

The logo features the text "Louisiana Believes" in a green, hand-drawn style font, centered within a white rectangular area. This white area is set against a background of light blue watercolor-style washes. A thin green horizontal line is positioned directly below the text.

Louisiana Believes

**Louisiana Public Charter Schools Program  
Planning and Implementation Sub-Grant Application**

**October 23, 2017**

# Louisiana Believes

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## Purpose

Louisiana Believes, the Louisiana Department of Education's guiding philosophy, is based on the belief that parents and educators who know children best should be empowered to identify and implement the educational pathways that best meet their needs. By authorizing high-quality charter schools, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and local school boards enable local educators to meet the needs of students where they live.

Louisiana's charter schools have been shown to provide high-quality educational opportunities to our most disadvantaged students. A 2013 study by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University found that, when compared to traditional public schools, Louisiana charter school students experienced learning gains equivalent to two months of added learning time in reading and three months of added learning time in math. That same year, 73% of students served by charter schools qualified for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, compared to 67% for the state of Louisiana as a whole. <sup>1</sup>

A charter school's first year is critical to its long-term success. In a different report, CREDO found that 94% of charter schools that begin in the top quintile of charter school performance remain there over time, whereas 80% of schools that begin in the bottom quintiles remain there through their fifth year. <sup>2</sup>

In March 2016, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) was awarded an \$8 million federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant to support Louisiana's charter school movement. Over the next three years, the LDE will issue \$6.8 million in CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grants to provide new charter schools with the resources they need to start at full capacity, leading to a strong first year and beyond.

## Eligibility

Any charter school in its pre-opening period may apply for a CSP sub-grant, with the exception that a Type 1 or Type 3 charter school may only apply if authorized by one of the authorizers listed below. A charter school in its pre-opening period may apply for planning and implementation funds.

Federal guidelines only allow the awarding of CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grants to charter schools under the jurisdiction of authorizers whose policies reflect authorizer best practices. For example, in addition to satisfying other CSP application requirements, authorizers must have policies on record for reviewing and evaluating charter schools under their jurisdiction at least once every five years.

Currently, the following authorizers comply with this requirement:

- Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Orleans Parish School Board

Authorizers may contact David Shepard at david.shepard@la.gov to learn more about how to comply with this requirement.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/school-choice/2013-2014-charter-annual-report.pdf?sfvrsn=11>

<sup>2</sup> <http://credo.stanford.edu/pdfs/CGAR%20Growth%20Volume%20II.pdf>

## Eligible Expenditures

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CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grants may be used during the pre-opening period and the first two years of operation. Sub-grant recipients may apply for the following allocation <sup>3</sup> –

Sub-grant	Planning (Pre-opening)	Implementation Year 1 (Year 1 of Operation)	Implementation Year 2 (Year 2 of Operation)	Total
Planning & Implementation	\$165,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$315,000

Planning funds may be used during the six to nine months of the pre-opening period prior to the launch of the charter school. During the planning period, sub-grant recipients may only spend funds on federally permitted planning activities:

- Refinement of the desired educational results and the method for measuring progress toward achieving those results
- Professional development of teachers and other staff who will work in the charter school

Implementation funds may be used during the first 24 months of operation in which Year 1 does not exceed the first 12 months of operation and Year 2 does not exceed the second 12 months of operation. During an implementation period, sub-grant recipients may only spend funds on federally permitted implementation activities:

- Informing the community about the school
- Acquiring necessary equipment and educational materials and supplies
- Acquiring or developing curriculum materials
- Other initial operational costs <sup>4</sup>

## Awards

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The LDE will determine award amounts based on demonstrated need and availability of funds.

BESE will allocate CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grants to LEAs. Awards on behalf of Type 1 and Type 3 charter schools will be allocated to each charter school's LEA on the condition, required by federal guidelines, that LEAs may not deduct administrative fees unless as part of an arrangement for administrative services to which the charter school and LEA have mutually agreed.

Planning and Implementation sub-grants must be drawn down according to the funding periods described in the chart above. All funds must be drawn down by March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

## Application Process and Timeline

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CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis by email to Megha Upadhyaya at megha.upadhyaya@la.gov. Complete applications consist of the following components, described in more detail on next page.

### Application Narrative:

- Cover Page
- Project Narrative (5 page limit)
- Approach to Equity (2 page limit)

### \* Appendices:

- Appendix A: CSP budget form
- Appendix B: Approved charter school application
- Appendix C: Approved financial plan

<sup>3</sup> List of eligible expenditures taken directly from ESEA, Section 5204(f)(3)

<sup>4</sup> Federal supplement not supplant rules still apply

- Assurances Page
- Appendix D: Authorizer's pre-opening checklist
- Appendix E: Authorizer's performance framework
- Appendix F: Charter contract or authorizer policy describing authorizer – charter relationship

\* BESE-authorized charter schools are not required to submit Appendices B – F.

The application narrative and Appendices B, D, E, and F should be submitted as separate PDF documents. Appendices A and C should be submitted as Excel files.

Each sub-grant application will undergo both a technical review by Department staff and a quality review by an independent panel of three reviewers. Department staff will review each proposal for compliance with state and law policy and with federal CSP guidelines. The independent review panel will assess the quality of all projects. The standards for both the technical and quality reviews can be found in the LDE's CSP Planning and Implementation grant rubric on page 8. BESE will vote to allocate new CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grants at their meetings on an on-going basis.

## **Contact**

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Please contact Megha Upadhyaya at [megha.upadhyaya@la.gov](mailto:megha.upadhyaya@la.gov) with questions.

## Application Instructions

### Cover Page

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Provide a one-page cover page that includes the following information:

- LEA Name
- School Name
- Primary point of contact name, email, and phone number
- Funding amount requested

### Part 1: CSP Planning and Implementation Project

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Respond to the following prompts in no more than five pages.

- (1) Describe the goals that a CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grant will enable your school to achieve. Goals should be aligned to all relevant LDE CSP performance measures and should put your school on a path to satisfy the LDE's definition of a high-quality charter school, both of which can be found in the Additional Information section on page 6.
- (2) Provide a budget narrative that describes the activities that a CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grant will enable you to complete and that you would have been unable to complete otherwise. Include:
  - An explanation of how, as applicable, each planning activity aligns with an eligible planning expenditure and each implementation activity aligns with an eligible implementation expenditure listed on page 3.
  - A detailed description of the purpose of each expenditure, including:
    - Assumptions showing that all funds will be spent on one-time start-up activities, as opposed to ongoing operational activities and including, if applicable, only the percentage of an employee's time devoted to start-up activities.
    - The incremental impact that each activity will have on your ability to achieve project goals.
  - If applicable, a description of how CSP Planning and Implementation funds will be used in coordination with other state and federal grants.

As Appendix A, complete the CSP Budget Form. The budget form should be submitted as an Excel file and the file name should indicate the LEA name, Appendix A, and Budget Form.

- (3) Describe how your school will meet CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grant goals, including:
  - The process that your school will use to collect data and measure progress towards achieving goals.
  - Evidence of organizational capacity to complete project goals

### Part 2: Equity

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Respond to the following prompts in no more than two pages.

- (1) Provide your school's target percentages of economically disadvantaged students and special needs students. Also provide a 5-year enrollment chart that includes projected enrollment by year by grade. Enrollment projections should always ensure that the number of students in a grade is at least as many as the number of students in the previous grade in the year before.
- (2) Either (a) indicate that your school will participate in New Orleans' centralized enrollment process or (b) provide a detailed description of your school's admission process, including admissions requirements, lottery exemptions, lottery weights, and lottery

timeline and procedures. Applicants choosing (b) may reference specific page numbers in their approved charter application where a description of the school's admissions and lottery process are already provided.<sup>5</sup>

## **Part 3: Authorizer Review**

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CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grants may only be awarded to Type 1 and Type 3 charter schools whose authorizers meet certain standards. Type 1 and Type 3 charter schools should submit the following documents that will be assessed against standards for authorizer quality.

Each document should be saved as a PDF file, except for the financial plan, which should be submitted as an Excel file, and should be submitted as a separate document. Document file names should include the appendix letter, LEA name, and document name.

- **Appendix B:** The charter school's approved charter school application
- **Appendix C:** The charter school's approved financial plan
- **Appendix D:** The local school board's charter school pre-opening checklist
- **Appendix E:** The local school board's performance framework, describing its academic, financial, and organizational performance expectations for the charter school.
- **Appendix F:** The local school board's charter school oversight and accountability policy
- **Appendix G:** The local school board's charter contract with the charter school or, if the contract has not yet been entered into, a copy of the local school board policy that describes the administrative relationship between the charter school and the local school board.

## **Assurances**

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As the last page of your CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grant application, provide a signed assurances document, agreeing to abide by the following assurances:

- (1) Our charter school does not request any waivers of any Federal statutory or regulatory provisions. We do not believe that such waivers are necessary for the successful operation of the charter school. In addition, we understand that RS 17:3996 describes the State rules, generally applicable to public schools, from which charter schools are exempt.
- (2) Our charter school will annually provide the LDE, and through them the USDOE, such information as may be required to determine if our charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the objectives of the charter school.
- (3) Our charter school will cooperate with the LDE, and through them the USDOE, in evaluating the charter school's CSP project.
- (4) [if applicable – district-authorized charter schools only] Our charter school has provided a copy of our CSP Planning and Implementation sub-grant application to our authorizer.

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<sup>5</sup> Applicants using a weighted lottery will not receive CSP sub-grants until USDOE confirms Louisiana's compliance with federal requirements for weighted lotteries.

## Additional Information

### Definition of a High-Quality Charter School

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In order to qualify as a high-quality charter school, a Louisiana charter school must satisfy at least one of the following conditions:

- Received an "A" letter grade in the most recent school year
- School Performance Score exceeds the District Performance Score of the district in which the charter school is located in the most recent school year
- A majority of grade 3-8 students meet or exceed growth expectations in ELA, as determined by Louisiana's school-level value-added model
- A majority of grade 3-8 students meet or exceed growth expectations in math, as determined by Louisiana's school-level value-added model
- A majority of high school students meet or exceed the median score of the predicted composite score range on the Explore, Plan, ACT series, as determined by the ACT series
- BESE-approved alternative charter meeting the top tier of expectations on an Alternative Charter Evaluation Framework

In addition, all high-quality charter schools must satisfy their at-risk requirements and may not have any outstanding notices of concern or breach issues by their authorizer.

### Overview of CSP Performance Measures

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*Increase the number of high-quality charter school authorizers:*

- CSP-eligible authorizers annually demonstrate high-quality application and oversight process policies and procedures
- Increase from 9 to 15 the number of non-SEA authorizers that have currently authorized charter schools
- Increase by 5% annually the number of non-SEA authorizers that have a charter school portfolio with an average school performance equivalent to at least a "C"

*Increase the number of high-quality charter schools in Louisiana:*

- At least 5 aspiring charter organizations incubated through dissemination grants are authorized
- At least 10 high-quality charter schools are authorized annually, including 5 annually by non-SEA authorizers
- All BESE-authorized charters and CSP sub-grant recipients meet all pre-opening requirements established by their authorizer

*Improve achievement for educationally disadvantaged students in Louisiana charter schools:*

- 90% of CSP sub-grant recipients with eligible grades achieve 5 points of growth annually from their Pre-Assessment Index or a letter grade of "C"
- Increase to 46% the percentage of students with disabilities in New Orleans who demonstrate proficiency on state assessments

## CSP Planning and Implementation Sub-Grant Rubric

In order to receive funding, CSP applicants must meet all standards for which they are eligible. BESE-authorized charter schools must meet all standards in Parts 1 and 2, and district-authorized charter schools must meet all standards in Parts 1, 2, and 3.

Information submitted to meet standards labeled as “technical standards” will be reviewed by Department staff for compliance with Louisiana law or CSP regulations, as applicable. All other standards are quality standards and will be reviewed by a team of independent evaluators.

### **Part 1: CSP Planning and Implementation Plans**

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#### *Question 1: Goals*

- (A) [Technical Standard] Project goals ensure that the charter school will meet or exceed Louisiana’s definition of a high-quality charter school.
- (B) Project goals will contribute to progress against all CSP performance measures.

#### *Question 2: Budget Plan*

- (C) [Technical Standard] All project expenditures align with an eligible CSP activity listed on page 3.
- (D) [Technical Standard] All projected expenditures fund clearly identifiable, one-time start-up activities.
- (E) All projected expenditures will be used to help the school achieve its project goals.
- (F) Projected expenditures align with the school’s use of funds secured from other federal and state grant programs, if applicable.
- (G) [Technical Standard] All projected expenditures in the completed Budget Form are included in the appropriate expenditure period – planning or implementation.

#### *Question 3: Implementation*

- (H) The charter school identifies measurable milestones – including dates and intermediate outcomes – that will be used to keep the school on track to achieve its project goals.
- (I) The charter school identifies the specific individuals who will be responsible for carrying out all activities required to achieve project goals.

### **Part 2: Equity**

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- (A) [Technical Standard] Projections for the percentages of economically disadvantaged students and special needs students satisfy at-risk requirements as described in RS 17:3991(B)(1)(a)(i).
- (B) [Technical Standard] Rules for admitting students, including student sub-groups, and admissions procedures comply with BESE policies described in Bulletin 126, §2705–2711.
- (C) [Technical Standard] When applied to the most recently admitted cohort of students, or the average of the two most recently admitted cohorts if applicable, the charter school’s lottery weights would produce a cohort of new students whose demographics no more than equal the school’s at risk requirements. <sup>6</sup>

### **Part 3: Authorizer Review**

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#### *Appendices B and C:*

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<sup>6</sup> Applicants using a weighted lottery approved by a federal court in order to comply with a federal desegregation court order are exempt from this standard.



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- (A) The charter school's approved application and financial plan meets BESE's charter school application standards, as found in the Evaluation Rubric for Applications Submitted to BESE, [here](#).

## *Appendix D:*

- (B) [Technical Standard] The local school board's charter school pre-opening checklist includes, at a minimum, all items on the LDE's charter school pre-opening checklist.

## *Appendix E:*

- (C) [Technical Standard] The local school board's performance framework articulates academic performance expectations that align with the LDE's CSP performance target for all authorizers to have a charter school portfolio with an average school performance equivalent to at least a "C".
- (D) [Technical Standard] The organizational criteria included in the local school board's performance framework ensure compliance with all laws and policies applicable to charter schools.
- (E) [Technical Standard] At a minimum, the financial criteria included in the local school board's performance framework include a review of the charter school's annual financial audit to evaluate the charter school's financial viability.
- (F) [Technical Standard] The local school board's performance framework includes an oversight timeline in which the school board conducts an annual evaluation of each charter school against the identified performance criteria.

## *Appendix F:*

- (G) [Technical Standard] The local school board's charter oversight and accountability policy ensures that, in accordance with CSP Absolute Priority 1, at least once every five years the local school board reviews and evaluates each charter school, including opportunities to take appropriate action or impose meaningful consequences if necessary.

## *Appendix G:*

- (H) The responsibilities of the local school board and the responsibilities of the charter school are clearly articulated either in the local school board's charter contract with the charter school or, if the contract has not yet been entered into, the local school board's policy that describes the administrative relationship between the charter school and the local school board.