

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

FY 25 Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act (SOAR) Third Party Charter Support Organizations

Request for Applications Release Date: Friday, June 14, 2024

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) will issue a Request for Applications (RFA) for Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act Third Party Charter Support Organizations grant funds. These SOAR Act funds are available to District of Columbia nonprofit charter support organizations. The purpose of the funds is to increase the achievement and academic growth of DC public charter school students and to enhance the organizational capacity of DC public charter local education agencies (LEAs) to operate as fiscally and operationally sound nonprofit organizations and schools.

Eligibility and Project Types: Eligible applicants are DC-based nonprofit charter school support organizations that have a demonstrated history of success working with DC charter schools on similar projects. Applicants must use funds to support projects designed to have a direct and rapid impact on academic achievement and outcomes for charter school students overall or specific subgroups. Applicants are required to submit a letter of recommendation from a DC public charter school with direct experience working with the organization, a letter of commitment from each of the two DC public charter schools that the organization intends to serve, as well as a list of all LEAs which the organization has provided education-based services.

OSSE will consider two types of projects for funding: “Direct Assistance” and “Indirect Assistance.” **Direct Assistance** projects must be research-based and designed to have a direct and rapid (within two years) impact on the academic achievement and outcomes for public charter school students; must be designed to improve student outcomes across multiple charter LEAs through direct service to students and/or direct professional development and support for teachers and instructional leaders; and must be tailored to meet the specific needs of each partner charter LEA. The project’s theory of action must be supported by LEA-specific data. **Indirect Assistance** projects must be designed to impact student outcomes at multiple charter LEAs indirectly by enhancing the organizational capacity of charter LEAs to operate as fiscally and operationally sound nonprofit organizations and schools; and may include projects that provide professional development for charter LEA leaders or board members in order to improve the charter school’s infrastructure or capacity related to the administration and use of student data, fiscal management, board governance, and overall school administration.

Applications will be scored on the following selection criteria: partner data, needs assessment, project description, theory of action, equitable access and participation, logic model and budget.

Length of Award: The total award period for the FY25 Third Party grant is three years from the grant award date.

Available Funding for the Award: At least \$2 million is available for awards through this RFA. OSSE will provide up to \$400,000 per “direct assistance” award and up to \$400,000 per “indirect assistance” award. Awards are limited to one per organization.

Grantees may charge allowable pre-award costs beginning on July 1, 2024. Pre-award costs are those incurred prior to the effective date of the grant award directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the award where such costs are reasonable and necessary for the efficient and timely performance of the scope of work. Grantees must identify pre-award costs in their budget, and if awarded, will receive written approval from OSSE on any pre-award costs included in the budget. Pre-award costs are a part of and not in addition to the total grant award. Costs incurred by an applicant before receiving an award are done so at the recipient’s risk. OSSE is not obligated to reimburse these costs if the applicant does not receive an award. OSSE must provide written approval for all pre-award costs.

Successful applicants may be eligible to receive up to the same amount of funding as their initial grant award for two additional fiscal years, subject to availability of continued funding and satisfactory completion of grant obligations.

Determinations regarding the number of competitive grant awards will be based on the quality and number of applications received and available funding. Successful applicants may be awarded amounts less than requested. Grant funds shall only be used to support activities authorized by the relevant statutes and included in the applicant’s submission.

Continuation of awards in future years is contingent upon: availability of funds; recipient’s implementation and/or operation of the program as submitted in the application; recipient’s demonstration that substantial progress has been made toward meeting the objectives set forth in the approved application, based on ongoing monitoring and review of the recipient’s reports; compliance with District and federal laws, regulations and guidance; and appropriate expenditure of funds throughout each grant award period.

Application Process: Applications must be submitted prior to 3 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 5, 2024. OSSE expects to make awards early October. Please allow additional time for any issues you may experience, as well as the consistency check to run, prior to submission.

A review panel or panels will be convened to review, score and rank each application for a competitive grant. The review panel(s) will be composed of external, neutral, qualified, professional individuals selected for their expertise, knowledge or related experiences. Each application will be scored against a rubric and applications will have multiple reviewers to ensure accurate scoring. Upon completion of its review, the panel(s) shall make recommendations for awards based on the scoring rubric(s). OSSE will make all final award decisions.

Pre-application webinars will be held on the following dates:

- Tuesday, June 25, 2024, from 10-11 a.m.
- Wednesday, June 26, 2024, from 1-2 p.m.

Webinar registration links will be included in the RFA. Interested organizations are encouraged to have at least one representative attend one of the above webinars. The organization representative should be someone who is familiar with the organization's past work with charter schools. Attendance is highly encouraged to help ensure applicants submit high quality applications.

To receive more information on this grant, please contact:

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The RFA for this competitive grant program will be available on OSSE's website at osse.dc.gov/service/scholarships-opportunity-and-results-soar-act-grant. All applications will be submitted through EGMS at grants.osse.dc.gov.