

# **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**RFA # GD0—SAIAQ—15**

**District of Columbia**

**Office of the State Superintendent of Education**



## **FFY2014 SOAR Act Increasing Academic Quality Grants**

**RFA Release Date**

May 1, 2015

**Intent to Apply Deadline (Mandatory)**

May 12, 2015

**Pre-Application Conference (Mandatory)**

Monday, May 11, 2015

**Application Submission Deadline**

May 29, 2015

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**Checklist for Application**  
**FFY2014 SOAR Act Increasing Academic Quality Grants**

- The applicant submitted the Intent to Apply form by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12, 2015. The Intent to Apply form can be found in Appendix A and on the OSSE website.
- The applicant attended the mandatory pre-application conference. 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 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2015 through EGMS.

**PLEASE NOTE**

**Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2015.**

**Applications submitted at or after 5:01 p.m. EST on Friday, May 29, 2015, 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 3:00 p.m.

**Request for Applications**  
**RFA # GDO-SAIAQ-15**

**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 (ED) 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 2014 prior to submitting the FFY2014 application to ED on August 22, 2014. ED approved the application and issued a Grant Award Notice (GAN) to OSSE on March 31, 2015.

**Charter Sector SOAR Funding**

Through the approved application and grant award, OSSE provides SOAR funding to public charter schools through five (5) grant programs and a public facilities direct loan/credit enhancement fund. The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the following grant programs was published in the D.C. Register on Friday, April 17, 2015:

| <b>Project Name</b>  | <b>Budget (Approx.)</b> | <b>Type of Grant</b> |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Academic Quality Grants                                     | \$5,281,906.80          | Competitive          |
| 2. Grants to Support Early Childhood Education                 | \$785,093.20            | Formula              |
| 3. Quality Grants to Third Party/Charter Support Organizations | \$2,500,000             | Competitive          |
| 4. Grants for Public Facilities                                | \$3,871,790             | Competitive          |
| 5. Grants for Replication & Growth                             | \$1,000,000             | 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 financing and 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 plans that have a direct and rapid impact on student proficiency rates and the 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 at least one of the three 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 address one or more of the following categories of strategies to improve academic achievement:
    1. Student Achievement – targeting subgroups through use of assessment data (where applicable) to identify students who need remediation. These can be categorized by grade, subject, or special populations (English Language Learners, students with disabilities,

homeless students, students who are involved with the child welfare or juvenile justice system, and/or early childhood students).

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. Graduation Pathways – improve graduation rates through the expansion of credit recovery, second chance programs, turnaround models, accelerated opportunities, and other programs. Also, increase quality through the expansion of capacity in alternative and adult education charter schools.
5. Extended Learning Time – institute longer school day, extended week or summer catch-up/acceleration programs.
6. Out-of-School-Time Programs – establish before and after care programs, homework clubs, afterschool tutoring, parental engagement, etc.
7. 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.)

### **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) U370C140001.

#### **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 further federal grant funds administered by OSSE.

#### **1.5 Funds Available and Funding Period**

At least \$5,281,906.80 is available for awards through this RFA. OSSE will provide up to \$500,000 per award. Awards are limited to one per LEA. The duration of the Increasing Academic Quality grant is for a period of two (2) years from the grant 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 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 and Part 80 and applicable OMB Circulars, including 2 CFR Part 200;
- Align with and support the principles outlined in the DC's Request for Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Waiver submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on March 31, 2015, *available here*: <http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/DC%20ESEA%20Flexibility%20Renewal%20Application%20Redline%20Version%2003%2031%202015.pdf>;
- Align with and support one of the seven OSSE-identified 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 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 May 1, 2015. The RFA is available online at [www.osse.dc.gov](http://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:

- Increasing Academic Quality Grants – Monday, May 11, 2015, 12:00–1:00p.m., 3rd Floor, Grand Hall

Each interested local educational agency (LEA) must send at least one representative in order to meet the attendance requirement. This representative should be someone who is employed directly by the LEA. Each attendee may only represent one LEA.

## **2.3 Intent to Apply**

All eligible LEAs seeking to receive funding under this RFA must submit their Intent to Apply notification form (please see appendix), signed by an authorized official of the LEA, via email to [opcsfs.funding@dc.gov](mailto:opcsfs.funding@dc.gov) by 5:00 p.m. on May 12, 2015. **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:

- Katherine Cox, Director, Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support, [katherine.cox@dc.gov](mailto:katherine.cox@dc.gov).

## **2.5 Applications Due**

Applications are due May 29, 2015 by 5:00 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 3:00 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 specific to this grant.

## **2.7 Awards Announcement**

Awards will be announced via EGMS, email, and the OSSE website by **June 26, 2015**. OSSE will disseminate award letters and 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 – Eligibility
- Section 4 – Program Specific Information
  - Academic Data
  - Guiding Strategies
  - Needs Assessment and Narrative
  - Logic Model
- Section 5 – Detailed Planning Expenditures
  - Budget Overview
  - Salaries and Benefits
  - Supplies and Materials
  - Professional Services
  - Equipment
  - Other Objects
  - Budget Summary
- Section 6 – Assurances

- Section 7 – Submit (*application is not complete until it is submitted through this tab*)
- Section 8 – Application Print (*hard copies of applications may be printed through this tab*)
- Section 9 – 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 review panel 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; panels may include both internal and external reviewers. 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. 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.

Appendix A

**Official Intent to Apply Notification**

**(Must be received by OSSE no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 12, 2015)  
(PDF Submission Preferred)**

**TO:** OSSE Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support  
[opcsfs.funding@dc.gov](mailto:opcsfs.funding@dc.gov)

**FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(LEA or Organization Name)

**RE:** Intent to Apply for FFY2014 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 Grants
- \_\_\_\_\_ Increasing Academic Quality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Influencing Replication and Growth
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investing in Public Facilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Third Party/Charter Support Organization Grants
  - \* Partner LEA (if identified): \_\_\_\_\_
  - \* Partner LEA (if identified): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(LEA or Organization Official)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_