

Iowa Charter Schools Program (Iowa CSP)

Application for New Awards (Federal ALN 84.282A)

Closing date: February 3, 2027 at 11:59 p.m.

*Applications are open to any newly authorized or currently operating charter school. The grant application timeline is as follows:

- Grant Application Released: November 15, 2026
- Application Due to DE: February 3, 2027
- Application Review Completed by DE: February / March 2027
- Award funds available: March / April 2027



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I. Grant Information

A. Overview

One of Iowa's education priorities is to increase access to high-quality public charter schools. Charter schools are tuition-free public schools that provide unique educational experiences. They are complementary to and supportive of district public and nonpublic schools, providing additional choice for families and students.

To strengthen Iowa's charter school sector, the Iowa Department of Education applied for and was awarded the *Expanding Opportunities Through Quality Charter Schools Program – Grants to State Entities (ALN 84.282A)* from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant totals \$43,285,068 over five years (FY26–FY30).

The purpose of the State Entities grant is to enable state grantees to support the development, expansion and sustainability of high-quality charter schools. The purpose of **Iowa CSP** is to support the opening, expanding or replicating of high-quality charter schools, particularly those serving disadvantaged students or offering innovative educational programming. For inquiries about the grant application, please contact Megan.Carter@iowa.gov and Stacie.Stokes@iowa.gov.

B. Eligibility

All currently operating or newly authorized charter schools in Iowa are eligible to apply for grant funds, except those that have received federal CSP funds for the same purpose (see item IV.A.11). Matching funds are not required. There are three different types of grants offered under the Iowa CSP: Start-up, Expansion and Replication.

Start-up (FY26-FY28) grants are to support the readiness of newly authorized charter schools to open and prepare for operation. This includes the planning and implementation of activities necessary to establish and open a newly authorized charter school. Eligible charter schools have not previously received **federal** Charter Schools Program start-up funds.

Start-up grants are open for application each year from FY26 through FY28, with funds available through FY30. Generally, total charter funds for start-up grants may not exceed a total of \$1.2 million, with equal distribution of funds across all funded years. ***Note, however, that awards and funding amounts are a result of the number of applications received within each funding category, and therefore the total amount of funds available each year may change.** All newly authorized charters that intend to open doors on or after August 2027 are eligible to apply for Start-up funds.

Expansion (FY26-FY28) grants are to expand the impact of existing high-quality charter schools. Expansion means increasing the capacity or scope of a high-quality existing charter school by increasing enrollment within authorized grade levels or adding one or more grades. If expansion exceeds the enrollment/grade levels in your current charter contract, a contract amendment will be required. Growth must be demonstrated within the terms of your approved charter agreement, or amended accordingly.

An increase in enrollment may be supported by enhancements to existing programming or the addition of new academic or educational programs. However, such programmatic changes alone do not constitute expansion absent an increase in enrollment or grade levels.

Expansion grants are open for application each year from FY26 through FY28, with funds available through FY30. Generally, total charter funds for expansion grants may not exceed a total of \$780,000, with equal distribution of funds across all funded years. ***Note, however, that awards and funding amounts are a result of the number of applications received within each funding category, and therefore the total amount of funds available each year may change.**

All charter schools open before August 2027 are eligible to apply for Expansion funds.

Replication (FY28-FY30) grants are to replicate the impact of existing high-quality charter school models. Replication grants are not available for application in 2026-2027.

Replication means opening a new charter school that substantially implements the educational model and key design elements of an existing high-quality charter school. All high-quality charter schools in operation for at least 3 years are eligible to apply for Replication grant funds.

Replication grants are open for application in FY28 and FY29, with funds available through FY30. Generally, total charter funds for expansion grants may not exceed a total of \$1.0 million, with equal distribution of funds across all funded years. ***Note, however, that awards and funding amounts are a result of the number of applications received within each funding category, and therefore the total amount of funds available each year may change.**

Definitions

Charter School is fully aligned with the federal definition from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), Section 4310(2) [20 U.S.C. 7221i], meets Iowa Code [256F](#) and [256E](#), and is defined as a public school authorized by the Iowa State Board that:

- (A) in accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the other requirements of this paragraph;
- (B) is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;
- (C) operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school's developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;
- (D) provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
- (E) is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
- (F) does not charge tuition;
- (G) complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et. seq.), section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (commonly referred to as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974), and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- (H) is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that-
 - (i) admits students on the basis of a lottery, consistent with section 4303(c)(3)(A), if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated; or

- (ii) in the case of a school that has an affiliated charter school (such as a school that is part of the same network of schools), automatically enrolls students who are enrolled in the immediate prior grade level of the affiliated charter school and, for any additional student openings or student openings created through regular attrition in student enrollment in the affiliated charter school and the enrolling school, admits students on the basis of a lottery as described in clause (i);
- (I) agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such State audit requirements are waived by the State;
- (J) meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
- (K) operates in accordance with State law;
- (L) has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school; and
- (M) may serve students in early childhood education programs or postsecondary students.

Note that charter schools must admit students on the basis of a lottery¹ if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated either by grade, classroom, or building capacity.

Expansion² is fully aligned with the federal definition from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), Section 4310(7) [20 U.S.C.7221i(7)], and when used with respect to a high-quality charter school, means to significantly increase enrollment or add one or more grades to the high-quality charter school.

An increase in student enrollment may be supported by enhancements to existing programming or the addition of new academic or educational programs. However, such programmatic changes alone do not constitute expansion absent an increase in enrollment or grade levels. Expansion occurs within the same governing structure and charter contract and does not create a separate charter school.

High-Quality Charter School is fully aligned with the federal definition from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), Section 4310(8) [20 U.S.C. 7221i(8)], and is defined as a charter school that:

- (A) Shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth, as determined by a State;
- (B) Has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance;

¹ Excluding the use of a weighted lottery.

² **Definition Waiver Requested.** The Iowa Department of Education has submitted a waiver for the definition of *Expansion*. The language in the waiver definition is included below for your reference. If approved, the IDE will revise Iowa CSP materials to reflect this change:

Expansion: to significantly increase enrollment, add one or more grade levels, and/or expand academic programming through the implementation of one or more new academic or educational programs.

- (C) Has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students served by the charter school; and
- (D) Has demonstrated success in increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for each of the subgroups of students, as defined in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, except that such demonstration is not required in cases in which the number of students in a subgroup is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

Replication is fully aligned with the federal definition from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), Section 4310(9) [20 U.S.C. 7221i(9)], and, when used with respect to a high-quality charter school, is defined as the opening of a new charter school, or a new campus of a high-quality charter school, based on the educational model of an existing high-quality charter school, under an existing charter or an additional charter, if permitted or required by State law.

Replication creates a new school entity, even if operated by the same governing board or management organization. The new charter must maintain fidelity to the proven design of the original high-quality school.

Start-up is fully aligned with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), Section 4303(b)(1)(A) [20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(1)(A)], and is defined as: To open and prepare for the operation of a new charter school.

Note that start-up is focused on planning and implementation activities necessary to establish and open a newly authorized charter school that has not previously received **federal** Charter Schools Program start-up funds for initial operation³. Start-up activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Program and curriculum development;
- Staff recruitment and professional development;
- Governance and operational planning;
- Financial management system development;
- Facility preparation;
- Student recruitment and enrollment;
- Acquisition of instructional materials, equipment and technology.

Start-up refers specifically to the planning and implementation period leading to a charter school's opening and initial operations. This does not include the expansion of an existing school or the replication of a currently operating model

³ For a full list of CSP grants, please visit the [Charter School Program grant page](#) on the U.S. Department of Education's site.

Funding Restrictions

Subgrant funds must be used for activities related to the opening, replication or expansion of high-quality charter schools:

- **Start-up:** Funds support planning and implementation activities to prepare a newly authorized charter school for initial operation. Start-up subgrants may use up to 18 months of the grant period for planning and design;
- **Expansion:** Funds support activities that increase enrollment in currently offered grades or add one or more grades at an existing high-quality charter school. An increase in enrollment may be supported by enhancements to existing programming or the addition of new academic or educational programs. However, programmatic changes alone do not constitute expansion absent an increase in enrollment or grade levels;
- **Replication:** Funds support the opening of a new charter school that substantially implements the educational model and key design elements of an existing high-quality charter school.

Subgrant Terms

- Subgrant awards are generally for a period of up to five years or through FY30, whichever comes first, depending on the award year.
- Applicants may apply for and be awarded up to two Iowa CSP subgrants during the five-year period (FY26 to FY30). However, additional subgrant applications must not duplicate previously awarded grant activities (start-up, expansion, replication). For example, if awarded a subgrant previously for start-up, the additional subgrant application purpose must be for expansion or replication.
- All costs charged to the grant must be reasonable and necessary to achieve the goals of opening, replicating or expanding charter schools.

Compliance and Audit Requirements

- Grantees and subgrantees must follow the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200).
- Entities that expend \$1 million or more in federal awards in a fiscal year must undergo a federal audit as specified in 2 CFR 200.501(a).
- Charter school subgrantees must follow all federal procurement requirements and use funds only for approved activities under this program.

Allowable Uses of Funds

See Table1 for allowable uses of funds, as required by Section 4303(h) of the ESEA [20 U.S.C. 7221b].

Table 1 Use of Funds: Allowable | Not Allowable

Categories	Description
Supporting Personnel	Preparing teachers, school leaders and specialized instructional support personnel, including through paying the costs associated with - Providing professional development; and - Hiring and compensating, during the eligible applicant's planning period specified in the application for subgrant funds that is required under this program, one or more of the following: - Teachers - School leaders - Specialized instructional support personnel
Supplies-Equipment.	Acquiring supplies, training, equipment (including technology) and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials).
Renovation	Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction).
Transportation	Providing one-time startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school.
Community Engagement and Recruitment	Carrying out community engagement activities, which may include paying the cost of student and staff recruitment.
Other	Providing for other appropriate, non-sustained costs related to start-up, replication and expansion which cannot be met from other sources.
Not Allowable	- Activities unrelated to charter school opening, replication or expansion. - Facilities, activities or programs already funded by another federal CSP grant. - General operating expenses unrelated to the grant's approved scope. - Purchase or construction of facilities.

All costs charged to the grant must be reasonable, necessary and allowable under federal cost principles (2 CFR Part 200). Costs that do not meet these standards are unallowable.

Funding Window and Timing

- The spending window begins on the letter award date and must be fully expended by September 30, 2030.
- Funds may not be accessed until a fully executed grant agreement is on file with the Department.
- Funds must be used for expenses incurred after the award date in Year 1 (through September 2027). For Years 2–5, funds must be used for expenses starting October 1 of each award year.
- Matching funds are not required, but applicants must provide their current total charter school budget, including operational costs and invested funds, in their proposal.

Payment Provisions

1. It is understood that this program is funded on a cost-reimbursement basis for actual costs during the period of performance for allowable and documented expenses under the grant agreement.
2. Payments will be made on a monthly basis, based on claims submitted and approved. All payments are contingent on available grant funding and the timely submission of claims by the awarded grantee.
3. Any funds not expended by the end of the grant period must be reverted. A warrant for the reversion amount must accompany the year-end report to the U.S. Department of Education.

Reporting

Charter school subgrantees will participate in the IA CSP Monitoring Tool, which will provide reports, as well as requested updates to the Department documenting the activities and amount of funds expended in each allowable category. Grant funds are subject to all provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), as well as all federal laws, requirements and regulations for procurement procedures for acquiring property or services. Failure to submit reports by stated due dates shall result in suspension of financial payments until the time that the report is received. Further, the following are required data points for reporting purposes:

- Completion of grant-related surveys, for example, student and family satisfaction surveys, training and technical assistance feedback surveys and program implementation surveys.
- Engagement in ongoing focus groups or community conversations, including discussions on charter network support, monitoring review improvements and family/community engagement.
- Submission of programmatic and operational data, including annual student enrollment and seats by grade, documentation of program models for at-risk or underserved students and implementation of innovative educational programs.
- Submission of student performance data, including state assessment results, proficiency metrics and other outcomes required for High-Quality Charter Monitoring Review standards.
- Documentation of monitoring and compliance activities, including completion of grant activities and reports on time and within budget, or submission of corrective action plans if monitoring standards are not fully met.
- Evidence of use and access of collaborative resources, demonstrating that established resources and best practices are used to support educational programming and school operations.
- Any additional data or reporting requested to meet the requirements of the federal Charter Schools Program or the Iowa CSP.

Application Submission Procedures

The Iowa CSP application is available within Iowa's Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA). The application itself follows the exact order of entry as what is presented in this application packet.

Note: New charter schools that are not yet affiliated with the State and do not have a previously authorized charter school in operation will be granted access to CASA by the IA CSP Grant Team.

The IA CSP Team will ensure sufficient time is provided to allow for the processing and retrieval of a State ID Number along with the completion of the Iowa CSP application by **February 3, 2026 at 11:59 pm**.

1. Access the Iowa Charter School Program (Iowa CSP) application.

- i. Log into [EdPortal](#)
- ii. Sign in to EdPortal using the ID provided to you.

Note: Schools that will be “newly” authorized will need to establish a [State ID Number](#).

2. Access [CASA](#) for Iowa Charter School Program (Iowa CSP) application (CASA: Iowa CSP opens November 15)

- i. Log into [EdPortal](#)
- i. Access **CASA**
- ii. Select the Iowa Charter School Program Grant (Iowa CSP) folder
- iii. Select the FY27 Iowa CSP Application
- iv. Complete and **submit** all application items

II. Required Section Checklist

See Table 2 below for a checklist of each required section, total points possible and related description.

Table 2 Checklist of Required Sections

✓	Required Section	Points	Description
	III.A. Cover Page	1	This section requires the applicant to select the applicable fund type (Start-Up, Expansion or Replication) and provide complete contact information for key charter school personnel.
	III.B. Executive Summary	5	This section requires the applicant to provide a concise overview of the charter’s mission and vision, the needs the grant will address, the purpose, activities and goals of the proposed project and any absolute or competitive priorities supported by the request.
	III.C. PFC, Absolute and Competitive Priorities	15	This section requires the applicant to indicate and describe their eligibility for the Iowa CSP priority funding criteria (PFC), address the required Absolute Priority on implementation of evidence-based best practices and respond to one or both Competitive Preference Priorities.
	III.D. Project Need	15	This section requires the applicant to describe the results of a community needs assessment and explain how the requested funds will address identified needs. Applicants must demonstrate alignment between the charter school’s mission, vision, and programming, the community demand and identified community need(s). Specific requirements and supporting documentation is determined by the proposal type: Start-Up, Expansion or Replication.

✓	Required Section	Points	Description
	III.E. Project Design	25	This section requires the applicant to describe the specific purpose, measurable goals, activities, timeline and family engagement strategies for the Iowa CSP-funded project. Applicants must clearly distinguish grant-funded activities from the broader charter plan and demonstrate how funds will support successful implementation and improved student outcomes.
	III.F. Management and Applicant Capacity	30	This section requires the applicant to describe the management structure, roles and leadership capacity for the Iowa CSP-funded project. Applicants must demonstrate that qualified personnel and, if applicable, partners are clearly assigned and capable of implementing and overseeing all grant activities successfully.
	III.G. Monitoring and Evaluation	25	This section requires the applicant to describe how they will monitor and evaluate the Iowa CSP-funded project. Applicants must include progress monitoring, using data to inform improvements, adjusting activities as needed and ensuring compliance to achieve grant objectives and maximize student and program outcomes.
	III.H. Budget and Budget Narrative	30	This section requires the applicant to provide a detailed budget and narrative explaining how each proposed Iowa CSP expenditure supports project objectives. Applicants must distinguish one-time and ongoing costs, align budget items with allowable fund categories and ensure sustainability, including travel and professional development for required Iowa Charter School Network and related events.
	IV.A. Assurances	1	This section requires applicants to review and affirm compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and grant requirements. This includes use of funds, procurement, civil rights, nondiscrimination, reporting, audits and enrollment policies.
	IV.B. GEPA Statement	1	This section requires applicants to assure that they will provide equitable access and participation in the Iowa CSP-funded project for all students, teachers and beneficiaries. Applicants must describe strategies to identify and remove barriers related to disability, language, race, color, national origin, sex or age.
	IV.C. Certification Signatures	1	This section requires applicants to download, sign and upload the certified signature page to formally submit the Iowa CSP application and agree to all conditions and assurances.
	IV.D. Resumes/Vitae	.5	Applicants must provide a single document of resumes or CVs for all key staff responsible for implementing the proposed charter school activities. Limit 2 pages per individual.
	IV.E. Letters of Support	.5	Applicants may submit a single document of letters demonstrating community, partner or stakeholder endorsement of the proposed charter school project.
	IV.F. Additional Information	NA	Applicants may submit a single document with any supplementary materials, clarifications or other relevant information supporting the application.
	Total Points	140 +	10 competitive points = 150 total points possible

III. Grant Application Sections

Below provides the applicant with the information required for each section as it appears in CASA. This section can be used to draft the application prior to submission.

Cover Page (1 point)

1. Select the fund type from the options below:

- ☐ Start-Up
- ☐ Expansion (if selected, answer 1a and 1b)
- ☐ Replication (Starts FY28)

1a. Select Expansion Grant Type:

- ☐ Enrollment
- ☐ One or more grades
- ☐ One or more academic/educational programs

1b. Indicate Planned Enrollment expansion across each year of the grant:

Year 1:

Year 2:

Year 3:

Year 4:

Year 5:

2. Does your charter school currently have a waitlist?

- ☐ Yes (if yes, answer 2a)
- ☐ No

2a. How many students are currently on the waitlist?

3. Provide the appropriate charter school contact information as indicated:

- LEA/District Name (School board model only)
- LEA/District Location (School board model only)
- Charter School Location. Physical address or geographic location.
- Charter School Name.
- CSP Principal. Name, email, phone
- CSP Grant Coordinator. Name, email, phone
- CSP Facilities Manager. Name, email, phone
- School Business Officer. Name, email, phone
- Governing Board President. Name, email, phone

4. If applicable, provide the following information for the Charter Management Organization (CMO): Name, email, phone, roles and responsibilities

- ☐ Indicate if the charter school is operated by this CMO
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

5. If applicable, provide the following information for the Education Management Organization (EMO): Name, email, phone, roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Indicate if the charter school is operated by this EMO
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
6. Check all that apply to your charter school
- ☐ Our school is a full-service community school
 - ☐ Our school is a magnet school
 - ☐ Our school is a Title I school
 - ☐ Our school is virtual
 - ☐ Our school is a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) school
 - ☐ Our school is a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) school
 - ☐ Our school is a Career and Technical Education (CTE) school
 - ☐ Other _____

Executive Summary (5 points)

The executive summary should be a brief overview of the purpose, activities and goals of the grant, including how these fulfill the needs the grant seeks to address. Provide a concise summary of the following:

- Charter school mission and vision, and how requested funds will directly support them
- Absolute or competitive preference priorities the grant will address
- Charter school needs that the grant seeks to address
- Purpose, activities and goals of the grant

Priority Funding Criteria and Absolute and Competitive Preference Priorities (15 points)

The Iowa CSP has three priority funding criteria, one absolute and two competitive preference priorities. Applicants must indicate their priority funding criteria status (including descriptions, if applicable) and address the absolute priority. Applicants need to address one or both of the competitive preference priorities.

Priority Funding Criteria (PFC: 5 additional points)

There are three priority funding criteria for up to 5 additional points:

- **PFC#1:** Rural School (1 point). Indicate whether the charter is in rural Iowa,
- **PFC#2:** Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) (2 points). Indicate whether the charter is located in the same geographic area as a district with one or more CSI schools, and
- **PFC#3:** Dropout prevention/Recovery (2 points). Describe any dropout prevention and recovery programs, and career counseling services that will be implemented as a result of charter funds (only available for additional points if competitive preference priority #1 is addressed).

Absolute Priority: Implementation of Best Practices (5 points - must be addressed)

Under this competition, the implementation of best practices is an absolute priority. **Only applications that meet this priority will be considered for funding.** To meet this priority, the applicant must

summarize how the charter implements evidence-based best practices in charter school governance, leadership, instructional programming, use of data to inform decision-making and student support systems to promote strong student academic outcomes and post-high school success.

Competitive Preference Priorities.

Under this competition, applicants **must address** one or both of the competitive preference priorities listed.

CPP #1 (2 points). Competitive Preference Priority: Serving Educationally Disadvantaged or Underserved Students.

To meet this priority, the applicant must clearly identify the at-risk or underserved student population(s) the proposed charter school intends to serve, including data to substantiate need. The application should describe enrollment targets, outreach strategies, evidence-based supports or strategies designed to improve student outcomes. The applicant must also explain the alignment and integration of the proposed services and support into the overall school model.

CPP #2 (3 points). Competitive Preference Priority: Innovative Charter School Models.

To meet this priority, the applicant must describe the innovative model or models that are designed to improve student outcomes that are not widely available in the applicant's geographic area, such as career-focused academies, classical and civics education, STEM, career and technical education, competency-based learning or other evidence-based instructional approaches. Models that serve unique student populations, such as students with disabilities or receiving special education or related services, military-connected students, students living in rural areas or Native American students also meet the competitive preference priority for innovative models.

Project Need (15 points)

Applicants must describe the completed community needs assessment and how the requested funds will address the identified results. This description must include a clear demonstration of the alignment between the community need, support of the charter school and how the school's mission, vision and programming address the results of the community assessment.

Start-up. The application must demonstrate a need for additional funding to increase charter readiness to open for initial operation (see Iowa's [Pre-Opening Checklist](#)). Applicants must identify specific areas requiring support and explain how the requested funds will address those needs. An upload of documentation demonstrating evidence of need will be required, which may include:

- Evidence of student and family demand for a charter option;
- An analysis of existing educational programming within the geographic area to demonstrate the charter option is needed; and
- Engagement with the resident district and, where applicable, nonpublic schools to assess needs within the broader local educational landscape.

Expansion. The application must describe the needs assessment conducted, including how the needs were identified and the results of that assessment. The description must clearly explain how the proposed expansion activities and requested funds address the identified needs. An upload of documentation demonstrating the evidence of need will be required and may include:

- Evidence of student and family demand for increased enrollment or additional grade levels, such as survey results, waitlists, enrollment interest forms or participation data;

- An analysis of existing educational programming within the geographic area to demonstrate that the proposed expansion addresses unmet needs and does not duplicate substantially under-enrolled programs; and
- Engagement with the resident district and, where applicable, nonpublic schools to assess programmatic needs within the broader local educational landscape.

Replication. The application must demonstrate a clear need for replicating the existing high-quality charter school model in the proposed location. Applicants must describe the data and rationale supporting replication, including evidence of community demand and the capacity of the model to achieve similar outcomes in the new setting. Applicants will be required to upload documentation demonstrating evidence of need, which may include:

- Evidence of student and family interest in the proposed school model in the new geographic area;
- An analysis of current educational offerings in the area to demonstrate that the replicated model fills an identified gap or unmet need; and
- Engagement with the resident district and, where applicable, nonpublic schools to assess alignment within the overall portfolio of school program offerings.

Project Design (25 points)

The Project Design section describes the specific purpose, goals and activities of the proposed Iowa CSP-funded project. This section must clearly distinguish the activities supported by Iowa CSP funds from the broader charter authorization narrative. Applicants must describe how grant funds will be used to support the start-up, expansion or replication of a high-quality charter school, consistent with the definitions and allowable uses of funds outlined in this application. Applicants must provide a detailed action plan that includes:

Purpose and Goals of the Project (5 points). A clear description of the purpose of the Iowa CSP-funded project and the specific, measurable goals the charter intends to achieve during the grant period. Goals must align with the selected grant type (Start-up, Expansion or Replication) and demonstrate how funds will directly support successful implementation and improved student outcomes.

Project Activities and Milestones (10 points). A detailed description of the key activities that will be implemented using Iowa CSP funds. Activities must be directly tied to allowable uses of funds and clearly connected to the stated goals. Applicants must include a timeline that identifies major milestones, responsible parties and anticipated completion dates for critical tasks necessary to achieve project goals.

Parent and Family Engagement (5 points). A description of how parents and guardians will be engaged in the proposed charter school and in activities supported by Iowa CSP funds. Applicants must describe how parent input will be solicited and considered using both required Iowa CSP surveys and focus groups as well as charter-specific collection methods; how family-school partnerships will support student learning; how the school will provide ongoing opportunities for communication, including parent-teacher conferences; and how the school will ensure accessible communication for families who do not speak English. Ongoing family engagement strategies must be clearly described.

Coherent and Actionable (5 points). The Project Design narrative presents a coherent and actionable plan demonstrating how the proposed activities will be implemented effectively within and sustained beyond the grant period.

Management Plan and Applicant Capacity (30 points)

This section describes how the proposed Iowa CSP-funded project will be managed and who will be responsible for implementing the approved activities. Applicants must demonstrate a clear management structure, defined roles and responsibilities and sufficient leadership capacity to successfully carry out the proposed grant activities within the project period.

Management Plan (15 points). Applicants must describe how the Iowa CSP-funded project will be implemented and overseen. The management plan should demonstrate that authority, reporting relationships and decision-making responsibility related to the grant are clearly defined and aligned to successful execution of project activities. The narrative must clearly identify:

- The individual(s) responsible for overall grant management and coordination.
- The roles and responsibilities of key personnel involved in implementing project activities.
- How responsibilities are assigned to ensure activities are completed on time and within scope.
- How leadership will oversee grant implementation, including coordination between school administration, governing board (as applicable) and any partners supporting the project. Include an uploaded Iowa CSP operational chart labeled: **III.F.Iowa CSP Operational Chart** (there will be an area to upload a management or operational chart in CASA).
- If an Education Service Provider (ESP), Charter Management Organization (CMO) or other partner will support implementation of grant-funded activities, the applicant must clearly define the role of that entity in relation to the Iowa CSP project and include this in the uploaded Iowa CSP Operational Chart.

Capacity of Key Personnel (15 points). Applicants must demonstrate that the individuals responsible for implementing the Iowa CSP-funded project possess the qualifications, experience and time commitment necessary to carry out the proposed activities effectively. Applicants must clearly demonstrate that the leadership team has the capacity to manage grant funds responsibly, implement the proposed activities with fidelity and support strong educational outcomes aligned with the goals of the Iowa CSP. For each key individual involved in the grant (e.g., project director, principal, business manager, program lead or other critical personnel), applicants must provide:

- Name and title
- Role in the Iowa CSP project
- Relevant background and professional experience - applicants must upload one document with the resumes/vitae of all named individuals labeled: **IV.D.Resumes-Vitae**.
- Specific expertise that supports successful implementation of the proposed activities
- If a position has not yet been filled, applicants must describe the role, required qualifications and hiring timeline.

Monitoring and Evaluation (25 points)

Applicants must describe how the proposed Iowa CSP-funded project will be managed and who will be responsible for implementing the approved activities. Describe the processes your charter will use to

evaluate and monitor the implementation of the project to ensure activities are carried out on time, within budget and as planned. This includes:

- Tracking progress of project activities and milestones aligned to the proposed project design.
- Using data from surveys, community engagement, focus groups or other feedback mechanisms to inform next steps and improve implementation (see Section **1.B.Reporting** for list of potential data).
- Using evaluation results to determine the impact of project activities on students, families and the school.
- Adjusting project activities based on monitoring findings to strengthen outcomes and ensure the objectives of the grant are achieved.
- Demonstrating continuous improvement by applying evaluation insights to refine and enhance project activities, ensure sustainability and maximize student and program outcomes.
- Ensuring compliance with all grant requirements, including allowable uses of funds, procurement procedures and reporting expectations. Note that reporting expectations include providing programmatic, operational, financial and compliance evidence upon request during the grant period. Broad categories of such required information include:
 - Charter school definition and legal compliance documentation
 - Programmatic and operational data (e.g., enrollment, performance, lottery records, parent/community input)
 - Fiscal controls and use of funds documentation
 - Management organization contracts and board of oversight (if applicable)
 - Progress toward approved enrollment projections and grant activities

Budget and Budget Narrative (30 points)

Applicants must submit a budget and budget narrative that match the proposed Iowa CSP expenditures and clearly show how each cost supports the objectives and activities described in the Project Design section. The narrative must demonstrate that all requested funds are necessary, reasonable and allocable to the project and aligned with allowable use-of-funds categories, such as staff preparation, materials and equipment, facility-related costs, transportation, community engagement and other start-up or one-time expenses.

The narrative must distinguish between one-time start-up costs and ongoing operational costs and explain how core program elements will be sustained beyond the grant period, consistent with ESEA §4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(V).

Applicants must submit a detailed Iowa CSP-specific budget and narrative using the [III.H. Iowa CSP Budget spreadsheet](#). The budget must include all proposed uses of Iowa CSP funds, organized by funding category and aligned with the project's objectives, activities and timeline. Travel, professional development and technical assistance costs should be included as appropriate to support grant implementation, subgrantee support and statewide collaboration.

The budget must also reserve funds for attendance at the annual Iowa Charter School Network event (up to 2 days) and other Network events. The budget may also reserve funds for the following: travel to the National Charter Schools Conference hosted by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, attendance at Iowa Department of Education events such as HQIM Leadership Academy, Every

Learner Forward, Teaching for Impact, and travel opportunities hosted by the Iowa Coalition, including visits to model schools in other states.

IV. Attachments

The attachments section provides required documentation to demonstrate compliance with federal and state requirements, as well as support for the proposed charter school project. Applicants must carefully review each item and ensure all required assurances, statements, signatures and supporting materials are completed and uploaded. Each type of attachment must be compiled into a single document and uploaded to the designated section of the CASA application site, using the labels provided for clarity.

Assurances (1 point)

Review all assurances carefully before answering. **Each assurance must be answered in order for the application to be considered for review.**

1. If awarded a grant under Iowa CSP, the charter will use funds only for activities allowable in the grant as outlined in Table 4. Use of Funds, related to the appropriate grant type described under Definitions.
☐ Yes
☐ No
2. The Charter meets the federal definition of **Charter School** from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), Section 4310(2) [20 U.S.C. 7221i], and meets Iowa Code [256F](#) and [256E](#) as outlined on pages 5-6 of the Iowa Charter School Program Grant (Iowa CSP): Application for New Awards _FY26.
☐ Yes
☐ No
3. The Charter will follow all federal laws, requirements and regulations for procurement procedures for acquiring property or services. (Note: these must be consistent with state, local and tribal laws and regulations and conform to the procurement standards identified in §§ 200.317 through 200.327).
☐ Yes
☐ No
4. The Charter will cooperate with any examination of the grant records supported by the federal State Entities CSP funds (including financial records related to use of grant funds) by making both records available for inspection, production and examination; and authorized individuals available for interview and examination. Records will be retained separately from other grant funds in accordance with federal record retention requirements.
☐ Yes
☐ No

5. The Charter will comply with Federal civil rights, nondiscrimination and disability laws, including the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); Section 444 of the GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (FERPA), and all other applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws.
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
6. The Charter will not use funds with respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the SEA will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 CFR Part 82, Appendix B).
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
7. The Charter will comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), including Subpart D—Post Federal Award Requirements (2 CFR §§200.300-345) and Subpart E—Cost Principles (2 CFR §§200.400-475), and with all applicable assurances contained in OMB Standard Forms 424B and 424D (Assurances for Non-Construction and Construction Programs), including but not limited to legal authority to apply; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders and regulations.
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
8. The Charter will meet all applicable federal, state and local health and safety requirements and laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, creed, religion, actual or potential family, parental or marital status. The charter school will be subject to any court-ordered desegregation in effect for the school district, unless otherwise specifically provided for in the desegregation order.
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
9. The Charter will comply with all reporting requirements, including all data and evidence requested by the Iowa Department of Education to meet federal CSP-State Entity monitoring requirements for the duration of the awarded Iowa CSP grant in accordance with federal and state requirements.
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. The Charter will meet and follow each applicable grant condition for the duration of the awarded Iowa CSP grant. Failure to maintain any of these conditions may result in corrective action, suspension or revocation of awarded funds in accordance with applicable federal and state law.
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
11. The Charter will comply with Iowa Code 256E regarding student admissions and enrollment procedures. The Charter will not implement or utilize a weighted lottery system and will not apply any enrollment preferences beyond the statutory sibling preference permitted under Iowa Code 256E.7(5).
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
12. The Charter has previously received and/or is currently receiving funds under the **federal** Charter Schools Program.
- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If “Yes” is selected, the applicant must provide the following in the designated section of the CASA application site:

- Grant name
 - CSP Credit Enhancement Program
 - Charter Management Organization grant
 - CSP Developer grant
 - State Entities grant
- Funding period
- Award amount
- Brief description of outcomes and compliance status
- Grant type:
 - Start-up
 - Expansion
 - Replication

GEPA Statement (1 point)

In compliance with Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), the applicant assures that it will take all necessary steps to ensure equitable access to and participation in, the Iowa CSP-funded project for students, teachers and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This includes identifying and addressing potential barriers related to disability, limited English proficiency, race, color, national origin, sex or age.

The applicant will describe and implement strategies to mitigate barriers, which may include targeted outreach to underrepresented groups, accessible communications, language assistance services, reasonable accommodations and other measures consistent with applicable federal civil rights laws.

Certification Signatures (1 point)

Download, print and sign the certified signatures document, then upload it in the space provided within the CASA application. This single document should be labeled: **IV.C. Certification Signatures.**

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, do hereby submit an Iowa CSP application and agree to the conditions and assurances contained therein.

_____	_____
Charter Principal	Date

_____	_____
School Business Officer Signature*	Date

_____	_____
Governing Board President Signature*	Date

_____	_____
Education Service Provider Authorized Representative Signature*	Date

*If identified

Resumes/ Vitae (.5 points)

Applicants must include resumes or curriculum vitae for all key staff responsible for implementing the proposed charter school activities. All resumes or CVs must be compiled into a single document and uploaded to the CASA application site. Multiple files for resumes will not be accepted. That single document should be labeled: **IV.D. Resumes-Vitae**.

Letters of Support (.5 points)

Applicants may provide letters of support demonstrating community, partner or stakeholder endorsement of the proposed charter school project. Letters should reflect meaningful engagement with families, local districts and other partners as appropriate. All letters of support must be uploaded as a single document in the designated section of the CASA application site. That single document should be labeled: **IV.E. Letters of Support**.

Additional Information

Applicants may provide any other relevant information to support their application, such as supplementary documentation, clarifications or supporting materials. All additional information must be uploaded as a single document in the designated section of the CASA application site. That single document should be labeled: **IV.F. Additional Information**

V. Iowa CSP Application Review Rubric

Table 3 provides the overall rating system applied across application items. An applicant will receive specific ratings based on the quality of responses to any given item.

Table 3 Overall Rating Description

Rating	Description
Fully Developed 95-100% of section points	The response completely and directly addresses all aspects of the criterion. All required elements are present, thoroughly explained and supported with clear, specific and internally consistent information. The level of detail demonstrates strong feasibility and clear compliance with requirements. No gaps, inconsistencies or concerns are identified.
Well Developed *Approximately 80-94% of the points	The response addresses all aspects of the criterion. All required elements are present and clearly described, with sufficient detail to demonstrate feasibility and compliance. Minor clarifications or small enhancements could strengthen the response, but no significant gaps or concerns are identified.
Adequately Developed *Approximately 50-79% of the points	The response addresses the main aspects of the criterion but lacks depth, specificity or full clarity in one or more areas. At least one required element is underdeveloped, insufficiently explained or somewhat unclear. Feasibility or compliance can be generally inferred but is not fully demonstrated. Minor to moderate concerns or unanswered questions remain.
Partially Developed *Approximately 20-49% of the points	The response partially addresses the criterion but omits or inadequately addresses one or more required elements. Information provided is limited, vague, inconsistent or lacks sufficient detail to determine feasibility or compliance. Moderate to significant concerns or substantial unanswered questions remain.
Not Addressed *Approximately <20% of the points	The response fails to meaningfully address the criterion or omits most or all required elements. Information is minimal, vague, inconsistent or not relevant to the criterion. Feasibility and compliance cannot be determined. Significant concerns are present.

*Approximately, as some points are removed completely, or remain stable across rating categories, which impacts the total percent

Table 4 Reviewer Scoring

Required Section	Scoring Description	Fully	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Not Addressed
III.A. Cover Page	Indicates the selected fund type (Start-up, Expansion or Replication) and provides complete and clearly labeled contact information for all required positions. Responses are incomplete if any required field is missing or lacks full contact details.	1	1	0.5	0.5	0
III.B. Executive Summary	Briefly summarizes the following in 600 words or less: - Charter school mission and vision, and how requested funds directly support them - Any absolute or competitive preference priorities the grant will address - Charter school needs that the grant seeks to address Purpose, activities and goals of the grant	5	4	3	2	0-1
III.C. Absolute Priority	The summary provided demonstrates that the charter implements evidence-based best practices in governance, leadership, instructional programming, data-informed decision-making and student support systems to promote strong student academic outcomes and post-high school success.	5	4	3	2	0-1
III.C. PFC #1: Rural Schools	The Rural School option is selected for a full 1 point. No points if not selected.	1	NA	NA	NA	NA
III.C. PFC #2: CSI School	The CSI School option is selected for a full 2 points. No points if not selected.	2	NA	NA	NA	NA
III.C. PFC #3: Dropout Prevention	The Dropout Prevention option is selected, and the summary description indicates the charter will implement either a dropout prevention/recovery program or career counseling services as a result of obtaining charter funds. Note that these points may only be provided if the applicant addresses CPP #1: At-Risk/Underserved.	2	NA	NA	NA	NA

Required Section	Scoring Description	Fully	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Not Addressed
III.C. CPP #1: At-Risk/Underserved	Applicant description: - Identifies student population(s) to be served - Provides data to substantiate need - Describes specific supports, strategies or targets Aligns proposed services with the school model	2	1.5	1	.5	0
III.C. CPP #2: Innovative Model	Applicant description: - Identifies student population(s) to be served - Describes the innovative model(s) Provides evidence of effectiveness or research-based rationale for the model(s), specific to the student population to be served.	3	2	1	.5	0
III.D. Project Need	The response clearly demonstrates a well-documented and compelling need for the charter school or proposed expansion/replication, supported by evidence and aligned to the school's purpose, vision and mission. For start-up projects, the applicant identifies specific areas requiring support to achieve charter readiness and explains how requested funds will address those needs. For expansion projects, the response presents a thorough needs assessment, including evidence of student and family demand, analysis of existing programs to show unmet needs and engagement with local districts or nonpublic schools. For replication projects, the response provides clear data and rationale showing community demand, alignment with local educational offerings and the capacity of the model to achieve strong outcomes in the new location. Documentation or other evidence supporting identified needs is included, and all information is coherent, detailed and directly tied to the requested use of Iowa CSP funds.	14-15	12-13	8-11	3-7	0-2

Required Section	Scoring Description	Fully	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Not Addressed
III.E. Project Design	The response presents a coherent, actionable plan demonstrating how Iowa CSP funds will be used to support the start-up, expansion or replication of a high-quality charter school. The purpose and goals of the project are clearly defined, specific and measurable, aligned with the selected grant type, and directly tied to improved student outcomes. The proposed activities are detailed, feasible and explicitly connected to allowable uses of funds and the stated goals, with a timeline that identifies major milestones, responsible parties and anticipated completion dates. The response also demonstrates meaningful parent and family engagement, including obtaining/using input through required surveys and focus groups, school-specific methods and ongoing communication strategies that are accessible to all families. The narrative provides sufficient detail to show that the project can be successfully implemented within the grant period.	24-25	20-23	13-19	5-12	0-4
III.F. Management and Applicant Capacity	The response demonstrates a clear, well-structured management plan and strong leadership capacity to implement the Iowa CSP-funded project successfully. Roles, responsibilities, reporting relationships and decision-making authority are clearly defined, aligned with project activities, and supported by an operational chart that shows coordination among school administration, governing board and any partner organizations, including ESPs or CMOs. Key personnel are identified, and their qualifications, relevant experience and time commitment are clearly documented, demonstrating the capacity to manage grant funds responsibly, implement activities with fidelity and achieve the project's goals. For positions not yet filled, the response provides a clear description of required qualifications and a realistic hiring timeline. Overall, the narrative conveys that the project has the organizational and personnel capacity necessary for successful, timely and effective execution of all grant-funded activities.	29-30	24-28	15-23	6-14	0-5

Required Section	Scoring Description	Fully	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Not Addressed
III.G. Monitoring and Evaluation	The response demonstrates a comprehensive description for monitoring and evaluating the Iowa CSP-funded project to ensure effective implementation and continuous improvement. The description clearly indicates how progress on project activities and milestones will be tracked, how data from surveys, focus groups, community engagement and other feedback mechanisms will be collected and used to inform next steps (continuous improvement) and how evaluation results will be applied to assess the impact of project activities on students, families and the school. Overall, the response provides sufficient detail to demonstrate that the project will be implemented and monitored effectively, and continuously improved to maximize student and program outcomes.	24-25	20-23	13-19	5-12	0-4
III.H. Budget and Budget Narrative	The response presents a clear, detailed and well-justified budget demonstrating that all requested Iowa CSP funds are necessary, reasonable and directly aligned with the goals and activities described in the Project Design section. The budget narrative clearly explains how costs support project implementation and addresses the sustainability of core program elements beyond the grant period. The proposed expenditures are clear and aligned with allowable use-of-funds and budget line items. The budget demonstrates mathematical accuracy and internal consistency, and differentiates startup vs. ongoing costs. Travel costs for required Iowa Charter School Network events, national and state conferences and other relevant activities are included where appropriate.	29-30	24-28	15-23	6-14	0-5
IV.A. Assurances	The response indicates “Yes” for all required assurances. If “No” is selected for any item, the application is ineligible for review, with one exception regarding funds awarded by the Federal Charter Schools Program. If this allowable item is answered “No,” the applicant must provide the grant name, funding period, award amount and a brief description of outcomes and compliance status. All assurances must be completed as specified for the application to be eligible for review.	1	1	0.5	0.5	0

Required Section	Scoring Description	Fully	Well	Adequately	Poorly	Not Addressed
IV.B. GEPA Statement	Describes specific actions to ensure equitable access and participation Identifies relevant barriers (e.g., disability, language, access, race, color, national origin, gender and age) Explains strategies to mitigate barriers (e.g., translation, accommodations, outreach)	1	1	0.5	0.5	0
IV.C. Certification Signatures	All required signatures are provided in the uploaded Certification Signatures document.	1	1	0.5	0.5	0
IV.D. Resumes/Vitae	Resumes/vitae are provided for all named individuals within the submitted application.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0
IV.E. Letters of Support	Letters of support are provided.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0
IV.F. Additional Information	Additional Information is provided.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Total Application Points	135- 140	Low-113	Low- 73	Low-32	<22
	Total PFC and CPP Points	10	3.5	2	1	0
	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	145- 150	Low- 116.5	Low-75	Low-33	<22