examination. Records will be retained separately from other grant funds.
☐ Yes
☐ No
4. The Charter will not use funds with respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the SEA will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 CFR Part 82, Appendix B).
☐ Yes
☐ No

5. The Charter will comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) requirements in Subpart D—Post Federal Award Requirements (2 CFR §§200.300-345) and Subpart E—Cost Principles (2 CFR §§200.400-475) to ensure that the Charter is using SLFRF-ARP funds for purposes that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable under the ARP.
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
6. The Charter will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B and D (Assurances for Non-Construction and Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders, and regulations.
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Payment Provisions

1. Payments will be made on a monthly or quarterly basis based on claims submitted and approved. All payments are contingent on available grant funding and the timely submission of claims by the awarded grantee.
2. It is understood that this program is funded on a cost-reimbursement basis for actual costs during the period of performance for allowable and documented expenses under the grant agreement.
3. Any funds not expended by the end of the grant period must revert back to the state. A warrant for the reversion amount must accompany the year-end report to the Department of Education.
4. Quarterly reports from the project are due to the Department of Education by October 15, January 15, April 15 and July 15, until the end of the grant period. Failure to submit reports by the due date shall result in suspension of financial payments until the time that the report is received.

A. Executive Summary/Purpose of Grant Fund Request

Provide a brief and concise summary of:

- Charter needs (Summary of **B. Rationale and Needs Assessment**)
- Proposal purpose and proposed activities (Summary of **C. Action or Management Plan** and **D. Need and Engagement-Expansion only**)
- Description of how activities/funds are directly related to the grant purpose.
 - **Start Up** funds are to support the readiness of newly authorized charter schools to open and prepare for operation. Funds must be used for one-time purchase or infrastructure needs as identified in the charter's established *Pre-Opening Checklist*.
 - **Expansion** funds are to expand the impact of existing high quality charter schools. Expansion means to broaden or improve existing programming, add new programs, increase enrollment in currently offered grade levels or add one or more grades to a *high-quality charter school*.

1500 characters

B. Rationale and Needs Assessment

Describe in detail the identified needs of the charter based on an assessment that demonstrates a need for additional funds:

- **Start Up** applicants, the application must demonstrate a need for additional funding to increase charter readiness to open for student enrollment as reflected in the *Pre-Opening Checklist*.
- **Expansion** applicants, describe:
 - Needs assessment completed, including how needs were identified
 - Needs assessment results that indicate clearly what needs the charter proposal will address with the grant funds.

1500 Characters

C. Action/Management Plan

Below provides the four areas for action planning within funding categories:

- Equipment and Supplies
- Leasing/Purchasing Charter Space
- Transportation
- Infrastructure

For each allowable fund category selected, provide a detailed project management plan in the space provided that includes a description of:

- a. Activities that are clearly described with defined responsibilities, and timelines for each selected funding category.
 - b. How the activities described are:
 - i. Tied to the related allowable fund category;
 - ii. Justified, necessary, or critical one-time costs, and related to the purpose of the grant; and
 - iii. Unable to be met by other resources.
 - c. The process to procure and purchase services, including vetting processes and criteria to evaluate the quality of those services or potential services. A reminder that it is required applicants follow all federal laws, requirements and regulations for procurement procedures for acquiring property or services. (Note these must be consistent with state, local, and tribal laws and regulations, and conform to the procurement standards identified in §§ 200.317 through 200.327).
-
1. Equipment and Supplies. If funds are used in this area, address items **a-c** above for the one-time equipment and supplies costs. If educational materials are being developed, describe how the materials will be developed and the process to develop them (action items - who is responsible, what is being developed, how, when), and how the materials will be evaluated for efficacy. **For **Start Up** funds, indicate which Pre-Opening Checklist item is supported by the use of funds within this funding category.*

1500 Characters

2. Leasing/Purchasing Charter Space If funds are used in this area, describe in detail all the necessary costs related to leasing or purchasing space for charter school operation, and address items a-c above. **For **Start Up** funds, indicate which Pre-Opening Checklist item is supported by the use of funds within this funding category.*

1500 Characters

3. Transportation. If funds are used in this area, address items a-c above for the one-time transportation costs. **For **Start Up** funds, indicate which Pre-Opening Checklist item is supported by the use of funds within this funding category.*

1500 Characters

4. Infrastructure. If funds are used in this area, describe in detail all necessary infrastructure costs proposed, and address items a-c above. For founding group model charter schools, other required information includes a description of how the items specific to infrastructure costs are removable at the end of a lease without damage to the real property. **For **Start Up** funds, indicate which Pre-Opening Checklist item is supported by the use of funds within this funding category.*

1500 Characters

D. Needs and Engagement - Expansion only

Provide a description of how the charter has documentation of:

- Student/Workforce Expressed Need: Evidence of student/family interest to expand enrollment or programs (e.g. survey results, event attendance numbers, student schedule request forms)
 - Inventory of student access to a wide variety of programming within a geographic area, ensuring that existing unfilled programs are not duplicated in charter schools, and demonstrating demand for new programming at the charter school. and
- Resident District/non public Engagement: Demonstrated resident district/non-public engagement in determining need in the overall portfolio of school program offerings in the geographic area - specifically seeking input from the resident district superintendent, educators, staff, students or families of the LEA/non-public to assess programmatic

2500 Characters

Upload required evidence as indicated:

- ☐ Documentation of Student/Workforce Expressed Need
- ☐ Documentation of Resident District/non public Engagement

E. Budget Form and Narrative

Upload your 2024-2025 charter operating budget spreadsheet. For charter schools opening in August 2025, attach the current readiness budget that will allow you to open for operation in 2025-2026. Please access the [Budget Template](#) for an example.

☐ 2024-2025 Budget

Indicate the total award amount you are requesting: _____

Complete the budget form below for each allowable fund category selected in **D. Action/Management Plan**.

Allowable Budget Categories	Requested Fund Amount	Itemized Expenditures
1. <u>Equipment and Supplies.</u> Acquiring supplies, equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials).	\$0	List of specific itemized expenditures
2. <u>Leasing/Purchasing Charter Space.</u> Costs related to leasing or purchasing space for charter school operation.	\$0	List of specific itemized expenditures
3. <u>Transportation.</u> Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school including purchasing a vehicle for student transportation.	\$0	List of specific itemized expenditures
4. <u>Infrastructure.</u> Infrastructure that is not an improvement to leased real property, items that can be removed at the end of a lease without damage to the real property (e.g., removable fixtures, attachable ramp, modular walls) are permissible. In a public district charter wherein the district owns the charter school building, infrastructure investment is permissible.	\$0	List of specific itemized expenditures
Total Project Amount	\$0	

Expenditure Description/ Justification

Provide a budget narrative justification for how the itemized budget will be expended.

Equipment and Supplies. Acquiring supplies, equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials).

500 Characters

Leasing/Purchasing Charter Space. Costs related to leasing or purchasing space for charter school operation.

500 Characters

Transportation. Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school including purchasing a vehicle for student transportation.

500 Characters

Infrastructure. Infrastructure that is not an improvement to leased real property, items that can be removed at the end of a lease without damage to the real property (e.g., removable fixtures, attachable ramp, modular walls) are permissible. In a public district charter wherein the district owns the charter school building, infrastructure investment is permissible.

500 Characters