Pre-Application Conference:
Academic Quality Grants to Charter Schools

Scholarships for Opportunities and Results (SOAR) Act Competition (RFA #GD0-SAPCS-14)

January 14, 2014

Agenda

- Purpose of Grant

- Grant Details

- Application Content

- Evaluation of Applications

- Q&A

Purpose of SOAR Act Grant

- The purpose of SOAR Act funding is to improve school performance and educational outcomes and to provide facility funding in order to increase the number of high-quality public charter school seats.

Purpose of Academic Quality Grants for Charters

Academic quality funds will support applications that meet one or more of the application strategies below:

- 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.

Grant Details

- Source of Funding
- Eligibility
- Award Amounts
- Important Dates
- Allowable Expenses

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).

All grant awards are contingent on the appropriation of funding.

Eligibility

Eligible organizations:

- Must be a DC Public Charter School that serves students in grades Pre-K3 through 12.

Award Amounts

A total of $11,730,360 is available for awards:

- OSSE will provide allocations (handout).

- Allocation was formulated using a base $75,000 award amount for each LEA, and then added supplemental funding based on enrollment data.

$75,000 Base award **+** LEA Enrollment data **=** SOAR Academic Quality Allocation

Enrollment data consists of last year's certified enrollment numbers plus any new or significantly expanding charter school data.

Award Amounts

- The duration of the Academic Quality for Charters grant is for a period of 2 years from the grant award date.

Important Dates

Deliverable	Due Date
Intent to Apply	January 14, 2014 by 5:00 pm
Application Due	January 31, 2014 by 5:00 pm
Expected Awards	February 21, 2014
End of Grant	February 21, 2016

The intent to apply form and application are due via email to opcsfs.funding@dc.gov by 5:00 pm on the due date.

Allowable Expenses

Funds are strictly on a reimbursement basis and may only be used for allowable grant project expenditures during the grant period.

Allowable Expenses	Non-Allowable Expenses
✓ Costs should clearly align with the selected guiding strategy/strategies.	✗ Unallowable costs per Federal Government guidelines.
✓ Costs should have a feasible link to increasing academic achievement.	✗ Costs that do not align with the principles outlined in the ESEA Waiver or the guiding strategies.
✓ Costs must address the needs identified in the needs assessment.	✗ Costs that do meet the purpose of this grant.
✓ Costs must meet requirements of permissible use of Federal funds within EDGAR 34 Part 75, Part 76, and Part 80, as well as applicable OMB Circulars.	

Application Content

- 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 – Sources and Uses
- Tab 9 – Logic Models
- Tab 10 – Appendices
- Tab 11 – Intent to Apply Form
- Tab 12 – Assurances

Tab 1: Directions

Applicants should review this tab and take note of:

- Deadline for grant application,

- Email address where application should be submitted, and

- Various tabs to be completed.

**Important note—Naming convention of application email subject line:

Organization Name_Grant Category

Example: ABC Public Charter School_Charter Academic Quality

Late applications will not be considered

Tab 2: Contact Info

Applicants should use this section to:

- Provide contact information,
- Provide the amount that the LEA is allocated, and
- Provide applicant certification of the information contained in the application.

Tab 3: Comprehensive Data

LEA applicants will be required to provide a comprehensive data summary. This data will be tracked throughout the life of the grant to determine if objectives were met.

- Requested Academic Data includes:
  - PMF scores and number of targets met
  - DC CAS scores and narratives
  - Attendance and graduation rates (as applicable)
  - Teacher retention rates
  - Early childhood assessments (as applicable)

Tab 4: Guiding Strategies

Applicants may select to apply funding to one or more of the eight guiding strategies listed on the tab.

- LEAs will be given an allocation to use on the strategies.
- LEAs can spread the funding among the strategies.
- Link between the needs assessment and selected strategy/strategies should be clear.
- Plans must be research-based and align with the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Principles.
- Plans should be realistic yet ambitious.
- Projects should have a tangible impact on student achievement.

Tab 5: Needs Assessment & Narrative

Section should justify the need for the project.

Narratives:

- Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Summary Project Description
- Theory of Action
- Alignment to DC's ESEA Flexibility Waiver

Tips:

- Be detailed, yet concise.
- Respond to all the prompts.
- Use the narratives to demonstrate that this project will address the needs of the LEA/students in DC while also aligning with the guiding strategy selected.
- This tab is worth 45% of the total score.

Successful Narratives

Needs Assessment and Project Description

- Make a clear link between the needs, the selected guiding strategies, and the proposed project.

- Justify that this project will address the needs at the LEA and impact change.

- Convince the reviewer – the narratives should make the reviewer believe that this project will directly resolve the needs identified in the data assessment.

Tabs 6 & 7: Detailed Expenditures and Budget Summary

How will the SOAR funds be spent?

- Provide a link between the needs assessment, guiding strategies, the proposed project, and the use of funds.

- Align the budget with permissible use of funds and proposed outcomes.

Budget Details
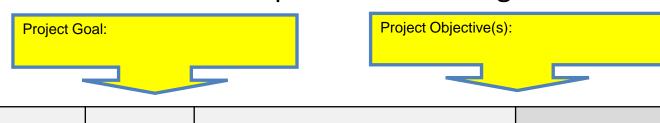
Itemized Budget Spreadsheet:

- Provide detailed expenditures for the proposed project.
- Provide a description for each line item.
- Link each line item to the guiding strategy it supports.
- Align the budget with permissible use of funds and with the needs assessment.

Budget:

- Summary of costs by program category.
- This table is automatically populated with information from the Itemized Expenditures Tab.

Tab 8: Logic Models

LEA must complete at least 2 logic models.

Project Goal:

Project Objective(s):

What do you contribute?	What are you going to do?	What do you want at the end of the day?			Performance Measures	
Inputs	Activities/Timeline (Please provide completion dates for each activity)	Immediate	Within one year of project completion	After one year of project completion	What will show you're getting there?	
		Short Term Outcomes	Medium Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes	Outputs	Measurement Tool

Tab 9: Appendices

The following appendices are required with the application:

- Collaboration letter(s) from partner(s) as applicable
- Completed logic models
- Signed assurances
- W9 Form for any vendor not currently in the DC vendor system
- Any other significant information deemed necessary by the applicant

Tab 10: Intent to Apply Form

Due today by 5:00 pm for those who have not already submitted!

- Send a signed PDF to opcsfs.funding@dc.gov.

- Please indicate in the subject line that the intent is for the charter academic quality grant.

Tab 11: Assurances

All assurances (18 total) must be checked for the application to be considered complete.

- Assurances include:
  - The applicant will administer the funds covered by this application in accordance with all applicable statues, regulations, program plans, and applications.
  - The applicant will expend all funds by two years from the award date. The applicant assures timely (at least quarterly) submissions of reimbursement workbooks.
  - Applicant will comply with all school and LEA requirements of the Statewide Accountability Plan, including, but not limited to: implementation of school turnaround plans and interventions; development and implementation of teacher and leader evaluation systems; annually administer the DC CAS and/or DC CAS Alt (as applicable) to its students in conformance with OSSE test integrity protocols.

Evaluation of Applications

- A review panel comprised of individuals with expertise in the field of public charter school financing and education will review applications according to the Scoring Rubric.

- Incomplete or late applications will not be considered for funding.

Review Panel

- 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).

- OSSE will request revisions of applications that do not meet quality standards and will make all final decisions.

Review Rubric

- 80% of the weight will be on the data summary, needs assessment, guiding strategies, and narratives.

- 20% of the weight will be on the budget.

- Rubric will be available on the OSSE website at: http://osse.dc.gov/service/scholarships-opportunity-and-results-soar-act-grant-ffy-2013

Questions?

Contact Information

The following staff are the authorized contact persons for the charter academic quality 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.