

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Office of Innovation and Improvement;
Overview Information; Charter School
Program (CSP); Notice Inviting
Applications for New Awards for Fiscal
Year (FY) 2006**

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
(CFDA) Number:* 84.282N.

Dates:

Applications Available: May 16, 2006.

Deadline for Transmittal of

Applications: June 30, 2006.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental
Review:* August 29, 2006.

Eligible Applicants: State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) in States with a State statute specifically authorizing the establishment of charter schools, and public and private non-profit organizations. Eligible applicants may also apply as a group or consortium.

Estimated Available Funds:
\$6,900,000.

Estimated Range of Awards:
\$500,000–\$1,500,000 per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:
\$1,150,000 per year.

Estimated Number of Awards: 6.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to three years.

Full Text of Announcement**I. Funding Opportunity Description**

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the CSP is to increase national understanding of the charter school model and to expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to students across the Nation by providing financial assistance for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools, and to evaluate the effects of charter schools, including their effects on students, student academic achievement, staff, and parents. Section 5205 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 7221d), authorizes the Secretary to award grants under the CSP to carry out national activities.

For FY 2006, the Department is holding a grant competition for national activities projects listed in section 5205(a) of the ESEA. Grants for national activities projects under the CSP are highly competitive. Applicants should make a well-reasoned and compelling case for the national significance of the problems or issues that will be the subject of the proposed project and of the approach the project would take to addressing those problems or issues.

Priority: Under this competition we are particularly interested in applications that address the following priority.

Invitational Priority: For FY 2006 this priority is an invitational priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1), we do not give an application that meets this invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

This priority is:

The applicant proposes a project that enhances and expands a State's capacity to support high-quality charter schools in one or more geographic areas, particularly urban and rural areas, in which a large proportion or number of public schools has been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Title I, Part A of the ESEA. The proposed project demonstrates research and effective practices in building charter school capacity through (1) the alignment of curriculum models with State content standards to enable all students to meet challenging expectations for improving student academic performance; (2) the creation and dissemination of models for high-quality authorized public chartering agencies; (3) the improvement in the academic performance of African-American students, Hispanic students, students with disabilities, English language learners, or children from low-income families; (4) the recruitment, training, ongoing professional development, and retention of highly qualified teachers, including highly qualified mid-career professionals and recent college graduates who have not majored in education, as teachers in high-need charter schools as defined in section 2304(d)(3) of the ESEA; (5) the dissemination of models and best practices for chartering "restructured schools" under Title I, Part A of the ESEA; or (6) the identification and replication of high-performing charter schools in high-need communities as defined in section 2151(e)(9)(B) of the ESEA.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 7221–7221j.

Applicable Regulations: The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply only to institutions of higher education.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 99 apply only to an educational agency or institution.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds:
\$6,900,000.

Estimated Range of Awards:
\$500,000–\$1,500,000 per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:
\$1,150,000 per year.

Estimated Number of Awards: 6.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to three years.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* SEAs and LEAs in States with a State statute specifically authorizing the establishment of charter schools, and public and private non-profit organizations. Eligible applicants may also apply as a group or consortium.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* This competition does not involve cost sharing or matching.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* Dean Kern, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 4W227, FB6, Washington, DC 20202–5970. Telephone: (202) 260–1882 or by e-mail: dean.kern@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the program contact person listed in this section.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this competition.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. The Secretary strongly encourages applicants to limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 100 pages, using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations,

references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

The suggested page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, you must include all of the application narrative in Part III.

3. *Submission Dates and Times:*

Applications Available: May 16, 2006.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 30, 2006.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically or by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV.6.

Other Submission Requirements in this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. We do not consider an application that does not address the application requirements, selection criteria, and other required information outlined in the application package.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: August 29, 2006.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

5. *Funding Restrictions:* An eligible applicant receiving a grant under this program may use the grant funds only for—

(a) *Access to Federal Funds.* Disseminating information to charter schools about Federal funds that they are eligible to receive and Federal programs in which they may be eligible to participate and providing technical assistance to charter schools in applying for Federal education funds that are allocated by formula.

(b) *Research.* Conducting evaluations or studies on various issues concerning charter schools, such as student achievement, teacher qualifications and retention, and the demographic makeup (e.g., age, race, gender, disability, limited English proficiency, and

previous public or private school enrollment) of charter school students.

(c) *Technical Assistance and Planning.* Assisting States and charter school developers with all aspects of planning, design, and implementing a charter school. Some areas in which newly created charter schools face challenges include program design, curriculum development, defining the school's mission, hiring staff, drafting charter applications, student recruitment and admissions, public relations and community involvement, governance, acquiring equipment and services, budget and finances, facilities, assessment and accountability, parental involvement, serving students with disabilities, and collaborating with other entities to provide high-quality instruction and services.

(d) *Best or Promising Practices.* Disseminating information on best or promising practices in charter schools to other public schools, including charter schools.

(e) *Facilities.* Collecting and disseminating information about programs and financial resources available to charter schools for facilities, including information about successful programs and how charter schools can access private capital.

We reference regulations outlining additional funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

6. *Other Submission Requirements.* Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. *Electronic Submission of Applications.* Applications for grants under the Charter School Program, CFDA Number 84.282N must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site at: <http://www.grants.gov>. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is

provided later in this section under *Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.*

You may access the electronic grant application for the Charter School Program at: <http://www.grants.gov>. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search.

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

- Applications received by Grants.gov are time and date stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and must be date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not consider your application if it is date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this program to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at <http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf>.

- To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see <http://www.Grants.gov/GetStarted>). These steps include (1) registering your organization, (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step

Registration Guide (see <http://www.grants.gov/assets/GrantsgovCoBrandBrochure8x11.pdf>). You also must provide on your application the same D-U-N-S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to successfully submit an application via Grants.gov.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information typically included on the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text), or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified above or submit a password protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. The Department will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send you a second confirmation by e-mail that will include a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions as described elsewhere in this notice. If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, please contact the

person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number (if available). We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: Extensions referred to in this section apply only to the unavailability of or technical problems with the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because—

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system; and
- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application. If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Dean Kern, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 4W227, FB6, Washington, DC 20202-5970. Fax: (202) 205-5630.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. *Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.* If you qualify for an exception

to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: CFDA Number 84.282N, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202-4260; or

By mail through a commercial carrier: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center—Stop 4260, Attention: CFDA Number 84.282N, 7100 Old Landover Road, Landover, MD 20785-1506.

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

(1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark,

(2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service,

(3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier, or

(4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

(1) A private metered postmark, or

(2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. *Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.* If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: CFDA Number 84.282N, 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-4260.

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department:

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—in Item 4 of the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424) the CFDA number—and suffix letter, if any—of the competition under which you are submitting your application.

(2) The Application Control Center will mail a grant application receipt acknowledgment to you. If you do not receive the grant application receipt acknowledgment within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

Selection Criteria. The selection criteria for this competition are in 34 CFR 75.210 and are as follows.

In evaluating an application, the Secretary considers the following criteria:

(1) *Need for project* (10 points). The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.

(2) *Significance* (10 points). The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers—

(a) The national significance of the proposed project.

(b) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

(3) *Quality of the project design* (20 points). The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(4) *Quality of project personnel* (10 points). The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin,

gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors —

(a) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

(b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience of project consultants or subcontractors.

(5) *Quality of the management plan* (20 points). The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(6) *Quality of the project evaluation* (30 points). The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

Note: A strong evaluation plan should be included in the application narrative and should be used, as appropriate, to shape the development of the project from the beginning of the grant period. The plan should include benchmarks to monitor progress toward specific project objectives and also outcome measures to assess the impact on teaching and learning or other important outcomes for project participants. More specifically, the plan should identify the individual and/or organization that has agreed to serve as evaluator for the project and describe the qualifications of that evaluator. The plan should describe the evaluation design, indicating: (1) What types of data will be collected; (2) when various types of data will be collected; (3) what methods will be used; (4) what instruments will be developed and when; (5) how the data will be analyzed; (6) when reports of results and outcomes will be available; and (7) how the applicant will use the information collected through the evaluation to monitor progress of the funded project and to provide accountability information both about success at the initial site and effective strategies for replication in other settings. Applicants are encouraged to devote an appropriate level of resources to project evaluation.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we will notify your U.S.

Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. *Reporting:* At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by the Secretary in 34 CFR 75.118. For specific requirements on grantee reporting, please go to the ED Performance Report Form 524B at <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>.

4. *Performance Measures:* The goal of the CSP is to support the creation and development of a large number of high-quality charter schools that are free from State or local rules that inhibit flexible operation, are held accountable for enabling students to reach challenging State performance standards, and are open to all students. The Secretary has set three performance measures to measure progress toward this goal: (1) The number of States, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, with charter school laws, (2) the number of charter schools in operation around the Nation, and (3) the percentage of charter school students who are achieving at or above the proficient level on State examinations in mathematics and reading. Additionally, the Secretary has established the following measure to examine the efficiency of the CSP: Federal cost per student in implementing a successful school (defined as a school in operation for three or more years).

All grantees will be expected to submit an annual performance report documenting their contribution in assisting the Department in meeting these performance measures.

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact:
Dean Kern, U.S. Department of
Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW.,
room 4W227, FB6, Washington, DC
20202-5961. Telephone: (202) 260-1882
or by e-mail: dean.kern@ed.gov.

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VIII. Other Information

Electronic Access to This Document:
You may view this document, as well as
all other documents of this Department
published in the **Federal Register**, in
text or Adobe Portable Document
Format (PDF) on the Internet at the
following site: [http://www.ed.gov/news/
fedregister](http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister).

To use PDF you must have Adobe
Acrobat Reader, which is available free
at this site. If you have questions about
using PDF, call the U.S. Government
Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1-

888-293-6498; or in the Washington,
DC, area at (202) 512-1530.

Note: The official version of this document
is the document published in the **Federal
Register**. Free Internet access to the official
edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code
of Federal Regulations is available on GPO
Access at: [http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/
index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html).

Dated: May 11, 2006.

Christopher J. Doherty,

*Acting Assistant Deputy Secretary for
Innovation and Improvement.*

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