

GC23-016: Charter School Expansion Grants Questions and Answers Summary

General

1. Should the overall ask amount be relative to the number of expanded seats the school intends to provide?

Please see the "Need for Grant Program" portion of the Proposal Narrative section of the RFP and the Budget Narrative section of the RFP. The Proposal and Budget Narratives may include the number of expanded seats the school intends to provide.

2. What will be required in the reporting to demonstrate the enrollment of new students/seats?

Annual reporting to NYSED's Basic Education Reporting System (BEDS) will suffice as documentation of the addition to a grantee's enrollment/grade span.

3. [Charter school] applied for this grant opportunity in June of 2021. I am new to the position of Director of Development for the organization and cannot find a review of the scoring from that application in the files. Is it possible for me to obtain that at this time?

No. In this case, the application to participate in the previous round of NYSED CSP expansion grants was received after the due date. Therefore, the application was not reviewed or scored.

Eligibility

4. I am the grants manager for [charter school]. Can you tell me if they are eligible to apply for this grant?

To determine if your entity is eligible, please see the Eligibility section on pages 3-4 of the RFP.

5. We recently applied for and were approved for an enrollment expansion (by our authorizer the NYC DOE and then approved by the Board of Regents in April 2023), increasing our enrollment from 676 to 745. Could this grant potentially apply for those additional scholars we have added in grades K-12 at [charter school]?

Yes. A goal of NYSED's CSP expansion grant program is to increase the number of seats in existing charter schools in New York State. Therefore, an authorizer-approved addition of grade levels or an authorizer-approved increase in enrollment would apply.

6. I work at [Charter School], catering to 6th-12th graders. Regarding the grant, would it cover adding grades K-5?

Yes. A goal of NYSED's CSP expansion grant program is to increase the number of seats in existing charter schools in New York State. Therefore, an authorizer-approved addition of grade levels or an authorizer-approved increase in enrollment would apply.

7. [Charter School] (DOE Authorized) has had our charter renewed many times, and in 2020, our second school opened (NYS authorized). Our second school was approved to expand to open a high school this Fall, adding 108 new seats to our school. Are there any exceptions to the charter renewal eligibility clause, given [charter schools]'s unique status as a replication school whose first school charter has been renewed consistently? Our second school's charter will be up for renewal next year.

No. The charter school must have had its charter renewed by the school's charter authorizer at least once. Please see the Eligibility section on pages 3-4 of the RFP.

8. I wanted to inquire if [charter school] is eligible to submit a grant application for this RFP OR if this is exclusively open to charter school **corporations** only and how that is defined by your office.

A charter school education corporation is a legal entity that operates one or more charter schools. As the legal entity, the education corporation will apply on behalf of one of the charter schools it operates that it has determined is eligible for this funding opportunity. Please see the Eligibility section on pages 3-4 of the RFP.

9. We have two schools which have merged and have one EIN number. Our Staten Island school is a CSP recipient, in its third year of the grant and according to the eligibility requirements we are ineligible to apply for this grant. Our question is - is our Park Slope school eligible to apply?

*Section 4303(e)(2) of Title IV, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, states that "[a]n eligible applicant may not receive more than 1 subgrant under this section for each **individual** [emphasis added] charter school for a 5-year period . . ." If the education corporation determines that the second individual charter school referenced above is otherwise eligible for this opportunity, then it may apply on behalf of that charter school. Please see the Eligibility section on pages 3-4 of the RFP.*

10. I was hoping you could give some insight as to the eligibility of schools for the charter school expansion grant who were "awarded" CSP funding over five years

ago but had received grant funding for CSP in the FY2018-2019 school year. Would a school with this profile still be eligible for the expansion grant?

Yes. NYSED's interpretation of Section 4303(e)(2) is that, in the statute's language, "receive" is synonymous with "be awarded", not when the funds are disbursed.

11. I run two charter schools that are part of the same Education Corporation. I was wondering if we would be eligible to apply if we are replicating our model and opening a third school in a separate location? So our network (and Education Corporation) is adding seats to an existing successful model, but the seats won't be at one of our currently existing schools.

No. Because the third school in the separate location does not meet the eligibility requirement of having had its charter renewed at least once by its charter authorizer, it would not be eligible.

12. Reaching out on behalf of [charter school education corporation] with a question for the Charter School Expansion Grant. Are we able to apply for the grant as our larger entity, [charter school education corporation], or should we apply under one of our schools — ex. [one of the charter schools the education corporation operates].

The charter school education corporation must apply on behalf of the charter school it operates.

13. We are having some early conversations about adding a small and targeted Pre-K program to scholars at [charter school]. We do have outreach out to our authorizer to inquire about this in general as I do not believe there is an active RFP for Pre-K at this time, but we did want to see if this grant would potentially be applicable here.

No. Pre-K programs are operated by a number of charter schools separately from their charter-authorized charter school programs, with only the latter falling under the auspices of their charter authorizer. Technically, implementing a pre-K program does not increase the number of seats in existing, authorized charter schools.

Fiscal

14. If awarded, does the money have to be spent in the single year grant period by June 30, 2024? Or can you spend awarded funds over more than one year?

The funds must be encumbered within the grant period, which is October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024. Federal regulations permit grantees to make actual expenditures within an additional 90 days after the end of the grant period. For more information about encumbrance rules, please consult the [Fiscal Guidelines for Federal and State Funded Grants](#).

15. Charter School that is currently expanding K-6 school to K-12 and would like to provide a recreational area to the students at the new expansion site.

A revamp of our recreational area would be immensely beneficial to our students, especially for our student population that does not have these types of opportunities. Our students come from a crowded inner city and do not have these vast open areas. We currently have a huge open field and acres of woods beyond that. With the revamp of the current field, we would allow our students to explore different sports and recreational activities that they may need help accessing or affording. We would need to support this renovation by inputting a drainage system to ensure the field does not get too waterlogged as it currently does. An addition of a track around the current soccer field will broaden our student's horizons and provide a safe environment for them to grow in. The students will be able to hone their skills and potentially take those skills to higher education or a professional level. Our recreational area will also be a facet in our community. We are located in a central location of [city]. There are many community members in our area that would benefit from this area as well, that currently use it to play recreational sports on. It would also create job opportunities and exposure for our school. For this project, can charter schools use this fund to improve the recreational area? If so, what allowable improvements can we make within this project?

The parking lot has minor issues such as several potholes and severely damaged and deteriorated asphalt surfaces at the new expansion site. Because there is no water discharge the area needs drain system to address the problem before fixing the damage. For the above-mentioned project, can charter schools use this fund to repair the damages on the parking lots by addressing the issues?

Section 4303(e)(2) of Title IV, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, prohibits use of funds by grantees for construction. The federal definition of construction is "(A) the preparation of drawings and specifications for school facilities; (B) erecting, building, acquiring, altering, remodeling, repairing, or extending school facilities; (C) inspecting and supervising the construction of school facilities; and (D) debt service for such activities".

Minor remodeling, or maintenance and repair costs under section 200.452 of Uniform Guidance, is an allowable expense in CSP expansion grants. Minor remodeling would be costs incurred for repair or upkeep of buildings and equipment which neither add to the permanent value of the property nor appreciably prolong its intended life but keep it in an efficient operating condition. Costs incurred for improvements which add to the permanent value of the buildings and equipment or appreciably prolong their intended life would not be considered minor remodeling.

Please see the Allowable Expenditures and Funding Restrictions section on pages 4-5 of the RFP.

M/WBE

16. If the only things in the budget are in the categories of personnel, fringe, rent, utilities and indirect, does the organization still need to submit examples of good faith efforts for M/WBE since no vendors, suppliers, or subcontractors would be utilized to satisfy the grant project?

If the M/WBE Goal Calculation Worksheet shows a \$0 goal, then the Good Faith Efforts Form is not required.