



**NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION**

New Jersey Public Charter School Association
(NJPCSA) Charter School Program (CSP) Request for
Application (RFA)

**"NJPCSA Competitive Subgrant Application 2023: Round
IV"**

RFA Number: RFA2023004

Applications Due By:
October 30, 2023, 5:00 PM ET

Table Of Contents

GRANT INFORMATION	1
A. Background and Purpose of the Grant	1
B. Key Information and Dates	1
C. Size and Duration of Subgrants	2
D. Eligibility	2
E. Definitions	3
F. Permissible Activities	5
G. Application Submission Instructions	7
H. Application Processing, and Scoring	7
I. Technical Assistance, Evaluation, Reporting	8
GRANT APPLICATION	11
J. Letter of Intent and Eligibility Check	11
K. Executive Summary	11
L. Application Narrative	11
M. References and Additional Guidance	11
N. Required Narrative Attachments	12
EXHIBIT A: APPLICATION PACKAGE	13
Section 1. Plan for Serving Student Needs	15
Section 2. Families and Communities	19
Section 3. Financial Plan	21
Section 4. Subgroup Performance (replication and expansion only)	23
Section 5. Overall Alignment and Viability	24

Grant Information

A. Background and Purpose of the Grant

Under the FY 2020 Charter Schools Program (CSP) State Entities Competition, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded grants to eight states. Authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (20 U.S.C. §§ 7221-7221j), the CSP State Entities Program is a competitive grant program that enables State entities to award subgrants to eligible applicants in their State. The program’s purpose is to “expand opportunities for all students, particularly traditionally underserved students, to attend charter schools and meet challenging State academic standards; provide financial assistance for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of public charter schools; increase the number of high-quality charter schools available to students across the United States; evaluate the impact of charter schools on student achievement, families, and communities; share best practices between charter schools and other public schools; encourage States to provide facilities support to charter schools; and support efforts to strengthen the charter school authorizing process.”

On September 30, 2020, the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) was awarded a competitive five-year CSP grant to administer a subgrant program that will pursue the following two overarching objectives:

- (1) Increase the number of high-quality charter schools statewide; and
- (2) Increase the overall quality of NJ’s charter school sector.

CSP grants awarded by NJPCSA through its New Jersey CSP Grant program are federally funded under the US Department of Education CSP State Entities Grant (CFDA number 84.282A) and are subject to the availability of funds through the CSP. Additional federal guidance and related documents are available at the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education webpage for [“Expanding Opportunities through Quality Charter School Programs \(CSP\) Grants to State Entities.”](#)

In carrying out these objectives, New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association will provide subgrants to qualified charter school developers to provide financial support for the initial implementation of opening, expanding, or replicating a public charter school.

B. Key Information and Dates

In the key information and dates Table 1, potential applicants can find a summary of information to help prepare a subgrant application. Please do not hesitate to contact NJPCSA at csp@njcharters.org with any questions you may have about the CSP grant process.

Table 1. Key Information and Dates

Activity	Information
Request for Applications Title	NJPCSA Competitive Subgrant Application 2023
RFA Number	RFA2023004
RFA Issuing Office	New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association
Contract Administrator	Olivia Tremble, csp@njcharters.org
Proposal Submission Portal	Survey Monkey Apply
Subgrant Application Available	August 14, 2023

Activity	Information
Application Package	https://njpcsasmapply.io/prog/
Pre-Proposal Support Webinar	August 10, 2023; 1:00-2:00 PM (ZOOM LINK)
CSP Budget Support Webinar	September 12, 2023; 1:30-2:30 PM (ZOOM LINK)
Subgrant Application Due	October 30, 2023 by 5:00 PM ET
Interviews	December 12, 13, & 14, 2023
Subgrant Awards Announced	By December 21, 2023

C. Size and Duration of Subgrants

NJPCSA may award subgrants to new charter schools, replicating charter schools, and schools that are expanding for a period of up to 42 months inclusive of planning and implementation periods. Expansion can include schools opening a new grade level in Fall 2023 (without a planning period) or 2024 (with a planning period). The **planning period** may be no longer than 18 months. The **implementation period** may be no longer than 24 months. Through a competitive process, all subgrantees will be eligible to be awarded up to \$1,500,000. The base award is up to \$1,000,000. Subgrantees are eligible to be awarded up to two additional \$250,000 escalators based on satisfaction of absolute and proportional enrollment targets set forth in Table 2. All final award amounts will be determined at the conclusion of the awards process and verified after enrollment.

Table 2. Subgrant Award Amount Breakdown

Target	Amount	Timing
Base Award	Up to \$1,000,000	Upon approval of application
School is located in a QOZ or Abbott District or draws at least 40% of its student population from neighboring QOZ	\$250,000	After first verified October enrollment count
At least 60% of school’s students are economically disadvantaged*	\$250,000	After first verified October enrollment count

*Low-income students are students eligible for free or reduced lunch, identified as “economically disadvantaged.”

D. Eligibility

To be eligible to receive an award, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. Meet a) the federal definition of a charter school; and b) the federal definition of a developer;

2. Have applied for authorization from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), the authorized public chartering agency, to open, expand¹, or replicate a high-quality charter school²;
3. Have provided adequate and timely notification to that authority that the school is applying to the NJPCSA Charter Schools Program subgrant;
4. Completed a Board Chair signed Statement of Assurances;
5. Replications and expansions meet one of the NJPCSA criteria of a “high-quality charter school” below:
 - a. **Performance:** One year of Aggregate Math and ELA scores exceeds state average of students meeting levels 3, 4 or 5 as measured by New Jersey Student Learning Assessment administered in Spring 2022; **OR**
 - b. **Performance:** One year of Aggregate Math and ELA scores outperform the district average by at least 10 percentage points as measured by the percentage of students meeting levels 3, 4, and 5 on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment administered in Spring 2022 ; **OR**
 - c. **Performance:** One year of Aggregate Math and ELA scores exceeds state average of students meeting levels 2 or 3 as measured by New Jersey Start Strong assessment administered in Fall 2022; **OR**
 - d. **Performance:** One year of Aggregate Math and ELA scores outperform the district average by at least 10 percentage points as measured by the percentage of students meeting levels 2 or 3 on the New Jersey Start Strong assessment administered in Fall 2022; **OR**
 - e. **Graduation Rates and College Readiness:** Graduation rate that is above the district average by at least 10 percentage points AND the percentage of students utilizing graduation pathways 1 or 2 is at least 10 percentage points above the district percentage of students utilizing graduation pathways 1 or 2.
6. Replications and expansions meet the federal definition of a “high-quality charter school” as described under ESEA § 4310 (8).
7. Applicants must not have received a subgrant under this program for a 5-year period unless it can prove 3 years of improved educational results for enrolled students as specified under ESEA § 4303. (2) 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). Any new subgrants must be used to support new activities.

E. Definitions

1. CHARTER SCHOOL. ESEA § 4310 (2) –The term “charter school” means a public school that, 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;
 - a. 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;

¹ Significant expansion is required to be eligible for this grant. Significant expansion is defined as adding at least 100 students or 15% of a school's total enrollment.

² Moving buildings does not qualify as adding a campus for replication or expansion.

- b. 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;
 - c. Provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
 - d. Is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
 - e. Does not charge tuition;
 - f. 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;
 - g. 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);
 - h. 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;
 - i. Meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
 - j. Operates in accordance with State law;
 - k. 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 in charter schools 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
 - l. May serve students in early childhood education programs or postsecondary students.
2. DEVELOPER. ESEA § 4310 (5)- 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.
 3. EXPAND. ESEA § 4310 (7) - The term "expand," 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.
 4. REPLICATE. ESEA § 4310 (9) - The term "replicate," when used with respect to a high-quality charter school, means to open 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.³
 5. HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL. ESEA § 4310 (8) - The term "high-quality charter school" means a charter school that—
 - a. shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth, as determined by a State;

³ Moving buildings does not qualify as adding a campus for replication or expansion.

- b. has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance;
 - 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), except that such demonstration is not required in a case in which the number of students in a group is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.
6. HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL. NJPCSA
- a. **Performance:** One year of Aggregate Math and ELA scores exceeds state average of students meeting levels 3, 4 or 5 as measured by New Jersey Student Learning Assessment administered in Spring 2022; **OR**
 - b. **Performance:** One year of Aggregate Math and ELA scores outperform the district average by at least 10 percentage points as measured by the percentage of students meeting levels 3, 4, and 5 on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment administered in Spring 2022 ; **OR**
 - c. **Performance:** One year of Aggregate Math and ELA scores exceeds state average of students meeting levels 2 or 3 as measured by New Jersey Start Strong assessment administered in Fall 2022; **OR**
 - d. **Performance:** One year of Aggregate Math and ELA scores outperform the district average by at least 10 percentage points as measured by the percentage of students meeting levels 2 or 3 on the New Jersey Start Strong assessment administered in Fall 2022; **OR**
 - e. **Graduation Rates and College Readiness:** Graduation rate that is above the district average by at least 10 percentage points AND the percentage of students utilizing graduation pathways 1 or 2 is at least 10 percentage points above the district percentage of students utilizing graduation pathways 1 or 2.

F. Permissible Activities

All requested budget items must be reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable as defined in the Office of Management and Budget’s Uniform Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 200). All costs must be justified for the specific purposes of this CSP subgrant, necessary to complete grant objectives, supported with justification for reimbursement, and aligned with state and federal law. Required justification may require upfront planning and tracking and should be addressed prior to spending any approved funds.

Federal non-regulatory guidance indicates “If the charter school can show that the state or local funds it has received are necessary to meet expenses other than the one at issue, then the charter school has met its burden of showing that the ‘other initial operations costs’ cannot be met from state or local sources and, therefore, is allowable under the CSP grant.” Costs incurred must be one-time in nature, obligated during the grant project period, correlated to a grant objective, and may not include ongoing operational costs.

An applicant receiving a subgrant under this program may use the subgrant funds only for allowable activities as defined in the ESSA § 4303(h):

1. Preparing teachers, school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel, including through paying the costs associated with–

- a. providing professional development; and
- b. hiring and compensating, during the eligible applicant's planning period specified in the application for subgrant funds, that is required under this section one or more of the following:
 - i. Teachers.
 - ii. School leaders.
 - iii. Specialized instructional support personnel.
2. Acquiring supplies, training, equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials).
3. Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction).
4. Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school.
5. Carrying out community engagement activities, which may include paying the cost of student and staff recruitment.
6. Providing for other appropriate, non-sustained costs related to the activities described in this RFA when such costs cannot be met from other sources.

Unallowable Costs include:

1. Facility construction, renovation, or other capital improvement costs, except as described above in the allowable activities section.
2. Any recurring costs, such as lease payments, or utilities incurred after the first 18 months of the award.
3. Utilities and other facility operating expenses on or after the first day of school.
4. Grant oversight expenses.
5. Non-educational/non-informative promotional/novelty items for advertising, events, or recruiting.
6. Gift certificates, alcoholic beverages, school apparel for staff or students, fines and penalties, lobbying.
7. Student activities.
8. Professional dues or memberships.
9. Employee hiring/recruitment expenses such as a placement firm or travel for prospective employees.
10. Salaries or related fringe benefits after the school opens for essential staff such as the school principal, financial manager, etc.
11. Costs of continuing education credits for professional development coursework.
12. Out-of-state travel, unless it can be demonstrated that the goal of the travel is directly related to startup activity and cannot be accomplished in-state (no out-of-country travel is permitted).
13. Expenses outside the scope of the school's charter or K-12 education, i.e., before/after school programs and preschool, activities related to the non-profit organization but not the charter school, etc.
14. Funding cannot be redirected for other uses (e.g., traditional public schools that are not charters).

This list is not inclusive but is presented to show typical items that cannot be covered with grant funds. Additional resources for federal guidance pertaining to allowable costs under the CSP program are shown below:

- [Uniform Guidance](#)
- [CSP ESSA Flexibilities FAQ document](#)

G. Application Submission Instructions

Submit the application according to the timeline in Table 1. Applicants will receive access to the application package from the link in Table 1.

1. All applicants will be required to complete a Letter of Intent (LOI) to apply using the NJPCSA application portal prior to gaining access to the full application. Applicants should allow up to 5 business days for NJPCSA review of the LOI and verification of eligibility before they are approved to receive access to the full application.
2. NJPCSA will provide a pre-application technical assistance webinar for prospective applicants, which will be recorded and available for viewing. This webinar will be held on **August 10, 2023 at 1:00pm ET**. All applicants are encouraged to attend. See Table 1 above for dates, times, and meeting links.
3. All narrative and cover sheet answers must be submitted in the application portal outlined in Table 1. Attachments uploaded must be standard letter size using 12-point font in Times New Roman, double-spaced, and one-inch margins. Applicants should be succinct in their responses.

H. Application Processing, and Scoring

1. Subgrant applications are reviewed and scored by three members of a Peer Review Committee composed of national experts in charter school operation, authorization, law, governance, and parent engagement. To receive a subgrant, applicants must (a) earn at least 80% of the available points on the scoring rubric; and (b) be among the most highly rated applicants during a subgrant cycle given the finite number of awards NJPCSA expects to make. Criteria for each question and the scoring rubric is available in the application package.
2. Each section of the application identifies the elements that must be present. Table 4 shows the points possible for each section and type of application. There are two types of points: base and competitive preference. For new schools, applicants must earn a total score of at least 74 to meet minimum eligibility requirements. Replicators and expanders must earn a total score of at least 80 points to meet minimum eligibility requirements.

Table 4. Points Possible on Application

Application Point Breakdown	
Competitive Preference Priorities (CPP)	Possible 12
Educating At-Risk Student Populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a weighted lottery to give increased chances for low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, or other at-risk populations to get a seat. 2 pts • Serving a student population with at least 70% eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. 4 pts 	Up to 6
Providing Services to High School Students	0 <u>or</u> 2
Providing Services to Rural Communities	0 <u>or</u> 2
Serving a Diverse Student Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined as low-income students making up 30-70% of the student body and no one race or ethnicity constituting more than 70% of the school. 	0 <u>or</u> 2

Elements	Base Points Possible
1. Plan for Serving Student Needs	40
1.1. Educational Model	12
1.2. Access and Equity	12
1.3. Roles, Responsibilities, and Organization Structure	6
1.4. Human Capital Capacity	10
2. Families and Communities	20
2.1. Demonstration of Demand	10
2.2. Evidence of Family and Community Engagement	10
3. Financial Plan	22
3.1. Financial Management Plan	10
3.2. Plan for Financial Sustainability	12
4. Subgroup Performance (replication and expansion only)	8
4.1. Subgroup Performance Data	8
5. Overall Alignment and Viability	10
5.1 Overall Alignment and Viability of Applicant	10
Total Points Possible New Charters (Base 92 + Competitive Preference 12)	104
Total Points Possible Replicators and Expanders (Base 100 + Competitive Preference 12)	112

I. Technical Assistance, Evaluation, Reporting

Subgrantees are required to attend technical assistance sessions and participate in designated activities for the grant award and during the grant period. The sessions are tailored to the needs of each school and designed to enhance each school's ability to fulfill its mission and satisfy the objectives of the NJPCSA grant program. Subgrantees are required to participate fully in the external evaluation of the NJPCSA grant program.

1. The NJPCSA CSP team will host mandatory grant management webinars for subgrant recipients after award announcements. Grant funds will be available soon after completion of mandatory grant management webinars with an eligible expenditure date as early as November 1, 2023.
2. All sub-recipients will be **REQUIRED** to participate in or provide evidence of recent, within the last three years, and aligned process* of the following:
 - a. A three-to-five-year strategic plan incorporating qualitative and quantitative school data analysis, stakeholder input, and a review of program implementation to develop a strategy that includes goals, objectives, metrics, and a plan for monitoring and tracking.
 - b. The timeline for completion of the strategic planning requirement is by the completion of implementation year 1.
*This activity may be funded out of your CSP budget as it is considered an allowable expense. An RFP for posting to hire a provider(s) for this process will be provided upon award orientation for those applicants receiving a subgrant.
3. Technical assistance for subgrantees will include capacity-building activities focused on both grant management and school operation. The NJPCSA CSP team will target training to subgrantees' needs as stated in their subgrant applications, identified in the organizational assessment and strategic planning, and as observed during routine and enhanced monitoring. Potential technical assistance areas include:

- a. Meeting the needs of all students, particularly those in designated ESSA subgroups and those in danger of disengaging from school;
 - b. Student recruitment and retention, including strategies to promote inclusion;
 - c. Participation in federal programs and receipt of federal funds;
 - d. Replication and expansion;
 - e. Instructional leadership and school operation;
 - f. Promoting implementation of equity and inclusive practices, strengthening overall school culture, and improving learning environments for students and teaching climates for educators;
 - g. Meeting educational needs of students with disabilities; and
 - h. Maximizing the flexibility provided under law.
4. The external evaluation will be ongoing throughout the grant period and subgrantees agree to fully participate in and support these necessary activities. The external evaluation team will collect and analyze data as necessary for the evaluation and in a manner which assures safety, security, and anonymity of all subjects and data. Subgrantees will provide the external evaluation team with data and access requested in a timely manner which may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Student academic and other outcome data
 - b. Staff data
 - c. Access to individuals necessary for interviews or focus groups
 - d. Staff time as necessary for survey completion
 - e. Access to the school site for planned observations
 5. Dissemination of best practice strengthens the NJPCSA CSP subgrantees. As such, subgrantees agree to make a good faith effort to participate in all reasonable requests by NJPCSA to share and disseminate best practices. Such participation may include posting resources online via the NJPCSA website, serving on discussion panels, or providing informational sessions at a convening, and more.
 6. Monitoring from the NJPCSA CSP team will be ongoing throughout the grant period and grantees agree to fully participate in and support these necessary activities.
 - a. Desk monitoring and scheduled on-site visitations will occur to ensure subgrantees are meeting benchmark goals. Further, the NJPCSA CSP team will be responsible for evaluating subgrantees to ensure that they adhere to federal rules and regulations.
 - b. The NJPSCA CSP team will conduct at least quarterly reviews, which will include a full review of all available data concerning academic, operational, and fiscal performance. A site visit beginning in the implementation period of the grant will be conducted. Attendance at board of trustees meetings is also a potential form of monitoring.
 - c. Additional monitoring activities to be performed by the NJPCSA CSP team include:
 - i. Collect, review, and approve each CSP subgrant budget;
 - ii. Review subgrantee spending reports and compile a running report of all CSP expenditures;
 - iii. Conduct at least quarterly fiscal and programmatic desk reviews;
 - iv. Monitor for timely drawdown of subgrant funds and compliance concerning allowable uses of funding;
 - v. Provide input and review materials prior to submission for all authorizer hearings concerning finance; and
 - vi. Receive and review budget revisions as requested, along with other duties.
 - d. The NJPCSA CSP team will also implement a plan and procedure to identify and notify subgrantees of compliance issues related to their CSP subgrant in order

to impose any necessary conditions and corrective actions in a timely fashion, and to tailor technical assistance to the specific needs of subgrantees.

- e. Table 5 provides an overview of the standard monitoring and reporting activities conducted by the NJPCSA CSP team during each respective phase of a subgrant. When higher risk events within the charter school are identified, frequency of monitoring activities will increase:

Table 5. Monitoring and Reporting Activities Schedule

Subgrant Phase	Monitoring Activities	Frequency
Planning Phase (Up to 18 months)	Technical assistance sessions	As needed
	Desk review fiscal and programmatic	Quarterly
	Expenditures and reimbursements	Monthly/Quarterly
	Annual performance reports	Yearly
	Verification of Federal Single Audit	Yearly
Implementation Phase (Up to 24 months)	Technical assistance sessions	As needed
	Desk review fiscal and programmatic	Minimum twice
	Expenditures and reimbursements	Monthly/Quarterly
	Attendance of board meeting	Minimum once
	Implementation site visit	Minimum Once
	Annual performance reports	Yearly
	Verification of Federal Single Audit	Yearly
Closeout	Grant final reports	At closeout

- 7. The privacy of student Personally Identifiable Information (PII) collected, used, shared, and stored is a priority of NJPCSA. All program evaluation data will be collected in the aggregate and will be used, shared, and stored in compliance with state and federal law.

Grant Application

Applicants must submit the following information according to the application package in Exhibit A

J. Letter of Intent and Eligibility Check

Prior to receiving access to the full application, applicants must submit a Letter of Intent which includes an eligibility questionnaire as well as the following documentation related to eligibility:

- Enrollment Chart
- High Quality Eligibility Data

Review of the Letter of Intent could take up to 5 business days. Access to the full application will not be received until the Letter of Intent is reviewed.

K. Executive Summary

Recipients must complete an executive summary in the application portal which includes the following:

- i. General information about the school including address and contacts, applicant type, NCES IDs, DUNS number, areas of focus, board type, authorizer, management organization (if applicable), expansion years and grades, demographics, and enrollment.
- ii. CSP subgrant goals aligned to NJPCSA's CSP grant goals.
- iii. CSP Budget and Narrative using the provided template in the portal to describe proposed expenditures up to \$1.5 million and the rationale. (see section F "Permissible Activities" for details on allowability.)
*A finalized budget will be prepared with the CSP team should the applicant receive an award. A budget will be approved in three stages, planning and implementation year 1 and 2; the proposed Year 1 budget expenditures will be approved for no more than \$750,000 in proposed expenditures. Expenses in the initial budget period can include expenses beginning as soon as November 1, 2023.
- iv. Competitive Preference Points checklist and evidence.
- v. Other Eligibility Attachments

L. Application Narrative

Applicants must respond to each applicable question. Some questions ask for a required attachment, which is submitted in a separate file. The application narrative is composed of an Executive Summary, which includes Competitive Preference Points, and five scored sections:

- I. Plan for Serving Student Needs
- II. Families and Communities
- III. Financial Plan
- IV. Subgroup Performance
- V. Overall Alignment and Viability

M. References and Additional Guidance

Additional information and guidance on budgeting, budget revision, and allowable expenses will be provided during pre-proposal webinars.

Applicants should also be aware of the following relevant provisions: 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards and Nonregulatory Guidance Student Support and Academic Achievement Programs.

Applicants should be aware that if you spend over \$750,000 of Federal funds in one fiscal year, you will be required to hire a CPA firm to complete a “Single Audit” of your Federal funds. See reference on [Single Audit requirements](#).

N. Required Narrative Attachments

The following attachments are required as part of the grant application package:

Executive Summary

- NJDOE Letter of Authorization Approving Weighted Lottery Process for low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, or other at-risk populations
- Board Chair Signed Program Assurances
- NJDOE Authorization or Proof of Application
- Proof of Notification to Authorizer of Application to CSP Competition
- School Nonprofit Designation
- CSP Budget and Narrative

Narrative Sections

- **Attachment 1:** Board Approved Enrollment and Lottery Policy (replication and expansion only)
- **Attachment 2:** Organizational Chart
- **Attachment 3:** Resumes for Board Members and Leadership Team and SBA Credentials
- **Attachment 4:** Board Approved Financial Policies and Standard Operation Procedures (replication and expansion only)
- **Attachment 5:** Replication and expansion schools must provide the 2023 March 30th annual budget submitted to NJDOE. New schools must provide the Phase II Application Budget.

Exhibit A: Application Package



**NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION**

**New Jersey Public Charter School Association
Charter School Program Competitive Subgrant
Application 2023**

Application Package

NJPCSA Charter Schools Program (CSP) Subgrant Application

To be completed on NJPCSA's online portal: <https://njpcsa.smapply.io/prog/>

Letter of Intent

Attachments Referenced in the LOI:

Enrollment Chart

High Quality Eligibility Data

Application

Executive Summary (including Competitive Preference Points)

Section 1: Plan for Serving Student Needs

Section 2: Families and Communities

Section 3: Financial Plan

Section 4: Subgroup Performance

Section 5: Overall Alignment and Viability

Attachments Referenced in Application:

Executive Summary and Competitive Preference Points

- NJDOE Letter of Authorization Approving Weighted Lottery Process for low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, or other at-risk populations
- Board Chair Signed Program Assurances
- NJDOE Authorization or Proof of Application
- Proof of Notification to Authorizer of Application to CSP Competition
- School Nonprofit Designation
- CSP Budget and Narrative

Narrative Sections

- **Attachment 1:** Board Approved Enrollment and Lottery Policy (replication and expansion only)
- **Attachment 2:** Organizational Chart
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Section 1. Plan for Serving Student Needs

1.1 Educational Model (12 points)

- Describe the school's educational model including data or research supporting the model.
- Describe the school's mission and overall school goals and provide a brief description of the school's key design elements and critical drivers of success.
- Describe the school's student population and how the educational model utilizes the autonomies and flexibilities granted to charter schools (per the definition of a charter school) to meet the unique needs of the school's student population.

1.1 Educational Model

<p>The applicant describes the school's educational model and provides clear, research-based evidence supporting the model. The mission statement and goals are aligned. Key design elements and critical drivers of success in executing the design are identified. The proposed student population, inclusive of demographics is described, as well the autonomies and flexibilities as appropriate for the educational model.</p>			
<p>The applicant meets all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A research-based educational model. • Mission statement and aligned goals. • Key design elements and critical drivers of success aligned to goals. • Student population inclusive of demographics and educational background. • Autonomies and flexibilities as appropriate for the educational model. 	<p>The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard but lacks description and/or evidence of alignment.</p>	<p>The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard. Insufficient description to assess alignment.</p>	<p>The applicant does not address the standard.</p>
12	10	5	0

1.2 Access and Equity (12 points)

- Describe the school's approach to achieving or sustaining equitable access, including retention and discipline practices. Explain how the school will ensure the reduction of inequitable discipline practices.
- Describe the school's plan for student recruitment and enrollment that will provide equal access to all interested students and parents (including homeless, foster, and other educationally disadvantaged students).
- Describe how the school plans to meet the transportation needs of its current and/or projected student population.
- Describe the steps the school takes or will take to identify students who qualify for Special Education, English Learner, Gifted and Talented, and Remedial services.
- Describe the Special Educational, English Learner, Gifted and Talented, and Remedial programs and range of services the school provides for identified students.

Include as Attachment 1 the school's Board Approved Enrollment and Lottery Policy (replication and expansion only).

1.2 Access and Equity

The applicant describes a comprehensive approach to achieving or sustaining equitable access, which may include practices around discipline, retention, enrollment/recruitment, transportation, etc. The applicant describes a comprehensive understanding and approach to serving at-risk and special populations which includes practices around recruitment, identification, and comprehensive academic services.

<p>The applicant comprehensively addresses all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for equitable access, inclusive of discipline, enrollment/recruitment practices, and transportation. • Plan for the identification of special populations of students. • Description of infrastructure for providing services and supports to all special populations of students in alignment with the educational model. 	<p>The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard, but the plan lacks specificity and/or evidence.</p>	<p>The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard and lacks specificity and/or evidence.</p>	<p>The applicant does not address the standard.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>0</p>

1.3 Roles, Responsibilities, and Organizational Structure (6 points)

Describe the school's organizational structure, the roles and responsibilities of key personnel, and how both support the implementation of the educational model. Be sure to include the following in your response:

- Process and system for decision-making, including opportunities for shared decision-making;
- Process and system for evaluating school leaders;
- Process and system for staff professional development inclusive of board, leadership, instructional and non-instructional staff, and specific professional development for new teachers/staff and new-to-the-school teachers/staff;
- Process and system for evaluating, mentoring, and coaching teachers; and
- Administrative and contractual roles and responsibilities of any partner organizations. If contracting with a charter management organization, describe key services provided by the CMO including information on who employs the school leader, teachers, and staff, the process for the evaluation of employees, the process for review of CMO contract obligations, and oversight responsibilities related to the CSP grant.

Include as Attachment 2 the Organizational Chart including the board of trustees, lead person, charter management organization, staff, and external partners.

1.3 Roles, Responsibilities, and Organizational Structure

The applicant demonstrates a thorough plan for the implementation of the educational model. A comprehensive staff development and evaluation strategy is provided. The plan clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities for all current and proposed staff, the board, and partner organizations.

<p>The applicant comprehensively addresses all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity in decision-making processes, including shared-decision making. • Authority is addressed and inclusive of board and school personnel collaboration. • Plan and tools for professional development for board, leadership, instructional, non-instructional staff, new teachers/staff, and new-to-the-school teachers/staff. • Staff evaluation, mentoring, and coaching are 	<p>The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard, but the plan lacks specificity and/or evidence. The plan includes a description of the intentional alignment to the educational model.</p>	<p>The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard. Description of strategies lack specificity and/or alignment to the educational model.</p>	<p>The applicant does not address the standard.</p>
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grounded in evidence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roles and responsibilities of partner organizations, such as the management organization, are identified and described in adequate specificity in alignment with the educational model. 			
6	4	2	0

1.4 Human Capital Capacity (10 points)

- Explain how the school’s proposed organizational structure from Attachment 2 ensures adequate capacity to implement governance, leadership, academic, and operational responsibilities.
- Describe the current team’s collective and individual qualifications/credentials related to governance, leadership, academics, and operations.
- Describe the school’s plan for recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and other key staff.
- Describe the leadership team’s model for goal setting and performance management of academics and operations.

Include as Attachment 3, resumes for board members, resumes for all members of the leadership team, and credentialing information for the school’s SBA.

1.4 Human Capital Capacity

<p>The applicant demonstrates the capacity necessary to effectively implement governance, the educational model, and operations. Required capacity is demonstrated in the areas of governance, school leadership, academics, and operations; plan for recruiting and retaining staff is clearly articulated; and the leadership model demonstrates a plan that adequately monitors academic and operational performance.</p>			
<p>The applicant comprehensively addresses all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing model and capacity needs are clearly articulated, aligned to the educational model, and operations. The school’s current leadership, administration, and 	<p>The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard, but the plan lacks specificity and/or evidence. The plan includes a description of the intentional alignment to the educational model.</p>	<p>The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard. Description of strategies lack specificity and/or alignment to the educational model.</p>	<p>The applicant does not address the standard.</p>

board members' qualifications/credentials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and other key staff. Leadership model for goal setting and performance tracking of academics and operations. 			
10	8	5	0

Section 2. Families and Communities

2.1 Demonstration of Demand (10 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the process and strategies for soliciting, receiving, and utilizing feedback from families and community members on the implementation and operation of the educational model. Describe how the educational model is aligned to community demand, as supported by data and/or other evidence.

2.1 Demonstration of Demand

<p>The applicant demonstrates a process for soliciting, receiving, and utilizing feedback from families, community members, and other stakeholders on the implementation and operation of the educational model. Specific strategies for engaging with families and community members are described. The school's model is grounded in data and speaks to community demand as supported by evidence.</p>			
<p>The applicant comprehensively addresses all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific strategies for soliciting, receiving, and utilizing feedback from families, community members, and other stakeholders. Demonstrated ties between core elements of the educational model and community 	<p>The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard, but the plan lacks specificity and/or evidence.</p>	<p>The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard.</p>	<p>The applicant does not address the standard.</p>

demand grounded in data. • Evidence of community demand is grounded in data and/or other evidence.			
10	8	5	0

2.2 Evidence of Family and Community Engagement (10 points)

Explain how the school promotes or will promote opportunities for family engagement and input on the implementation and operation of the charter school. Be sure to include:

- Specific examples and evidence of how plans have been realized (if applicable); and
- Strategies and goals for improving the school’s partnerships with families.

Describe the various partnerships the school has developed or will develop with educational institutions and/or community organizations. Be sure to include:

- How these relationships promote and help achieve measures of student success;
- How they align with the school’s educational model; and
- Strategies and goals to improve the school’s partnerships with the community.

2.2 Evidence of Family and Community Engagement

The applicant demonstrates an ongoing plan—with specific strategies—for family and community engagement. Strategies of engagement are aligned to the educational model and measures of student success.

The applicant comprehensively addresses all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of the following: • Strategies and goals for improving family and community engagement. • Alignment between community partners, educational model, and measures of student success.	The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard, but the plan lacks specificity. The plan includes a description of the intentional alignment to the educational model and ties to student success.	The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard. Description of strategies lack specificity and/or alignment to the educational model.	The applicant does not address the standard.
10	8	5	0

Section 3. Financial Plan

3.1 Financial Management Plan (10 points)

Explain how the school will manage subgrant funds during the term of the subgrant:

- Identify regular monitoring of actual versus projected expenses;
- Identify a plan for addressing variances in a timely manner, including variances in expected enrollment;
- Include a plan for timely and consistent requests for reimbursement and reporting; and
- Describe the process and related timelines for communication between leadership and the board related to the grant, as well as for board oversight of grant expenditures aligned with school policy.

Include as Attachment 4 the School's Board Approved Financial Policies and Standard Operating Procedures. These policies and procedures should include, at a minimum, Conflicts of Interest, Inventory and Asset Management, and Procurement, but please upload all financial policies and standard operating procedures available (replication and expansion only*).

*New schools should be prepared to present these prior to funds release if awarded a grant.

3.1 Financial Management Plan

The applicant demonstrates the capacity and systems for clear monitoring and oversight of the subgrant including goals for the use of the funds aligned to the educational model. A plan for timely financial tracking, allocation, and reporting is provided and compliant with all state and federal requirements. Strong communication protocols are in place between the board, school administration, and management company, if applicable, to review financial performance and plan for variances or unexpected needs.

<p>The applicant comprehensively addresses all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols for timely and responsive financial monitoring, as well as review of financial performance and necessary planning for variances or unexpected expenditures. • Communication and oversight protocol between leadership and board demonstrates adequate and appropriate levels of accountability for grant administration and oversight. • Demonstration of the adequate capacity 	<p>The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard, but the plan lacks specificity and/or the capacity for execution. The plan illustrates a strong understanding of financial compliance requirements for all funding sources.</p>	<p>The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard. Description of protocols lack specificity and/or understanding of compliance requirements.</p>	<p>The applicant does not address the standard.</p>
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for execution of all systems and protocols.			
10	8	5	0

3.2 Plan for Financial Sustainability (12 points)

- Provide a description of how revenue assumptions were developed, including evidence of projected student enrollment, state and federal allocation formulas, and philanthropy.
- Describe how the school's projected expenditures support the educational model.
- Provide a reasonable and justified explanation of how the school will maintain financial sustainability after the end of the subgrant period.
- Describe evidence of capacity in managing a sustainable budget.

For replication and expansion applicants: Include as Attachment 5 the school's 2023 March 30th annual budget submitted to NJDOE.

For new school applicants: Include as Attachment 5 the school's Phase II Application Budget.

3.2 Plan for Financial Sustainability

The applicant demonstrates a strong evidence base for financial revenue assumptions inclusive of projected student enrollment, state allocation formulas, federal allocation formulas, and of the philanthropic donor base. Projected expenditures are aligned with the educational model and startup/expansion/replication plan. The provided budget and narrative demonstrate long-term sustainability without compromise to the proposed educational model. The applicant provides strong evidence of capacity in managing a sustainable budget (i.e., if an existing school the March 30, 2023 budget report, a non-profits operational history, and/or evidence of a strong partner).

The applicant comprehensively addresses all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong evidence to support all assumptions of revenue. • Aligned expenditures to the educational model. • Long-term plan for sustainability without compromise to the educational model. • Demonstrated leadership and experience in managing a sustainable budget 	The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard. The budget expenditures are aligned to the educational model.	The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard. Proposed budget assumptions lack specificity and/or alignment to the educational model.	The applicant does not address the standard.
12	10	5	0

Section 4. Subgroup Performance (replication and expansion only)

4.1. Subgroup Performance Data (replication and expansion only; 8 points)

- Explain what steps the school has taken, or plans to take, to ensure progress in both Math and English by subgroup (i.e., students eligible for free and reduced-prices lunch, English language learners, students with disabilities, and racial/ethnic groups).
- For each subject and grade level, provide a list of the diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments that were administered during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.
- Describe how results from the assessments were used to improve subgroup performance.

4.1 Subgroup Performance (replication and expansion only)

The applicant provides a narrative including clear and robust evidence of assessment use to identify student performance gaps. Data outcome disparities between subgroups (i.e., students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, English learners, students with disabilities, and racial/ethnic groups) are identified and accompanied by evidence of progress or a plan with specific benchmarks for future equitable achievement, aligned to the educational model.

The applicant comprehensively addresses all requirements of the standard including a thorough description of disparities among various student population groups are clearly articulated and supported by evidence of progress in closing achievement gaps.	The applicant meets the majority of the requirements of the standard. Data disparities among various student populations are supported by a comprehensive plan for achieving equitable outcomes.	The applicant does not meet the majority of the requirements of the standard. Evidence provided does not provide a plan for achieving equitable outcomes.	The applicant does not address the standard.
8	6	4	0

Section 5. Overall Alignment and Viability

5.1 Overall Alignment and Viability (10 pts)

- No additional response is needed in this section. It will be scored based on an evaluation of the CSP grant goals and budget narrative in the executive summary as well as the overall application and capacity interview.

5.1 Overall Alignment and Viability

The CSP grant goals and budget narrative provided in the executive summary as well as the overall application and applicant capacity interview process demonstrate alignment and capacity to implement the school's educational and operational program and planned use of CSP funds.			
The CSP grant goals and school's educational and operational programs are fully aligned to the proposed use of CSP funds. There are no concerns about the financial viability of the school or the capacity of the leadership team to effectively operate a high-quality charter school. The leadership team identified has a track record of success.	The CSP grant goals and school's educational and operational programs are mostly aligned to the proposed use of CSP funds. There are no significant concerns about the financial viability of the school or the capacity of the leadership team to effectively operate a high-quality charter school. In the event that a leadership team has not been identified, the plan to identify an effective leadership team is sound and convincing.	The CSP grant goals and school's educational and operational programs are tangentially aligned to the proposed use of CSP funds. There are some significant concerns about the financial viability of the school and/or the capacity of the leadership team to effectively operate a high-quality charter school. In the event that a leadership team has not been identified, the plan to identify an effective leadership team is insufficient or unconvincing.	The CSP grant goals and school's educational and operational programs do not align to the proposed use of CSP funds. Additionally, there are serious concerns about the financial viability of the school and/or the capacity of the leadership team to effectively operate a high-quality charter school.
10	8	5	0