

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

RFA # GD0—SAEC—15

District of Columbia

Office of the State Superintendent of Education



FFY2014 SOAR Act Early Childhood Grants

RFA Release Date

May 1, 2015

Intent to Apply Deadline (Mandatory)

May 12, 2015

Pre-Application Conference (Mandatory)

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

Application Submission Deadline

May 29, 2015

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Checklist for Application
FFY2014 SOAR Act Early Childhood 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-SAEC-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:

| Project Name | Budget (Approx.) | Type of Grant |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 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 eligible District of Columbia public charter schools for the following grant program:

- **Early Childhood Grants**
 - This grant provides **formula-based funding** to support eligible local education agencies (LEAs) that serve 3- and 4-year olds.
 - Funds will be allocated using the same formula as Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I, Part A and will be available for plans designed to assist with implementation of supplementary activities that support school readiness, including the development of literacy and mathematics skills, with emphasis on supports to students to increase academic achievement.
 - All activities under this grant program should enhance the quality of preschool or pre-k programming and funds should be used to supplement and not supplant existing programs.
 - These plans must be research-based, approvable improvement plans specific to the needs of each local educational agency (LEA) and supported by data.
 - Applications must include activities that fall into at least one of the following categories of strategies:
 - Raising Student Achievement;
 - Teacher and Leader Quality and Recruitment;
 - Instructional Support;
 - Extended Learning Time; and
 - Out-of-School-Time Programs.

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 once 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 \$785,093.20 is available for awards through this RFA. Funds will be allocated using the same formula as ESEA Title I, Part A. Allocations will be provided to LEAs at the pre-application conference. The duration of the Early Childhood grant is for a period of one (1) year from the grant award date.

1.6 Eligibility

An eligible applicant meets all of the following criteria:

- Must be a DC Public Charter School;
- Must have an overall student enrollment that is at least:
 - Forty percent (40%) three- and four year-olds in a preschool or pre-k program, and
 - Forty percent (40%) students who meet the Title I poverty threshold.

OSSE has pre-identified the following LEAs as eligible:

| ELIGIBLE LEAs: |
|--|
| AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School |
| Bridges Public Charter School |
| Briya Public Charter School |
| Cedar Tree Academy Public Charter School |
| DC Scholars Public Charter School |
| Eagle Academy Public Charter School |
| Lee Montessori Public Charter School |

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 one of the five OSSE-identified strategies, 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 school readiness; 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 and requirements. 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.

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:

- Early Childhood Grants – Tuesday, May 12, 2015, 11:00–12:00 p.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 entities 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 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 members are the authorized contact persons for this grant competition:

- John Savage, Program Analyst, Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support, john.savage@dc.gov.
- Katherine Cox, Director, Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support, 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*)
- Section 2 – Contact Information
- Section 3 – Eligibility
- Section 4 – Funding Distribution (*informational; nothing to complete*)
- Section 5 – Allocations (*informational; nothing to complete*)
- Section 6 – Program Specific Information
 - Academic Data
 - Guiding Strategies
 - Needs Assessment and Narrative
 - Logic Model
- Section 7 – Detailed Planning Expenditures

- Budget Overview
- Salaries and Benefits
- Supplies and Materials
- Professional Services
- Equipment
- Other Objects
- Budget Summary
- Section 8 – Assurances
- Section 9 – Submit (*application is not complete until it is submitted through this tab*)
- Section 10 – Application Print (*hard copies of applications may be printed through this tab*)
- Section 11 – 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 via formula funding. A review panel will be convened to review each application to assess the quality of the submission and to determine whether enough detail is provided to ensure that expenditures are appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to support the grant objectives. Applicants will be contacted to provide additional information as necessary. The review panel will be composed neutral, qualified, professional individuals selected for their expertise, knowledge or related experiences; may include both internal and external reviewers. The application will be scored against a rubric (provided in appendix) to assess quality and each application will have multiple reviewers. Upon completion of the panel's review, the panel(s) shall make recommendations for awards based on the scoring rubric(s). If revisions are needed, the LEA will be given an opportunity to make the necessary changes to receive approval. 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

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: _____

Appendix B

**Early Childhood Grant Review Rubric
(For Informational Purposes Only)**

Rating Guidelines: Reviewers are instructed to thoroughly read all narratives and assess whether the responses provided are “Strong,” “Limited,” or “Deficient.”

- A – Strong:** Narrative is specific and comprehensive. It is complete, detailed, and clearly articulates information as to how the criteria are met. Applicant provided all data requested with detail.
- B – Limited:** General detail. Adequate information as to how the criteria are met, but some areas are not fully explained and/or questions remain. Suitable rationales may not have been provided on all prompts.
- C – Deficient:** Inadequate organization and/or development. Applicant provided limited illustration of the key project ideas. Criteria appear to be minimally met, but limited information is provided about approach, activities and strategies. Lacks focus and detail.

| Part A | Strong | Limited | Deficient |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|
| Academic Data (10 points) | | | |
| The applicant responded to all questions in this section and provided detailed narratives. | 10 | 5 | 0 |
| Strengths/Weaknesses: | | | |
| Part B | Strong | Limited | Deficient |
| Guiding Strategies (15 points) | | | |
| The LEA selected at least one guiding strategy (more than one is okay) and inserted the percentage of funding to be used toward each strategy. PLEASE CONFIRM THAT PERCENTAGES TOTAL 100%. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| The LEA provided a comprehensive narrative for the selected guiding strategy or strategies. This narrative and expenditure summary shows a clear alignment to the selected strategy. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| The LEA summarized the planned use of funds in the narrative. Based on the narrative, the reviewer has an idea of how the funds will be spent. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| Strengths/Weaknesses: | | | |
| Part C | Strong | Limited | Deficient |
| Comprehensive Needs Assessment (14 points). The applicant should describe their identified needs of their school and make the case for their proposed use of these funds. | | | |
| The applicant used data to link the need at the LEA (described in Academic Data Tab) with the project summarized. The assessment identifies weaknesses at the LEA and demonstrates a firm grasp of the needs in specific areas. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| Based on the narrative provided by the LEA, there is a strong need for funding for this applicant. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |

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| | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| The applicant provided research that justifies the need for funding for the project. | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Strengths/Weaknesses: | | | |
| Part D | Strong | Limited | Deficient |
| Project Description (15 Points) | | | |
| The applicant provided a detailed project description that shows a clear link between the need at the LEA, the guiding strategy selected, and this project. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| The project description shows that the LEA has reviewed their student data and will be using SOAR funds in a way that will address these needs. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| Based on this description, the reviewer is confident that this project can feasibly impact achievement at the LEA and increase achievement. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| Strengths/Weaknesses: | | | |
| Part E | Strong | Limited | Deficient |
| Theory of Action (12 Points) | | | |
| The applicant has provided an extensive IF - THEN description of the project and has described how and why the proposed project will work using research and evidence of success. | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| The research and evidence of success used by the applicant is credible and can be verified while demonstrating strategic thinking. | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| The theory of action is feasible and has a strong likelihood of success. | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Strengths/Weaknesses: | | | |
| Part F | Strong | Limited | Deficient |
| Alignment to the ESEA Waiver (4 Points) | | | |
| The applicant has made a strong connection to the proposed project and one or more of the principles of the District of Columbia ESEA Flexibility Waiver. | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Strengths/Weaknesses: | | | |
| Part G | Strong | Limited | Deficient |
| Logic Model (10 Points) | | | |
| The applicant has provided a Logic Model for at least 2 project objectives, 1 objective per logic model. | 2 | 1 | 0 |

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| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| All elements of the logic model (Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes) are well-defined. | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Outcomes are feasible and can be accomplished in the timeline set forth by the applicant. (Within two years as required by the grant). | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Strengths/Weaknesses: | | | |

| Part H | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| | Strong | Limited | Deficient |
| Detailed Planning Expenditures (20 points) | | | |
| The applicant has listed items that are allowable, allocable and reasonable, and do not violate any spending restrictions. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| The applicant's budget and spending plan align with initiatives outlined in the narrative (project description). | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| The applicant has listed items that can reasonably be purchased/obligated within the 1 year grant period. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| The applicant is proposing costs that clearly align with the selected guiding strategies. | 5 | 2.5 | 0 |
| Strengths/Weaknesses: | | | |

Total Score: () out of 100

| |
|-------------------------|
| General Comments |
| |