

GC 20-013a: Charter School Expansion Grant Questions and Answers

General

1. How do I obtain more information on the guidelines and eligibility requirements for this grant due November 2021?

Please see the [grant application](#) for this information.

Eligibility

2. I received an email today stating that certain elements have changed regarding this grant. Our charter was renewed for five years in 2017. Are we now eligible to apply?

To determine if your charter school education corporation is eligible to apply, please review the Eligibility section on pages 3 and 4 of the grant application.

3. I was reviewing the recent notice from the CSO about 2022-2024 Charter School Expansion Grants and am wondering if you could tell me whether or not [Charter School] is eligible to apply. In the past, I believe I looked the school up on a website for eligibility but I cannot seem to find it. I believe our last CSP grant was over five years ago.

There is no list of eligible applicants. To determine if your entity is eligible, please see the Eligibility section on pages 3 and 4 of the grant application.

4. [Charter School] was recently approved (2 years ago) for middle school expansion (grades 6-8). Most recently (last April) we received a 4 year charter renewal. In the eligibility requirements from July, the State was only accepting CSP applications from schools that received full, 5 year renewals. Will the State consider applications from schools that received a 4 year renewal?

The information in the Eligibility section of the [grant application](#) applies here. Eligibility requirements listed in any previous grant application are not relevant.

5. [Charter School] is currently undergoing our first charter renewal this year with an expansion to Middle School. As you know, this will be approved later in 2022, but since this is our first renewal are we eligible to submit an application on 11/19/21? Our expansion will happen during the grants project period of 7/1/22- 6/30/2023.

An eligible charter school must have had its charter renewed by the school's charter authorizer at least once at the time of application.

6. The [Charter School] is interested in applying for the New York State Department of Education GC 20-01a: Charter School Expansion Grant. We are in the process of putting together our request for support and wanted to know if we are still eligible to apply because this past September (2021), we opened our new middle school for students in grades 6th and 7th. In September 2022, [Charter School] anticipates to complete our enrollment with the addition of an 8th grade. Is [Charter School] still eligible to submit this application and receive funds from the expansion program?

Any charter school education corporation in the process of expanding or seeking to expand a charter school it operates may apply for this grant opportunity, provided that the charter school meets the eligibility requirements listed on pages 3 and 4 of the grant application.

7. From the Announcement of Funding Opportunity file, under the "Condition of Award" section, there is a note on the eligibility of charter schools seeking to expand. May I ask for clarification on this point? Would charter schools who are not seeking to expand (if they are currently at full capacity) still be eligible to apply? Any guidance on this point would be greatly appreciated as the [Charter School] network currently occupies two campuses, each with an elementary school and a middle school.

- [Charter School] - currently K-8 and will not expand in 2022-23
- [Charter School]- currently K-7 and will expand to K-8 in 2022-23

We are looking to submit two applications and just wanted confirmation that both schools are eligible, given the guidelines. On behalf of our organization, we thank you in advance for your assistance.

Operators of any existing charter school education corporation who believe that a charter school it operates meets the eligibility requirements may apply for this funding opportunity. In this particular circumstance, this is not a "network" with two separate campuses; each of the two charter schools listed is its own charter school education corporation with its own opportunities for expansion. Furthermore, all proposed expenditures must be directly related to expansion of the charter school operated by the charter school education corporation, and 40 of the 100 points in the rubric are based on need for program.

8. For Eligibility for the reissued RFP can you clarify when the last date is that a school would have had to have used funding? I see you say cannot have funds awarded in last 5 years but what if an award was made more than 5 years ago but funds were used within the last 5 years – are they still eligible then?

Section 4303(e)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015:

SUBGRANTS. —An eligible applicant may not receive more than 1 subgrant under this section for each individual charter school for a 5-year period, unless the eligible applicant demonstrates to the State entity that such individual charter school has at least 3 years of improved educational results for students enrolled in such charter school with respect to the elements described in subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section 4310(8).

NYSED considers “receive” to be equivalent to “be awarded”. Thus, NYSED considers a charter school to be ineligible for this grant if it was awarded a CSP planning and implementation grant by NYSED with a begin date that occurred at any time within the last five years.

9. I was wondering if the Charter School Expansion Grant would include adding a UPK curriculum to our school?

Yes.

Priority School Design

10. Per the RFP it seems that there is an expectation that we reach out to the authorizer to see if they will send us a letter acknowledging that we fit into one of these special categories. Would a letter from a CBO be appropriate when applicable?

The statement or other definitive evidence must come from the charter school’s authorizer.

Fiscal

11. We want to confirm that we will be able to include in our CSP Expansion budget expenses for expansion grades that will be implemented in the years after the CSP Expansion Period ends. Specifically, during the grant period we will be adding Grades 2 and 3, and then after the grant period, we will add Grade 4 (beginning July 1, 2024) and Grade 5 (beginning July 1, 2025). Given the CSP Expansion Grant period ends on June 30, 2024, are we still able to include expenditures related to FFE, curriculum, etc. that we will purchase in advance for these grades as long as we guarantee encumbrance of the CSP funds prior to end of the grant period?

Yes, as long as encumbrance of funds occurs prior to the end of the grant period.

12. Per the RFP only the 12 month budget is reviewed and scored. Our budget includes 2 years of funding. Our narrative thus includes both years. As only year 1 is scored, how do you suggest we develop the narrative? We have a tight page limit. Are we answering all questions for both years? Should we focus on year 1? What do you suggest?

To clarify, the budget narrative, not the 12-month budget, is scored (see the proposal evaluation rubric beginning on page 23 of the grant application). A two-year budget narrative is needed to provide a comprehensive plan of how the funds will be employed to support expansion of the charter school.

13. We are planning to move to new space to accommodate our expansion. We will not need all the space for the first year because our enrollment will be less; however we have to lease the entire space because of the terms of the lease. As no students are using this space for that first year is this an allowable expense for year 1? Should we prorate this expense based upon student enrollment per the expansion?

Yes, it is an allowable expense, although justification of the magnitude, necessity, and reasonability of the expense would be scored as part of the project narrative and/or budget narrative.

14. We are renovating space where we will move for our expansion. Are security cameras an allowable expense?

Yes.

15. As the proposed space does not have air conditioners in some rooms, is this an allowable expense?

Yes.

16. Is our contract for technology services an allowable expense? Do we calculate this based upon the number of students entering during the expansion years compared to total enrollment for the school?

*Proposed expenditures must be **directly related** to expansion. Technology services is an allowable expense, although justification of the magnitude, necessity, and reasonability of the expense would be scored as part of the project narrative and/or budget narrative.*

17. We need to make repairs to upgrade a kitchen to ensure compliance for the local health department etc. Can you confirm if this is an allowable expense? It appears so.

Yes.

18. Must project expenses be budgeted only during the project period July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024 or can they be incurred beforehand?

No. All expenses must be encumbered (aka obligated) during the grant period.

19. I also wanted to ask if bathroom upgrades and modifications and renovations to add additional bathrooms to our proposed future expansion space would also be considered an allowable expense.

Yes.

20. Would moving a wall and modifying some space to enlarge a classroom be considered an allowable expense? We think it would constitute renovation as opposed to construction however we wanted to clarify with you ahead of submission.

Yes, this would be considered minor remodeling.

21. The reissued CSP Expansion Grant application has the following new question,

“Provide the status of the charter revision permitting the expansion (e.g. approved by authorizer, under review by authorizer, to be submitted to authorizer).”

Our school’s elementary school expansion has been approved by our authorizer. This expansion is the subject our CSP Expansion Request. However, we are also in the

process of applying for another charter revision during the current charter term seeking expansion to the high school grades. We are submitting our charter revision request on December 1, 2021. If this request is approved, we will be requesting a planning year during the 2022-23 school year and then admitting our inaugural 9th grade class in 2023-24. Given the new question in this re-issued RFP that asks for the status of the charter revision, does this mean we can include in the CSP Expansion budget costs associated with an expansion that has not yet been approved? (and if so, what would happen if we include such costs but then the revision request is not approved?).

Any charter school education corporation seeking to expand a charter school it operates but does not yet have charter authorizer approval may apply for this grant opportunity, provided that the charter school meets the eligibility requirements listed on pages 3 and 4 of the grant application. Therefore, the project narrative/budget narrative may include expansion activities not yet approved by the charter authorizer. In this specific circumstance, should the proposal result in a grant award and subsequently the expansion request be denied by the charter authorizer, the program office will work with the charter school education corporation to remove those expenses from the budget.

M/WBE

22. If a school seeks funding to purchase equipment and/or technology that is only available through the creator/manufacturer, and that entity is not a M/WBE, how should the good faith compliance effort be documented? In other words, is it sufficient to simply state that the school is seeking to purchase equipment/technology that is available through a single source and that source is not a M/WBE or do you require a more detailed explanation as to why the school seeks funding to purchase the specific product?

It is sufficient to simply state that the school is seeking to purchase equipment/technology that is only available through a creator/manufacturer and that source is not a M/WBE.