



FY 2009 Charter Schools Program Dissemination Grant Frequently Asked Questions

What are dissemination grants?

Dissemination grants are awarded to charter schools to support activities that help open new public schools (including public charter schools) or share the lessons learned by charter schools with other public schools. The following activities may qualify as dissemination activities: (a) assisting other individuals with the planning and start-up of one or more new public schools, including charter schools, that are independent of the assisting charter school and its developers and that agree to be held to at least as high a level of accountability as the assisting charter school; (b) developing partnerships with other public schools designed to improve student performance; (c) developing curriculum materials, assessments, and other materials that promote increased student achievement and are based on successful practices within the assisting charter school; and (d) conducting evaluations and developing materials that document the successful practices of the assisting charter school and that are designed to improve student performance in other schools.

Who is eligible to apply for a dissemination grant?

A charter school may apply for a dissemination grant, regardless of whether it has applied for or received a planning or implementation grant under the CSP, if the charter school has been in operation for at least three (3) consecutive years, has not received a dissemination grant before, and has demonstrated overall success, including the following: (a) substantial progress in improving student achievement; (b) high levels of parent satisfaction; and (c) the management and leadership necessary to overcome initial start-up problems and establish a thriving, financially viable charter school. For more information about dissemination grants, see section 5204(f)(6) of ESEA, 20 U.S.C. 7221c(f)(6).

What are some limitations on the use of dissemination funds?

Like all Federal grants, CSP dissemination grants must be used in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements. A charter school may not use dissemination grant funds, either directly or through a contractor, for marketing or recruitment activities designed to promote itself or the programs offered by it or by a contractor to parents or the community. In particular, grant funds may be used to develop materials documenting successful practices of the charter school for the educational purpose of assisting other public schools in improving student achievement, but not for the purpose of recruiting students or promoting the program of the school or its contractor. Any charter school receiving a dissemination grant should provide thorough and high-quality information that meets the needs of other schools trying to learn from the charter school's experience.

Can a charter school partner with another campus in the same local educational agency?

No, a partnership must be with a separate school outside of the charter local educational agency.

Can schools partner with a non-profit organization?

Charter schools can elect to work with other organizations, including non-profit organizations, for dissemination activities. However, the organization would act as a contractor, rather than a partner, since the school is the fiscal agent.

What is the benefit of applying for the dissemination grant?

The dissemination grant should be used to disseminate best practices, and charter schools that are successful in increasing student performance can use the dissemination grant to share and disseminate these achievements so that the charter school community and the District of Columbia Public Schools can learn from the charter school's successes.

Is there a limit to the number of partners that a charter school can have?

No, there is no limit. However, the grant will be awarded to only one school. That school can then create partnerships with other schools and organizations.

Do the partnership and activities need to be new or can it be an already existing partnership and activity?

The partnership and activities do not need to be new. However, the project should be enhanced by this grant, rather than the grant providing ongoing funding for an existing partnership, activity, or initiative.

How can funding be used for personnel? For example, can you hire someone new for the dissemination project?

Grant funds can be used for personnel. However, these funds can only be used for personnel working on this grant.

If the OSSE receives a new U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program grant, can schools extend the grant?

If the OSSE does receive a Charter Schools Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education, schools have the option of extending the grant. At that time, the school would need to provide a letter to the OSSE explaining the extension.

Does the school need to mention the schools it will partner with in the application?

A school does not need to state the schools that it will be partnering with. However, the school should explain what type of schools it will be working with.

Can a public charter school partner with private schools?

No, a public charter school may not partner with a private school.

Do schools need to have grant activities completed and funds obligated and/or expended by July 31st?

No, grant activities and funds need to be obligated by July 31, 2009. However, grantees will have until September 14, 2009 to complete activities and expend their awards. All

reimbursement requests need to be submitted to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education by September 29, 2009.