

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

RFA # GD0—SAIAQ—16

District of Columbia

Office of the State Superintendent of Education



FFY2015 SOAR Act Increasing Academic Quality Grants

Request For Application (RFA) Release Date

June 6, 2016

Intent to Apply Deadline (Mandatory)

June 17, 2016

Pre-Application Conferences (Mandatory)

June 13, 2016 or June 14, 2016

Application Submission Deadline

July 15, 2016

Table of Contents

Checklist for Application	3
1. General Information	4
1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 Purpose of Grant Funds	5
1.3 Source of Funding	6
1.4 Requirement of Funding	6
1.5 Funds Available and Funding Period	6
1.6 Eligibility	7
1.7 Permissible Use of Funds	7
2. Schedule	7
2.1 RFA Release	7
2.2 Pre-Application Conference	8
2.3 Intent to Apply	8
2.4 Contact Person(s)	8
2.5 Applications Due	8
2.6 Updates	9
2.7 Awards Announcement	9
3. Application	9
3.1 Application Content	9
4. Scoring	10
4.1 Review Panel	10
5. Award Administration	10
5.1 Decision and Notification of Awards	10
5.2 Monitoring	11
5.3 Corrective Action and Termination of Funding	11
5.4 Confidentiality	11
5.5 Terms and Conditions	11
5.6 Appearance of a Conflict of Interest	12
5.7 Assurances	13
Appendix A	16
Intent to Apply Form	16
Appendix B	17
Scoring Rubric	17

Checklist for Application
FFY2015 SOAR Act Increasing Academic Quality Grants

- The applicant submitted the Intent to Apply form **by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 17, 2016**. The Intent to Apply form can be found in Appendix A and on the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) website.
- The applicant attended one of the two **mandatory** pre-application webinars. Please see Section 2 in the Request for Application (RFA).
- The applicant completed all steps required by the RFA and submitted a complete application, through OSSE's Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS) that contains all the information and appendices requested. Please see Section 3 for an overview of the application components.

Please note: All required application elements must be submitted by entering information directly into the required sections in EGMS. Documents may be attached as appendices or supplemental materials only.

- The application adheres to the directions and criteria of each section of this RFA.
- The application was submitted **by 4 p.m. on Friday, July 15, 2016**, through EGMS.

PLEASE NOTE

Applications are due by 4 p.m. on Friday, July 15, 2016.

Applications submitted at or after 4:01 p.m. EST on Friday, July 15, 2016, will not be reviewed.

All applications must be submitted through the Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS). For more information about EGMS, please visit

<http://osse.dc.gov/service/enterprise-grants-management-system-egms>

Please avoid last minute technical submission issues by submitting early. OSSE strongly recommends submitting your application by 3 p.m. to ensure a smooth submission.

Request for Applications
RFA # GDO-SAIAQ-16

Section 1: General Information

1.1 Introduction

Overview of the SOAR Act

The Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act, Pub. L. 112-10, 125 Stat. 199, is a federal law that authorizes funding for District of Columbia (DC) public charter schools “to improve and expand quality public charter schools in the District of Columbia.” §3004(b)(2). Each year, OSSE’s Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support (OPCSFS) submits an application to the US Department of Education (USED) describing how it will administer the funds. Evidence of public consultation is a required component of the application process and OPCFS sought stakeholder feedback during the summer of 2015 prior to submitting the FFY2015 application to USED on September 1, 2015. USED approved the application and issued a Grant Award Notice (GAN) to OSSE on May 5, 2016.

Charter Sector SOAR Funding

Through the approved application and grant award, OSSE provides SOAR funding to public charter schools through five grant programs. The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the following grant programs was published in the D.C. Register on Friday, May 20, 2016:

Project Name	Budget (Approx.)	Type of Grant
1. Academic Quality Grants	\$6,200,000.00	Competitive
2. Grants to Support Early Childhood Education	\$603,314.34	Formula
3. Quality Grants to Third Party/Charter Support Organizations	\$2,500,000.00	Competitive
4. Grants for Public Facilities	\$4,086,685.66	Competitive
5. Grants for Replication & Growth	\$700,000.00	Competitive

1.2 Purpose of Funds

OSSE's administration of SOAR Act funding is designed to increase student achievement and academic growth of DC public charter school students by supporting the creation and expansion of high-quality public charter schools. In order to accomplish this goal, OSSE established two impact areas for this grant cycle, in consultation with stakeholders:

- Innovative funding to improve school performance and educational outcomes; and
- Effective facility funding to increase the number of high-quality public charter school seats.

Through this RFA, OPCSFS is soliciting proposals from District of Columbia public charter schools for the following grant program:

- **Increasing Academic Quality Grants**
 - Funds awarded through this competition will support research-based plans that have a direct and rapid impact on the academic achievement and outcomes for public charter school students.
 - Proposed projects must be tailored to meet the specific needs of each charter LEA and the proposed theory of action must be supported by data.
 - Proposals must also align with the needs identified in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver as applicable and the IDEA State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).
 - All charter schools currently serving students, including early childhood and adult education charter schools, are eligible to submit project proposals for this grant program.
 - Priority points may be awarded to project proposals that focus on improving achievement and graduation rates for English language learners, economically-disadvantaged students, and/or students with disabilities; proposals that incorporate robust STEM programming; and proposals seeking to reduce achievement and equity gaps between subgroups of students.

- Additional funding may be made available to charter LEAs who are willing to serve as demonstration sites for staff from other LEAs or who are willing to partner with lower-performing LEAs to provide targeted best practice dissemination assistance.

1.3 Source of Funding

The United States Department of Education, through the DC School Choice Incentive Program, 84.370C, Public Law 108-199, III, DC School Incentive Act of 2003; Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act, effective April 15, 2011 (Pub. L. 112-10; 125 Stat. 201). Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN) U370C150002.

1.4 Requirements of Funding

In addition to the requirements of this RFA, the assurances made in the submitted application, and the terms of the Grant Award Notice (GAN) issued by OSSE to the subgrantee, a key condition for receiving these funds is compliance with activities necessary to carry out a mandated evaluation of the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), as specified in Section 3011(a)(1) of the SOAR Act. Pursuant to this section, the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is required to evaluate annually the performance of students who applied to the OSP (Sec. 3009). Because some OSP applicants will be enrolled in public charter schools, it will be necessary for IES and its evaluation contractor to collect data on and from public charter school campuses each school year during the applicable grant period. Please be advised that noncompliance of the charter school with the terms and conditions stated in the SOAR Act GAN may result in the withholding of SOAR Act funds administered by OSSE.

1.5 Funds Available and Funding Period

At least \$6,200,000.00 is available for awards through this RFA. OSSE will provide up to \$500,000 per award. Awards are limited to one per charter LEA. The duration of the Increasing Academic Quality grant is for a period of two years from the grant award date.

1.6 Eligibility

All DC Public Charter Schools currently serving students, including early childhood and adult education charter LEAs, are eligible to submit project proposals for this grant program.

1.7 Permissible Use of Funds

The funds associated with this RFA are available strictly on a reimbursement basis and may only be used for allowable grant project expenditures during the grant period as follows:

- All costs must:
 - Meet requirements of permissible use of Federal Funds within EDGAR 34 CFR Part 75, Part 76, 2 CFR Part 200 and any applicable OMB Circulars;
 - Support projects that address needs identified within the needs assessment conducted;
 - Support projects that are linked to evidence-based research and have been shown to increase academic achievement; and
 - Support projects that apply promising practices to increase academic achievement.

All grant project budgets will be reviewed by a review panel, as well as OPCSFS staff, to ensure that planned expenditures are allowable and are appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to support the grant objectives. Additional guidance about standards for determining costs for federal grants is available from The Federal Register at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards>

Section 2: Schedule

2.1 RFA Release

The release date of the RFA is June 6, 2016. The RFA is available online at www.osse.dc.gov.

2.2 Pre-Application Conference

The mandatory pre-application webinars will be held on the following dates and times:

- Increasing Academic Quality Grants – Monday, June 13, 2016, from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Increasing Academic Quality Grants – Tuesday, June 14, 2016, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Each interested charter local educational agency (LEA) must have at least one representative attend one of the above webinars in order to meet the attendance requirement for this grant. This representative should be someone who is employed directly by the charter LEA. Each attendee may only represent one charter LEA.

2.3 Intent to Apply

All eligible charter LEAs seeking to receive funding under this RFA must submit their Intent to Apply notification form (please see appendix A), signed by an authorized official of the LEA, via email to opcsfs.funding@dc.gov **by 5 p.m. on June 17, 2016.**

Failure to submit the Intent to Apply notification will result in disqualification of the Applicant prior to review.

2.4 Contact Person(s)

Applicants are advised that the following OSSE staff member is the authorized contact person for this grant competition:

- Ronda Kardash, Program Analyst, Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support, Ronda.Kardash@dc.gov.

2.5 Applications Due

Applications are due July 15, 2016 by 4 p.m. and must be submitted through EGMS.

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications early to avoid any technical difficulties. OPCSFS strongly encourages applicants to submit by 3 p.m. to ensure a smooth submission.

2.6 Updates

Information and updates regarding the grant competitions will be emailed to all potential applicants that submit an Intent to Apply form and attend the mandatory pre-application conference webinar specific to this grant.

2.7 Awards Announcement

Awards will be announced via EGMS, email, and on the OSSE website by **August 12, 2016**. OSSE will disseminate grant award notifications following the awards announcement.

Section 3: Application

3.1 Application Content

The application in EGMS contains all of the following sections or "tabs." Unless noted, each section must be completed as instructed in the system:

- Section 1 – Overview Pages (*informational; nothing to complete*)
 - General Information (*informational; nothing to complete*)
 - Schedule (*informational; nothing to complete*)
 - Scoring Rubric (*informational; nothing to complete*)
- Section 2 – Contact Information
- Section 3 – Information
- Section 4 – Needs Assessment and Narrative
 - Data
 - Project Need
 - Project Description
 - Theory of Action
 - Logic Model
- Section 5 – Detailed Planning Expenditures
 - Budget Overview (*informational; nothing to complete*)
 - Summary of Planned Expenditures
 - Salaries and Benefits
 - Professional Services

- Equipment
- Supplies and Materials
- Other Objects
- Budget Summary
- Section 6 – Supporting Documentation
- Section 7 – Assurances
- Section 8 – Submit (*application is not complete until it is submitted through this tab*)
- Section 9 – Application Print (*hard copies of applications may be printed through this tab*)
- Section 10 – Application History (*the history of who has accessed and modified the application may be viewed through this tab*)

Section 4: Scoring

4.1 Review Panel

The grants described in this RFA will be awarded competitively. A panel of external reviewers will be convened to review, score, and rank each application. The review panel will be composed of neutral, qualified, professional individuals selected for their expertise, knowledge, or related experiences. The application will be scored against a rubric and each application will have multiple reviewers to ensure accurate scoring. The complete rubric can be found in EGMS for review and as appendix B of this RFA. Upon completion of the panel's review, the panel(s) shall make recommendations for awards based on the scoring rubric(s). The State Superintendent of Education, or her designee, will make all final award decisions.

Section 5: Award Administration

5.1 Decision and Notifications of Awards

OSSE will notify all applicants of the final award decision no later than August 12, 2016. Each awarded applicant will receive a Grant Award Notice (GAN) generated through EGMS that will include the award amount, award agreement, terms and conditions of the award, and any supplemental information required.

5.2 Monitoring

All awards will be reviewed during the grant period for compliance with programmatic and fiscal requirements.

5.3 Corrective Action and Termination of Funding

In the event that programmatic, financial, or documentation conditions of the grant are not being met in an appropriate and timely fashion, progressive actions will be taken, at the discretion of OSSE, up to and including the termination of funding and requiring the return of funds. A project which is terminated will be subject to the same requirements regarding audit, recordkeeping, and submission of reports as a project which runs for the duration of the project period.

5.4 Confidentiality

Except as otherwise provided by local or federal law, no recipient of the grant shall use or reveal any research, statistical information, or personally identifiable information furnished by OSSE for any person or for any purpose other than that for which such information was obtained in accordance with the OSSE program funded. Any identifiable personal information, and any copy of such information, shall be immune from legal process and shall not, without the written consent of the person identified in the information, be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any action, suit, or judicial, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Any grantee agrees to comply with all requirements surrounding identifiable information under FERPA. (34 CFR § 99.1 et seq.)

5.5 Terms and Conditions

- Funding for this award is contingent on available funds. The RFA does not commit OSSE to make an award.
- OSSE reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if OSSE determines it is in the best interest of OSSE to do so. OSSE shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. OSSE may suspend or terminate

an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable federal or local regulation or requirement.

- OSSE reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the RFA, or to rescind the RFA.
- OSSE shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the RFA. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- OSSE may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services intended.
- OSSE may enter into negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations.
- OSSE shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant or sub grant; all applicable federal and District regulations; payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by OSSE; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee.
- If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the RFA and any applicable federal or local law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

5.6 Appearance of a Conflict of Interest

All grant recipients shall ensure that no individual in a decision-making capacity will engage in any activity, including participation in the selection of a vendor, the administration of an award, or an activity supported by award funds, if the appearance of a conflict of interest would be involved. An appearance of a conflict of interest would arise when the individual, any member of the individual's immediate family, the individual's partner; or an organization that employs, or is about to employ, any of the

aforementioned, has a financial or personal interest in the firm or organization selected for a contract.

5.7 Assurances

Program Specific Assurances

Applicants will be required to attest to the following program specific assurances:

1. We are able to maintain adequate files and records and can and will meet all grant reporting requirements;
2. Our fiscal records are kept in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and account for all funds, tangible assets, revenue, and expenditures whatsoever; that all fiscal records are accurate, complete and current at all times; and we give the sponsoring agency through any authorized representative, the right to audit and inspect all records, books, papers, or documents related to the grant;
3. We are current on payment on all federal and District taxes, including Unemployment Insurance taxes and Workers' Compensating premiums. (Except for public or charter schools, this statement of certification shall be accompanied by a Certificate of Good standing from the District of Columbia Office of Tax & Revenue (OTR) stating that the entity has complied with the filing requirements of District of Columbia tax laws and has paid taxes due to the District of Columbia, or is in compliance with any payment agreement with OTR);
4. We have demonstrated administrative and financial capability to provide and manage the proposed services and ensure an adequate administrative performance and audit trail;
5. If required by the grant making Agency, we are able to secure a matching amount not less than the total amount of the funds awarded, against losses of money and other property caused by fraudulent or dishonest acts committed by any employee, board member, officer, partner, shareholder, or trainee;
6. We are not proposed for debarment or presently debarred, suspended, or declared ineligible, as required by Executive Order 12549, "Debarment and

Suspension,' and implemented by 2 CFR 180, for prospective participants in primary covered transactions and are not proposed for debarment of presently debarred as a result of any actions by the District of Columbia Contract Appeals Board, the Office of Contracting and Procurement, or any other District contract regulating Agency;

7. We have the financial resources and technical expertise necessary to perform the grant or sub grant, or the ability to obtain them;
8. We will insure that the facilities under our school or organization's ownership, lease or supervision, which shall be utilized in the accomplishment of the project are compliant with all District statutes, codes, and regulations; and
9. We will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that is or gives the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, particularly with whom they have family, business, or other ties.

Acknowledgement Assurances

Applicants will be required to acknowledge compliance with the following District and Federal statutes and regulations, as applicable:

1. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-336, July 26, 1990, 104 Stat. 327 (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.)
2. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. 93-112, Sept. 26, 1973, 87 Stat. 355 (29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.)
3. The Hatch Act, Chap. 314, 24 Stat. 440 (7 U.S.C. § 361a et seq.)
4. The Fair Labor Standards Act, Chap 676, 52 Stat, 1060 (29 U.S.C. § 201 et seq.)
5. The Clean Air Act pub. L. 108-201, February 24, 2004, (42 U.S.C. Chap 85 et seq.)
6. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, Pub. L. 91-596, Dec. 29, 1970, 84 Stat. 1590 (26 U.S.C. 651 et seq.)
7. The Hobbs Act (Anti-Corruption), Chap 537, 60 St. 420 (18 U.S.C. § 1951)

8. Equal Pay Act of 1963, Pub. L. 88-38, June 10, 1963, 77 Stat. 56 (29 U.S.C. § 201)
9. Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Pub. L. 94-135, Nov. 28, 1975, 89 Stat. 728 (42 U.S.C. § 6101 et seq.)
10. Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Pub. L. 90-202, Dec. 15, 1967, 81 Stat. 602 (29 U.S.C. § 621 et seq.)
11. Military Selective Service Act of 1973
12. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. 92-318, June 23, 1972, 86 Stat. 235, (20 U.S.C. § 1001)
13. Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Pub. L. 99-603, Nov 6, 1986, 100 Stat. 3359, (8 U.S.C. § 1101)
14. Executive Order 12459 (Debarment, Suspension and Exclusion)
15. Medical Leave Act of 1993, Pub. L. 103-3, Feb. 5, 1993, 107 Stat. 6 (5 U.S.C. § 6381 et seq.)
16. Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, Pub. L. 100-690, 102 Stat. 4304 (41 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.)
17. Assurance of Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity (29 CFR § 34.20)
18. District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977 (D.C. Official Code § 2-1401.01)
19. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
20. District of Columbia Language Access Act of 2004, DC Law 15 -414, (D.C. Official Code § 2-1931 et seq.)
21. Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-65, Dec 19, 1995, 109 Stat. 693, (31 U.S.C. § 1352)
22. Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

Appendix A

Official Intent to Apply Notification
(Must be received by OSSE no later than 5 p.m. on June 17, 2016)
(PDF Submission Preferred)

TO: OSSE Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support
opcsfs.funding@dc.gov

FROM: _____
(LEA or Organization Name)

RE: Intent to Apply for FFY2015 Scholarships for Opportunities and Results
(SOAR) Act Grant(s)

LEA or Organization Name: _____

LEA or Organization Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Contact Person Telephone: _____

Contact Person Email: _____

This Intent to Apply is for the following SOAR Act Grants:

Please place an "x" next to all of the grants for which the LEA or organization intends to apply:

- _____ Early Childhood Grant
- _____ Increasing Academic Quality Grant
- _____ Influencing Replication and Growth Grant
- _____ Investing in Public Facilities Grant
- _____ Third Party/Charter Support Organization Grant
- * Partner charter LEA (if identified): _____
- * Partner charter LEA (if identified): _____

I understand that the deadline for these grant applications is 4 p.m. on Friday, July 15, 2016, and that late applications will not be reviewed.

Signature: _____
(LEA or Organization Official)

Date: _____

Appendix B

Scoring Rubric

Instructions:

Choose the radio button that corresponds with your answer to the rubric question.
Justify your answer in the comments section.

Score Not Assignable	Limited/ Weak	Fair	Good	Strong/ Exceptional
No response or information/ information doesn't answer prompt question	Attempts to answer prompt	Mostly answers prompt	Fully answers prompt	Answers prompt in depth; reviewer has no questions
Information, if provided, is unclear or hard to understand	Missing a lot of requested information/ unclear	Missing some of requested information/ mostly clear	All requested information provided/ clear	All requested information provided/ clear, highly focused, coherently integrated answers
Inappropriate answer	Appropriate answer with limited details	Appropriate answer with details; answer is not well expressed	Appropriate answer with details; answer is well expressed	Appropriate, well- articulated answer that is extremely detailed and shows a clear and relevant path to success
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Needs Assessment (20):	Score Not Assignable	Limited/ Weak	Fair	Good	Strong/ Exceptional
1. The applicant gave a clear description of the data used to assess need. (max 10)	0	2.5	5	7.5	10
2. There is a clear link between the data used and the need described. (max 10)	0	2.5	5	7.5	10
Project Description (24):	Score Not Assignable	Limited/ Weak	Fair	Good	Strong/ Exceptional
1. There is a clear link between need(s) and the project. (max 4)	0	1	2	3	4
3. The project is clearly described. (max 20)	0	5	10	15	20
Theory of Action (8):	Score Not Assignable	Limited/ Weak	Fair	Good	Strong/ Exceptional
1. The if-then-because statement clearly shows how and why the project will be successful. (max 4)	0	1	2	3	4
2. The success of the project is based on credible and recent (within the last five years) research and/or demonstrated success. (max 4)	0	1	2	3	4

Increasing Academic Quality Grants

Logic Model (12):	No	Yes			
1. There are two logic models provided with different objectives (Yes/No). (max 2)	0	2			
	Score Not Assignable	Limited/Weak	Fair	Good	Strong/Exceptional
2. All elements of the logic models (Inputs, Activities, Outcomes, Outputs, and Measurements/Tools) are well-defined. (max 4)	0	1	2	3	4
3. The outcomes and outputs are feasible within a two year timeline. (max 2)	0	0.5	1	1.5	2
4. The logic models demonstrate a clear overview of the described project. (max 4)	0	1	2	3	4
Overall (16):	Score Not Assignable	Limited/Weak	Fair	Good	Strong/Exceptional
1. The overall project is well thought out. (max 4)	0	1	2	3	4
2. The project is likely to be successful in rapidly raising student achievement. (max 8)	0	2	4	6	8
3. The project is designed to ensure that gains are sustainable after the grant ends. (max 4)	0	1	2	3	4
Budget (20):	Score Not Assignable	Limited/Weak	Fair	Good	Strong/Exceptional
1. Costs seem allowable (necessary to the project, allocable, and reasonable). (max 8)	0	2	4	6	8
2. Budget line items and summary of costs align with the described project. (max 8)	0	2	4	6	8
3. Proposed budget can reasonably be expended within two years. (max 4)	0	1	2	3	4