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Sources: CFDA 84.282, Discretionary/Competitive Grants, also known as Public Charter School Program (PCSP) or CSP authorized under Title V, Part B, Subpart 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Non-Regulatory Guidance July 2004, updated 2007
Key Words: Public Charter Schools Program, grant, planning, implementation
Summary: Information about eligibility, purpose, amounts, timelines, application guidance and grant permissible and nonpermissible activities.

Community Schools (CS) Funding Application
Public Charter School Program (PCSP) Guidance

Planning/Implementation Grant

I. Eligibility

Eligible subrecipients are "a charter (community) school developer that has applied to an authorized public chartering authority to operate a charter school, and has provided that authority with adequate and timely notice of its application for funding under the Charter School Program (CSP). A charter school is a public school that provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both; is nonsectarian and does not charge tuition; complies with Federal and State civil rights laws; is a school to which parents choose to send their children; and that admits students on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply than can be accommodated. The term "developer" means an individual or group of individuals (including a public or private nonprofit organization), which may include teachers, administrators, and other school staff, parents, or other members of the local community in which a charter school project will be carried out. A for-profit entity does not qualify as an eligible applicant for purposes of the CSP. However, a CSP grant recipient may enter into a contract with a for-profit entity for the day-to-day management of the charter school (20 USC 7221i)."

II. Purpose of the PCSP Grant

According to CFDA 84.282, "an eligible applicant . . . may use funds for: (1) post-award planning and design of the educational program, which may include: (a) refinement of the desired educational results and of the methods for measuring progress toward achieving those results; and (b) professional development of teachers and other staff ; and (2) initial implementation of the school, which may include (a) informing the community about the school; (b) acquiring necessary equipment and educational materials and supplies; (c) acquiring or developing curriculum materials; and (d) other initial costs that cannot be met from State or local sources (20 USC 7221c(f)(3)).

III. Amounts

For applicants with one school, the total available for the planning year prior to school opening will be $50,000. For applicants who are developing more than one school, the amount will be $75,000 divided among the schools being planned. Thus if five schools are

being planned, the amount will be $15,000/school. A competitive application for each school must be submitted through the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP). If awarded, after successful completion of the planning year benchmarks, implementation funds are available for two years in the total amount of $450,000/school. Annual applications for $225,000 must be submitted through the CCIP by the deadline.

If the school was not awarded planning funds and has opened, next fiscal year it may apply competitively for implementation funds. If it did not open, it may apply again competitively for planning money.

IV. Timeline for Initial Applicants

Review the information on the Office of Community Schools' Web site, and contact the office at 614-466-7058 if you have additional questions. An eligible authorizer/sponsor must agree to sponsor your school, so it is important to have initial discussions with your sponsor before attempting to establish a school and apply for federal funding.

To apply for planning funds, the following must be done. The suggested dates allow time to accomplish all tasks.

a. By November of the year prior to the year when the school will apply for planning funds, draft a Preliminary Agreement (PA) with your sponsor and submit by March 15. Please be sure that the PA expires after May 15 of the year when your school will open. By that time your contract to open the school should be executed. See samples on the CS Web site page "Develop a Community School."
b. By the end of December:
    1. Using the links on the Web site "Develop a Community School," access and fill out the following forms:
        a. EIN federal identification number from the IRS Web site. The EIN number is needed for some of the following forms.
        b. OEDS-R Administrator form
        c. W-9 tax form
        d. OBM 5657 Vendor Information form
    2. Have the sponsor submit the signed PA with the last three forms to Connie Sims in the Office of Community Schools, so that you can receive an Internal Retrieval Number (IRN).
    3. When on the OBM site, fill out OBM 1234 Direct Deposit for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), so your school's funding will go directly to a bank account.
    4. After the IRN is set up for the school, be sure that both a superintendent and a treasurer are listed in the OEDS-R directory for the school. Without a superintendent or a fiscal rep, the CCIP grant application cannot be submitted by the school.
    5. After receiving an IRN you are ready to access the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP), which is where a grant application must be entered between the first Monday in February and the last Friday in April. To enter the CCIP each user must have:
        1. A SAFE account
        2. A CCIP role established through the OEDS-R directory for the school.
    5. The first Elluminate training on the first Tuesday in February, "Using the CCIP," will cover the technical details of entering and using the CCIP. You can review the PowerPoint from the previous year for general guidance, but the new training will

cover updates and changes. This PowerPoint is in the CCIP Doc Library, Community Schools' folder.

6. The second Elluminate training on the second Tuesday in February will cover "Applying for the PCSP Planning and Implementation grant." The previous year's PowerPoint is available in the CCIP Doc Library, Community Schools' folder, PCSP folder. A developer is encouraged to apply for a three-year PCSP grant, which includes a year of planning before two years of implementation funding. There are many benefits to receiving a planning year grant, which the Elluminate training will cover.
7. If awarded a grant, by the time you receive funding have the services of a licensed, bonded treasurer.
8. *Failure to submit with "superintendent/authorized representative approved" status by the deadline (5 p.m. on the final Friday in April) will prevent funding for the next fiscal year.*
9. Grants are evaluated in May-June, and most awards are decided by the end of July. All funding decisions are final.
10. Project period begins on July 1

The next steps must be completed in the year when the school plans to open. A "Resolution to Adopt" or a PA must be signed by March 15 of the year the school will open. By May 15 of the same year the contract must be executed. Before the contract is executed:

1. Be established as a nonprofit entity in Ohio. The Ohio Secretary of State has several options, including nonprofit corporation (Articles of Incorporation, Form 532) or an unincorporated association or trust. Another option is to become a 501(c)(3) corporation.
2. Provide a list of all governing authority members with their names, titles, addresses and affiliations with other community schools to your sponsor. A résumé for each person can be attached.

To apply only for Implementation funding:

a. If the school has already opened or will open by September (or by one year from the date of the contract, if the school is dropout recovery), and a contract has been executed (or will be executed by May 15), follow the above instructions to secure an IRN (the executed contract can be used by an open school in place of the PA), attend the Elluminate trainings, enter a grant application into the CCIP, be a formally established non-profit and have a governing authority to approve fiscal decisions.
b. Review Implementation Years 1 and 2 in the PCSP Project Period Timeline.

V. PCSP Project Period Timeline

The sequence for the three-year project period is:

1. Planning Year: July 1 – June 30. Receive award after review of budget. No expenditures can be made prior to July 1, the "substantially approved date" or after June 30. Until budget is approved, expenditures may be disallowed.
    a. Perform program activities outlined below (see "Planning Grant") and submit required documentation by deadlines.

b. February attend the Elluminate training for a review of CCIP processes and PCSP guidance.
c. February - April submit CCIP application for next year's implementation funding.
    1) If the CCIP application is not submitted by the deadline, no implementation funding will be available.
    2) If planning activities are not completed by deadlines, no implementation funding will be provided.
d. September 30 submit Annual Performance Report (APR) and Final Expenditure Report (FER). If these are not on time and approvable, funding for the next year will be stopped until required corrections are made. District Efficiency Rating (DER) will be lowered.
e. After September 30 a monitoring visit may be scheduled.

2. Implementation Year 1: July 1 – June 30. Award will be available after budget is approved. No expenditures can be made prior to July 1, the "substantially approved date" or after June 30. Until budget is approved, expenditures may be disallowed.
    a. School must open by September 30 unless the school is drop-out recovery, in which case it must open no later than one year after the contract is executed. If the school fails to open, funding will be discontinued and expenses may be disallowed.
    b. February attend the Elluminate training for a review of CCIP processes and PCSP guidance.
    c. February - April submit CCIP application for final year's funding. If not submitted by the deadline, no funding will be available.
    d. September 30 submit APR and FER. If these are not on time and approvable, funding for the next year will be stopped until required corrections are made. DER will be lowered.
    e. After September 30 a monitoring visit may be scheduled.
3. Implementation Year 2: July 1 – June 30. Award will be available after budget is approved. No expenditures can be made prior to July 1, the "substantially approved date" or after June 30. Until budget is approved, expenditures may be disallowed.
    a. September 30 submit APR and FER. If these are not on time and approvable, funding for other grants may be stopped. DER will be lowered.
    b. After September 30 a monitoring visit may be scheduled.

VI. CCIP Overview: the Planning Tool and the Funding Applications

The CCIP for each school consists of two main parts: the Planning Tool and the Funding Applications. The **Planning Tool** contains the school's *goals, strategies* and *action steps*. It also has a comprehensive **Needs Assessment**. The ***goal*** or goals must focus on student achievement. A limited number of ***strategies*** outline the major types of activities to achieve the goal, such as curriculum development, professional development and use of technology. ***Action steps*** record the school's annual activities, anticipated effects on student achievement and data to create a baseline for measurable outcomes. Action steps should be limited in number and of sufficient length to enable the reviewer to determine what will be accomplished in fulfillment of the goal during that year. They should allow the school to demonstrate accountability for the funding received. ***Fiscal resources,*** that is the grants a school receives, are attached to the school's goal or goals and thus to the strategies and action steps for that goal. They demonstrate the school's alignment of resources to a common goal or goals.

The **Funding Applications** (such as Community Schools Application, Competitive and Consolidated) contain the budgets and related materials for the different grants. The Funding Application for the PCSP competitive grant has a targeted needs assessment and data boxes where the applicant describes the intended school model, timeline, parental and community involvement, scientific basis for the curriculum, professional development plans, program monitoring, etc. Because a successful planning year should result in two years of implementation funding, the timeline should refer to the full three-year period. The budget narrative must describe how PCSP funding will be used in the planning year and in the implementation period, along with other funding sources that will be used to sustain operations.

While all questions on the application are important, the applicant should provide evidence that the proposed school will answer the specific, unique needs of the intended students, their parents and the community where the school will be located. Do other schools in the same area offer similar programs? Where are potential students currently attending school?

After an application is awarded, it becomes a public record that can be viewed by any user of the CCIP. All funding decisions are final.

VII. Planning Grant

Conditions and Expectations. (See CFDA 84.282 in Section 2, "Purpose")

During the course of the planning year, the following activities must be completed and documentation of the results provided on a quarterly basis to the OCS grants administrator. This documentation must also be kept in a grant file at the school for subsequent monitoring or auditing.

1. Consistent with Ohio Code, select and train a qualified governing authority/school board to be knowledgeable about funding, ethics, public records and other topics vital to successful school operation. Establish an audit committee to serve as liaison between school management and state/federal auditors. Training is available through either the Ohio Association of Community School Authorizers (OACSA) or the Ohio Association of Public Charter Schools (OAPCS). The latter offers annual governance trainings and may be contacted through www.oapcs.org.
    1) Ensure that an adequate policy manual is created by the governing authority. The manual must contain the following items among others:
        a. An ethics policy covering all school operations, which will be given to governing authority members, school employees and contracted entities. Federal and state regulations are very clear about avoiding apparent and actual conflicts of interest involving family members, employment, contracts for equipment and services, etc. Using a public job to secure public money for a family member, business partner or yourself is a fourth-degree felony in Ohio. Federal regulations also prohibit a person from participating in an administrative decision regarding a project if (a) the decision is likely to benefit that person or his or her immediate family member; and (b) the person has a family or business relationship with the grantee (34 CFR 75.525).
        b. Federal grant recipients must develop written procurement procedures and conduct all procurement transactions in a manner to provide open and free competition (34 CFR 74.42-74.44).

c. Policy and procedures on records retention by the school and governing authority. This must include a property inventory form consistent with federal 34 CRF 80.32 "Equipment." Ensure this policy is posted and available to all.
d. A public records policy that describes how the school will respond to public records requests. The policy must be included in the personnel handbook, and a poster of the policy placed in all required locations per ORC 149.93.
e. School disciplinary policy.
f. Cell phone and credit card policies. Avoid debit cards due to potential accountability problems.

2. Review research on curriculum, techniques and approaches to the school's students that have demonstrated success in improving student achievement. The USDOE maintains a Web site called "What Works Clearinghouse" that evaluates research on school initiatives.
3. Develop instruments to track data on student achievement at your school.
4. Review the state software packages available through Ohio's Information Technology Centers (ITCs). These packages include payroll (USPS), accounting (USAS) and fixed asset tracking (SAAS/EIS), all of which interface with, and meet reporting requirements of, SSA, ODJFS, SERS, STRS and EMIS. Contact your local ITC for details and to determine if your school should select any of these packages.
5. Ensure that at least one staff member secures the following trainings:
   1) EMIS training either at regional meetings or in Columbus. Please review the Association of EMIS Professionals (OAEP) Website located at www.oaep.net for additional assistance on EMIS issues.
   2) SOES training in August; check the calendar on the CS Web site for dates and locations.
   3) Auditor of State (AOS) fiscal compliance training in late summer; check AOS site for dates, cost and to enroll.
   4) March, April or May attend school lunch training. Go to the ODE Web home page, click "learning conditions and support," "food & nutrition," "school meals program," "how to become a school meals program sponsor," "potential new sponsor" and enroll through STARS for one of the monthly trainings that last from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. How to use STARS is explained. If you have additional questions, phone ODE school lunch program at 1-800-808-6325.
   5) Carefully review materials on pupil transportation on the ODE Web site. Attend a training or seek additional guidance if the school decides to provide transportation.
   6) Review the state's technology Web site, eTech Ohio, so that next year you can create a technology plan and apply for the federal E-Rate program that provides discounts and subsidy for telecommunication services, internet access, internal connections and basic maintenance. Contact marv.myers@etech.ohio.gov for information about this and other technology assistance/grants.
   7) Review information on the Medicaid in Schools Program (MSP), which is funded through ODE's office of Grants Management.
   8) Contact the State Teachers' Retirement System (STRS) and State Employees Retirement System (SERS) to be sure all staff will be properly enrolled.
6. Create the following documents and email to the OCS Grants Administrator by the deadlines:
   1) October 15: Submit Quarterly Report/Self-Evaluation. Form is posted on the CS Web site and in the CCIP Doc Library.

a) Attach a copy of a five-year budget forecast for the school. Form is available on the CS Web site at: "Funding for CS," "CS Financial Forms," "Five-Year Forecast Form." AOS requires initial submission of this form to ODE by October 31; it must be revised annually by May 31. Deviation more than five (5) percent from a projection is considered noncompliant. .

2) January 15: Submit Quarterly Report/Self-Evaluation.
   a) Attach the contract elements checklist indicating completed items, problems and questions. The contract checklist is available on the CS Web site at: "Develop a Community School," "Contracts," "Contract Elements."
   b) Submit a draft of the anticipated implementation budget, properly coded with a correctly detailed budget narrative. After approval, this budget will be put into the CCIP application that is due by the end of April. Draft budget form is available in the CCIP Doc Library and on the OCS Grant page.
3) April 15: Submit Quarterly Report/Self-Evaluation.
   a) Attach a copy of the school's board, with names, position titles and any positions held at other community schools.
   b) If a management company or for-profit entity will be used by the school, provide a list of all employees, position titles and affiliations to other community schools.

7. May 15: Submit executed and approvable contract. Failure to submit will prevent the school from opening and automatically cancel implementation funding.
8. September 30: Submit Annual Performance Report (APR) and Final Expenditure Report (FER).
9. Review documentation on subrecipient monitoring on the CS Web site and be prepared for a possible monitoring visit after September 30.
10. Other activities necessary for the timely opening and successful operation of the school, such as arranging a lease, contracting with potential employees, etc. Please note that the PCSP grant cannot fund operating costs of the school, salaries of employees or leases. See below.

VIII. **Implementation Grant (**See CFDA 84.282 in Section 2, "Purpose")

Successful completion and timely documentation of the required planning activities outlined above will enable the school to apply through the CCIP in February-April of the planning year for two subsequent years of implementation funding. This is a continuation application. The total amount available per school is $450,000, which is $225,000 annually.

School must open by September 30, unless the school is drop-out recovery, when it must open no later than one year after the contract is executed. If the school fails to open, implementation funding will be discontinued and expenses may be disallowed.

IX. **Grant Conditions**

Accounting records must be kept and coded in accordance with the Uniform School Accounting System (USAS). A document explaining this system is available in the CCIP Doc Library for Community Schools, on the OCS Web site and also from the Auditor of State's Web site. As public records, all grant materials, correspondence and emails must be made available both during the project period and for five (5) years after submission of the final expenditure report (FER), or longer if an audit is in progress or other fiscal issues

have been raised.

X. Uses of Funding

a. Permissible

Professional development of teachers, support staff, administrators and the school board; marketing and promotion of the school; community outreach and education; books, teaching supplies, curriculum including physical education; software, computers and technology, including wireless; furniture; minor renovations to bring the facility into compliance with health, safety and disability codes/legislation (7% cap on such costs); up to 5% for governance/admin to cover supplies, capital expenses, training, etc.; other costs in line with the purposes listed in CFDA 84.282 cited above in Section 2. Purpose.

b. Nonpermissible

Salaries or benefits (direct or contracted) for any regular staff, support staff, teaching aides, tutors, substitute teachers; operating expenses and utilities; insurance, debt repayment, bank charges; purchase/lease of vehicles; state sales tax (public schools are tax exempt); installing fiber or computer lines (E-Rate money should be used); building renovations/improvements (these should be negotiated with the building owner during rent negotiations); fund-raising activities; food, banquets; rewards, awards, souvenirs; student stipends, tuition, scholarships. Please check with the PCSP Grants Administrator if there are questions about a potential expenditure.

XI. Contact People

For questions about the grant or the application process, contact Susan Moss at susan.moss@ode.state.oh.us, 614-644-3573.

For questions about sponsors or creating a community school, contact an ODE field consultant at the Office of Community Schools, 614-466-7058.