

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

RFA # GD0—SAPCS—14

District of Columbia

Office of the State Superintendent of Education



FFY2013 SOAR Act Consolidated Academic Quality Grants to Charter Schools

RFA Release Date

January 3, 2014

Intent to Apply Deadline (Mandatory)

January 14, 2014

Pre-Application Conference (Mandatory)

January 14, 2014

Application Submission Deadline

January 31, 2014

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Checklist for Application
FFY2013 SOAR Act Consolidated Academic Quality Grants to Charter Schools

- ☐ The applicant submitted the Intent to Apply form by January 14, 2014.
- ☐ The applicant attended the mandatory pre-application conference. Please see Section 2 in Request for Application (RFA).
- ☐ The applicant has responded to all sections of the Request for Application (“RFA”) and the application contains all the information and appendices requested. Please see Section 3 for more detail, as well as Application workbook.
 - Tab 1 – Directions
 - Tab 2 – Contact Info
 - Tab 3 – Comprehensive Data
 - Tab 4 – Guiding Strategies
 - Tab 5 – Needs Assessment & Narrative
 - Tab 6 – Detailed Expenditure Summary
 - Tab 7 – Budget Summary
 - Tab 8 – Logic Models
 - Tab 9 – Appendices
 - Tab 10 – Intent to Apply Form
 - Tab 11 – Assurances
- ☐ The applicant has made certain the application adheres to the direction and criteria of each section of this RFA.
- ☐ The applicant has submitted:
 - One (1) electronic copy in Excel format, and
 - One (1) signed PDF copy of the signature page, both emailed to opcsfs.funding@dc.gov
- ☐ **Applications received via email at or after 5:01 p.m. EST, on Friday, January 31, 2014, will not be reviewed. Any additions or deletions to an application will not be accepted after the deadline of 5:00 p.m. No hard copies of the application will be accepted at OSSE.**

Request for Applications
RFA # GDO-SAPCS-14

Section 1: General Information

1.1 Introduction

The Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support, within the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), is soliciting applications from District of Columbia public charter schools for academic grants to charter schools.

1.2 Purpose of Funds

The purpose of SOAR Act funding is to address the two impact areas within Elementary and Secondary Education:

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

Through this RFA, OPCSFS is soliciting proposals for:

- **Consolidated Academic Quality grants to charter schools**
 - Funds will be allocated according to an OSSE-generated formula and will be available for plans designed to have a direct and rapid impact on student proficiency rates and success of public charter school students, either school-wide or for specific subgroups.
 - These plans must be research-based, approvable improvement plans specific to the needs of each local educational agency (LEA) and supported by data. Proposals must also align with all of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver principles.
 - All District public charter schools that serve students in grades PreK-3 through 12 are eligible to submit proposals for consideration. Applications must meet one or more of the application strategies proposed by OSSE and that are promising in improving academic achievement. These strategies are:
 - Student Achievement;
 - Teacher and Leader Quality and Recruitment;
 - Instructional Support;
 - Technology Readiness for PARCC;
 - Graduation Pathways;
 - Extended Learning Time;
 - Out-of-School-Time Programs; and
 - Extending Capacity and/or Infrastructure.

1.3 Source of Funding

The United States Department of Education, through 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).

1.4 Requirement of Funding

The most important 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). Pursuant to the SOAR Act, 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 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 once a year, 2013-2016. Please be advised that noncompliance of the charter school with the terms and conditions stated in the SOAR Act requirements acceptance document may result in the withholding of further federal grant funds administered by OSSE.

1.5 Funds Available and Funding Period

A total of \$11,730,360 is available for awards through this RFA. Each public charter school will be given a predetermined allocation of funds for which they are eligible to apply.

The duration of the Academic Quality grant is for a period of two (2) years from the award date.

1.6 Eligibility

All DC Public Charter Schools serving students in grades Pre-K3 through grade 12 are eligible to apply for these funds.

1.7 Permissible Use of Funds

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

- Costs must meet requirements of permissible use of Federal Funds within EDGAR 34 CFR Part 75, Part 76 and Part 80 and applicable OMB Circulars;
- Align with and support the principles outlined in the ESEA Flexibility Waiver;
- Align with and support one of the eight identified OSSE principles, as described in section 1.2 of this RFA;
- 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 peer review panel, as well as OPCSFS staff, to ensure expenditures are allowable and meet the intent of the purposes of this RFA.

Additional guidance about standards for determining costs for federal grants is available from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a087/a087-all.html#attb>.

Section 2: Schedule

2.1 RFA Release

The release date of the RFA is January 3, 2014. The RFA is available online at www.osse.dc.gov.

2.2 Pre-Application Conference

The mandatory pre-application conference will be held at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, located at 810 First Street, NE as follows:

- Academic Quality Grants – January 14, 2014, 1:00–2:00pm, 8th Floor, Room 806A

Each interested LEA must send at least one LEA-representative in order to meet the attendance requirement. This representative should be someone that works directly within the LEA.

2.3 Intent to Apply

All eligible entities seeking to receive funding under this RFA must submit their Intent to Apply notification form (please see appendix), signed by an authorized signer, via email to opcsfs.funding@dc.gov by 5:00pm on January 14, 2014. **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 staff are the authorized contact persons for the grant program:

- Katherine Cox, Education Grants Specialist, katherine.cox@dc.gov.
- Faida Fuller, Acting Director, Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support, faida.fuller@dc.gov.

2.5 Applications Due

Applications are due January 31, 2014 by 5:00pm and must be emailed to opcsfs.funding@dc.gov. Please use the following naming convention in the subject line: Organization Name_Grant Category.

(Example: ABC Public Charter School_Academic Quality Grant).

2.6 Updates

Information and updates regarding the grant competitions will be emailed to those that submitted an Intent to Apply form(s) and attend the mandatory Pre-Application Conference(s).

2.7 Awards Announcement

Awards will be announced via email and the OSSE website on **February 21, 2014**. OPCSFS will disseminate award letters and grant award notifications within 7-14 days after the awards announcement.

Section 3: Application

3.1 Application Content

The Application includes the following tabs:

- Tab 1 – Directions
- Tab 2 – Contact Information
- Tab 3 – Comprehensive Data
 - Academic Data
- Tab 4 – Guiding Strategies
 - Student Achievement
 - Teacher and Leader Quality and Recruitment
 - Instructional Support
 - Technology Readiness
 - Graduation Pathways
 - Extended Learning Time
 - Out-of-School-Time Programs
 - Expanding Capacity and/or Infrastructure
- Tab 5 – Needs Assessment & Narrative
 - Comprehensive Needs Assessment
 - Summary Project Description
 - Theory of Action
 - Alignment to the District's ESEA Flexibility Waiver
- Tab 6 – Detailed Expenditure Summary
- Tab 7 – Budget Summary
- Tab 8 – Logic Models
- Tab 9 – Appendices
 - Collaboration Letter
 - Completed Logic Models
 - Signed Assurances
 - W-9 Form for any entity not currently in the DC vendor system

- Tab 10 – Intent to Apply Form
- Tab 11 – Assurances

3.2 Guiding Strategies

Formula-based funding will be available for plans designed to have a direct and rapid impact on student proficiency rates and success of public charter school students. These plans must align with one or more of the application strategies proposed by OSSE that are promising in improving academic achievement. Outlined below are the eight (8) guiding strategies from which applicants may choose one or more for this grant:

1. **Student Achievement:** targeting subgroups through use of assessment data to identify students who need remediation. These can be categorized by grade, subject, special populations (ELL, SPED, homeless, neglected/delinquent, and/or early childhood), or parental engagement.
2. **Teacher and Leader Quality and Recruitment:** improve teacher retention, recruitment, or enhance professional development.
3. **Instructional Support:** accelerate curriculum development, data-driven instruction, or creation of inclusive environments/climates of engagement (i.e. project-based learning, cooperative learning, etc.).
4. **Technology Readiness:** upgrade of technology in preparation for the transition to full implementation of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC assessments are currently being developed and, beginning during the 2014-2015 school year, will be administered online.
5. **Graduation Pathways:** improve graduation rates through credit recovery, turnaround models, accelerated opportunities or other programs.
6. **Extended Learning Time:** institute longer school day, extended week or summer catch-up/acceleration programs.
7. **Out-of-School-Time Programs:** establish before and after care programs, homework clubs, after school tutoring, etc.
8. **Expanding Capacity and/or Infrastructure:** enhance capacity through third party assistance with grant management, technical assistance, fiscal management, etc. Additionally, provide development opportunities for charter LEA board development, as well as professional development for key leaders within the LEA (grants management, data management, budget and fiscal management, etc.).

Section 4: Scoring

4.1 Review Panel

All grants within this RFA are competitive. A review panel for all categories will be convened to review, score, and rank each applicant's application. The review panel will be composed of neutral, qualified, professional individuals who have been selected for their unique related experiences. Upon completion of its review, the panel shall make recommendations for awards based on the scoring rubric(s). OPCSFS will make the final decisions.