



Frequently Asked Questions

[Eligibility](#)

[Application Requirements](#)

[Allowable Costs](#)

[Budget](#)

[General](#)

[MSDE-Continuation Applicants](#)

Eligibility

If our school is going through renewal currently, would it exclude us from applying?

For existing charter schools, to be eligible a school would need to have successfully gone through at least one renewal. If this is your first renewal, and you will not have your results before June 10th, or you would need to wait until the next subgrant cycle to apply.

If our prospectus was approved, are we eligible to apply for this subgrant, and what year do we plan to open?

We would need more details on this, depending on the authorizer timeline.

What does "charter application is pending" mean under the Eligible Applicant section?

The applicant has submitted an application or prospectus to operate, expand, replicate a charter school to a local board of education and the charter application is pending. Each board has 120 days to review charter applications.

Is the UEI number the same as EIN?

No. EIN is related to nonprofit status. The EIN is part of the requirements to obtain a UEI from [Sam.gov](https://sam.gov).

If you get a start-up subgrant for a new charter, can you apply later again when you expand to PreK, for instance?

It depends. Most likely not, primarily due to timing. If you are approved in this grant round, remember that our grant is only for five years. In order for you to apply for a second subgrant, five years has to have passed, and the school must also meet the high-quality criteria of at least three years of academic growth.

If our original application was not accepted because of the deadline can we consider it submitted?

No, you would not be able to consider it as submitted.

Do we have to agree to every clause in the federal definition of a charter school?

Yes. This is required of all applicants and subgrantees for the duration of the project.

Should we select Title funding options even if the LEA decides how to use the funding?

Yes, please indicate the applicable options for our records.

Do Title funds that the LEA retains but we “benefit” from count towards the federal audit threshold?

No.

Application Requirements

Where can we find the requirements for the community needs assessment?

Please review application section 14 of the RFA and rubric.

What types of specifics do you need in a Community Needs Analysis?

Please review application section 14 of the RFA and rubric. That will be customized for your plan.

Do you know if the community needs analysis is based on the school’s location? If so, do we base the community needs analysis on the buildings considered within that community?

This is up to the applicant. You can make it as narrow or as broad as you would like. The idea is that you would be engaging in a community who wants your school and show that there is a need for your school.

Do you have advice on how to enter goals, objectives, and metrics into the portal?

The portal allows up to 5 goal sections (3 are required). We suggest entering each goal with supporting objectives and metrics into its own section. If you have 4 goals, then complete 4 sections in the portal.

Please clarify the difference between Attachments 4 and 5

Use attachment #4 for paid positions / staff. Attach resumes for key staff (Principal, Executive Director, etc.) or job descriptions for key unfilled positions. Use attachment #5 for board members. Please include affiliations on the board list, along with bios or resumes.

Allowable Costs

Are portable classrooms considered a capital improvement?

We need to look into this. It may also depend on whether you are in the planning or implementation period.

Can you define high quality teacher training? Does it include curriculum specific training for implementation of approved curriculum?

If this is related to allowable expenses and professional development for teachers. It may include curriculum-specific training, and professional development.

The Principal Pipeline office and DEI office of the district do not support charters because they have traditional \$'s. Can subgrant funding be used to fund support through this office specifically for charters to support their Principals and DEI PD's?

The rule is that the federal funding has to supplement and not supplant. This is seed money for expansion, not funding for existing schools to supplement funding shortages, unfortunately.

Could you re-explain the possibility of paying the Executive Director during the Implementation Period?

A pro-rated reimbursement may be possible based on partial versus full capacity enrollment. It would not be allowable to pay for teachers or principals during the Implementation period.

Can we pay for a consultant to do curriculum?

Yes.

Can you pay a contractor / consultant for a position that you are planning 4-5 years later?

No. This is a reimbursement grant, and services need to be incurred during the time of the approved grant period.

Is there any prefunding mechanism for new schools?

There is no prefunding mechanism.

When can we purchase a van / bus for student transportation?

This may be purchased during the Planning / Pre-Opening period only.

Are we able to include the cost of a federal audit in our budget?

Yes, the cost of the first year audit are allowable during the implementation phase. This is a one-time reimbursement expense.

What is the threshold for a federal audit?

It is still \$750k for this fiscal year (through 6/30/24). The new audit threshold will be \$1M effective after July 1, 2024. The threshold is based on how much is spent during a fiscal year.

Budget

Should we make the numbers you gave our maximum budget total for each FY? Or is there a possibility of getting more up front, so we should go over on that number in case more funds are available? And if there are not enough funds to cover a cost in one FY, can that budget item rollover to the next FY?

Per the RFA “MMP estimates the spend down of the sungrants will be according to the timelines laid out in Table 1: Applicants have the flexibility to request different funding amounts in Years 1, 2 or 3.”

Do you want the budget we submitted for Charter Application or revised up-to-date budget?

The pro-forma budget that you submitted to the authorizer with your application is fine to attach as your pro forma budget.

Can you carry over unused funds from planning to implementation for instance?

Successful applicants will be issued a letter of commitment that obligates a 3 year subgrant. There is not a separate grant for planning and implementation. Carryover and budget amendments will be handled through the budget amendment process.

Do we submit the original 5-year budget that we submitted to the authorizer, or an updated version if we have one?

Yes, applicants may submit an updated pro forma 5 year budget.

How far back can we include expenses for our grant budget?

Per our RFA under pre-award costs, the earliest eligible expenses can go back to June 10, the submission date of the subgrant application. Costs must be incurred by June 10.

Are we required to submit a budget to match RFA Table 1: Potential Size and Structure of Subgrants?

No. Applicants may submit a budget that fits their needs. At the initial subgrantee budget meeting, there will be an opportunity to update the budget based on the available award amount at that time.

Should the 5-year budget include CSP funds?

Yes, it should include CSP revenue and expenses.

Where do we find the RFA number that is requested on the budget form?

Please enter "Spring, 2024" as your RFA number for now.

General

Is a match required?

No, but additional unrestricted grants would be helpful for cash flow. This is a reimbursement subgrant.

What types of subgrants and amounts are offered for this fiscal year?

For the Spring, 2024 subgrant cycle, two subgrants for Pre-K expansion up to \$500,000, and one subgrant for new/replication/conversion up to \$2,000,000.

What types of subgrants and amounts will be offered for new charters in FY25?

In Federal FY25 (10/1/24 - 9/30/25) we plan to offer 2 new/replication/conversion subgrants up to \$2,000,000 each, 2 expansion subgrants (30% or more increase in enrollment or addition of 1 or more grades) up to \$1,500,000, and 1 Pre-K only expansion up to \$500,000.

If you are starting the process for a conversion charter, but it won't happen until the 25-26 school year, should we wait to apply?

The answer may depend on where you are in the approval process with the authorizer. For an August Fall 2025 start date, that would be 13 months of Planning and up to 23 months of Implementation. Consider the 18-month maximum subgrant term for planning / pre-opening, and plan accordingly.

If not awarded a subgrant during this cycle, can you reapply?

Yes! You may reapply.

Are there any subgrants available to assist with completing the application?

No.

Once the applications are peer-reviewed, what are the next steps?

MAPCS will schedule capacity interviews with applicants.

Do you recommend answering questions in a google doc and then uploading on the site or typing responses right into the application?

We recommend that you create a document so that you can check the word counts/page counts and then cut and paste into the application by individual sections.

What do you consider a high need LEA? A district without charter schools? Or struggling district?

A district that is identified by the Maryland Department of Education as having more than 10% of their students in Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools under ESSA is considered for Federal CSP grant purposes to be Baltimore City, Prince George's County and Baltimore County.

How do I prove that our school is located in a rural area?

Use this Local Lookup Tool: To determine a "Rural community," for the purposes of the Federal CSP Grant application, is a community served by one or more local educational agencies (LEAs) (a) with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43; or (b) that include a majority of schools with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43. Applicants are encouraged to retrieve locale codes using this [tool](#).

Will the application portal allow tables and/or links or is it text only?

The application narrative is text only. If you wish to include tables and charts, please reference them by name, and include the tables and charts as an upload for Attachment 17.

Is there a preference for leadership being employees vs contractors during the Planning period?

Usually contractors would be for a set period or set project and employees would be those that you plan to employ after the planning period. However, this is not a cut and dry answer so you should consider reaching out to csfinance@mdcharters.org before you submit your budget.

Do contractors have to track time in the same way as employees?

No. Contractors will require documentation such as contract, invoice, scope of work, and the school would need to follow the procurement requirements for the organization.

Is there a recommended web browser for the online application portal?

Yes, Google Chrome is preferred, then Mozilla Firefox.

MSDE-Continuation Applicants

For those who previously received a subgrant and are entering into the 2nd year of implementation, are we eligible to apply for the current subgrant?

For those who were continuation subgrants from MSDE. The answer is no, not yet. We will notify you when USED is ready.

Will the rollover funds from the previous subgrant cycle be available to obligate as of 7/1/2024 or 10/1/2023?

We are waiting for confirmation from USED and will notify you upon receipt.