

Great Schools for Connecticut

Connecticut's Charter Schools Program
(CSP) Grant



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Agenda for Today's Session

What is the Great Schools for Connecticut (GSCT) CSP Grant?

Grant Logistics (Size, Duration, Structure of Grants, Allowable Costs)

What Are the Steps in the Application Process? (Eligibility Check, Application, Peer Review)

Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

Technical Assistance

Important Dates, Questions and Closeout



What is the Charter Schools Program (CSP)?

In September 2022 NECSN was awarded \$24.5 million for the GSCT Project by the U.S. Department of Education under the FY '22 CSP to [State Entities](#) Grants Program. The grant is to be administered by the Connecticut Charter School Association (CTCSA).

CSP is authorized by Title IV, part C- Expanding Quality Through Quality Charter Schools of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. CSP is a competitive public charter school grant that can only be awarded to [high-quality](#) §4310 (8) schools that meet [federal](#) and [state](#) definitions of a charter school.



GSCT's main objectives

1. Increasing the number of high-quality public -school seats for educationally disadvantaged students in Connecticut;
2. Strengthening the caliber of the state's charter school operation and authorization; and
3. Heightening collaboration and resource sharing between and among schools with different governance structures.



Charter Schools Program (CSP)

The CSP Grant to State Entities §4303 (a)(4) enables CTCSA to award subgrants to:

- Open and prepare for the operation of **new high-quality** public charter schools;
- **Replicate** and **expand high-quality** public charter schools;
- Provide Technical Assistance (TA) to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies to improve authorizing quality, including developing capacity for, and conducting, fiscal oversight and auditing of charter schools.



How \$24.5 million of CSP funding will be spent §4303(c)

90% for subgrant awards
(\$22 million)

- Opening new charter schools
- Expanding and replicating existing charter schools

7% for Technical Assistance (\$1.7 million)

- Subgrant TA
- Authorizer TA

3% Administrative Costs (\$0.7 million)

- Overheads for grant related activities



Grant Logistics

Size: All subgrantees are eligible for the maximum grant award of \$1,469,250

Term and Structure:

Type of subgrant	Number of awards for 2023 RFA	Maximum funding available for award	Proposed split of the available subgrants over 36 months		
			First year	Second year	Third year
New school	1	\$1,469,250	\$489,750	\$489,750	\$489,750
Replication	1	\$1,469,250	\$979,500	\$489,750	
Expansion	1	\$1,469,250	\$1,469,250		

New School and Replication Applicants may request a breakdown of award term into Planning and Implementation. Planning periods may not exceed 18 months.



Grant Logistics

Base Award and Escalators:

Criterion	Target	Award Amount	Timing
1	Base Award	\$1,250,000	Maximum base award possible. Final award amount is contingent on budget request in grant application and CTCSA input.
2	School enrolls at least 100 educationally disadvantaged students in CSP-funded grades	\$150,000	Verified upon submission of a certificate of occupancy by the school in the first year of full operations
3	School earns competitive preference points on its RFA in connection with the 'collaboration with at least one traditional public school or traditional school district' priority and provides an MOU within the prescribed timeline	\$69,250	Verified upon submission of an MOU or other acceptable documentation outlining the terms of the collaboration with the traditional public school or school district in the first full year of operations.

Allowable Costs – refer to Allowable Cost Guide for details

In general, CSP funding is meant to supplement, not supplant other sources of funding.

Allowable (2 CFR 200.403)

Necessary and reasonable for performance of the Federal Award, confirms to limitations on what is allowed under federal award principles, be adequately documented, be accorded consistent treatment, and more.

Reasonable (2 CFR 200.404)

A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost.

Allocable (2 CFR 200.405)

Costs are incurred specifically for the Federal award; benefit both the Federal award and other work of the non-Federal entity and can be distributed in proportions that may be approximated using reasonable methods; is necessary to the overall operation of the non-Federal entity and is assignable in part to the Federal award in accordance with the principles in this subpart.



Application Process – 2 stages, both on SurveyMonkey Apply platform

Eligibility Check

Pre-screening mechanism to ensure only eligible applicants move to RFA stage

Applicants must:

- Evidence they have been authorized AND appropriated
- Demonstrate high-quality §4310(8)

Request for Applications (RFA)

Eligible applicants will be invited to this stage to complete the RFA process

RFA contains project and budget narrative, requires submission of various documents



Applications will be scored using a scoring rubric, applicants are encouraged to use rubric as a guide to structure narrative portion



Details of Eligibility Check

← ↻ 🔒 https://ctcharters.smapply.us/admin/surveys/13471/preview/?preview=1&lang=en&TEST_DATA

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Eligibility Check

Do you have an authorized charter certificate (approved State Board of Education Resolution) from the Connecticut State Department of Education?

Yes

No

For existing schools in Connecticut: Have you received at least a three-year renewal in the past two years and received the CSDE's approval to expand or replicate (see ESEA § 4310 (7 and 9) for the definition of expansion and replication candidates)?

For new school applicants: Have you received an initial charter certificate (approved State Board Resolution) from the CSDE AND been appropriated for in the Connecticut State budget?

Yes

No

Details of Eligibility Check

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Does your school meet the federal definition of a charter school:
(all boxes must be checked to meet federal requirements)

1. Is 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;

2. 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; ---

3. 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; ---

4. Provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both; ---

5. Is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution; ---

6. Does not charge tuition; ---

7. 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; ---

8. Is a school to which parents choose to send their children; ---

9. Admits students on the basis of a lottery, consistent with section 4303(c)(3)(A) of ESEA, if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated; ---

Details of Eligibility Check

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10. 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;

11. 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;

12. Meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;

13. Has a written performance contract with the Connecticut State Department of Education 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 CSDE and the charter school.

(This question is only visible to administrators)

Federal Definition Score

0

Letter of Intent and Required Documents

Section 1. Approved charter school certificate (approved State Board of Education Resolution) from the CSDE to open a new charter school, or to replicate or expand an existing charter school.



Details of Eligibility Check

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Letter of Intent and Required Documents

Section 1. Approved charter school certificate (approved State Board of Education Resolution) from the CSDE to open a new charter school, or to replicate or expand an existing charter school.

Upload approved charter school certificate (approved State Board of Education Resolution from the CSDE).

Upload a file

Section 2. Upload completed Notification Letter to the CSDE, please follow all instructions detailed in the letter.

Upload a file

Section 3. If contracting with a CMO the school must provide a description of the roles and responsibilities of eligible applicants, partner organizations, and charter management organizations (CMO), including the administrative and contractual roles and responsibilities of such partners. Candidates contracting with a CMO must provide a copy of the management contract. If not contracting with a CMO move to the next question.

Upload a file

Section 4. To be considered for CSDE grant, new school applicants must demonstrate they are high quality applicants by providing the

Details of Eligibility Check

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Section 4. To be considered for a CSP grant new school applicants must demonstrate they are high-quality applicants by providing the documents listed below. Documents must be submitted as a combined PDF with each numbered on a separate page, and each requirement clearly marked.

1. Evidence of a committed board of trustees to lead the project. (Please provide complete bios for all board members).
2. Identified quality instructional leader who is either experienced or proven in running a high-performing school and / or have other qualifications that make them a good leader. (Please provide resume and other documents to support this requirement).
3. Plan for identifying and acquiring a suitable facility to support the proposed school.
4. Evidence of market demand for the school (e.g. a community survey that evidences community need / demand for the school).

📁 Upload a file

Section 5. High-quality expansion or replication schools must provide the following documents. Documents must be submitted as a combined PDF with each numbered on a separate page, and each requirement clearly marked.

1. Approved / revised charter certificate (most recent renewal resolution) from the CSDE clearly denoting authority to add seats / expand.
2. Evidence of strong academic results, including above average scores relative to the host district / state in academic growth and achievement scores (as measured by Next Generation Accountability results - provide at least three years of available results).
3. No significant issues identified by authorizer in the areas listed below (provide school's most recent renewal resolution from CSDE):



Details of Eligibility Check

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3. No significant issues identified by authorizer in the areas listed below (provide school's most recent renewal resolution from CSDE):

- student safety
- school finances
- operational management
- statutory / regulatory compliance

4. At least a three-year renewal resolution from the CSDE (provide documentation).

5. Evidence of good standing with lenders no delinquency / delays in loan repayments for outstanding debt, (provide at least three most recent years of audit reports).

Upload a file

Section 6. All applicants must provide an IRS 501(c)(3) tax determination letter.

Upload a file

Section 7. Evidence of lottery admissions policy

Upload a file

Details of Eligibility Check

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Section 7. Evidence of lottery admissions policy

[Upload a file](#)

Section 8. This question only applies to schools that have previously received CSP funding under the SE grant, or any other form of CSP funding. Applicants who have not previously received CSP funding may skip this question.

If your school has received CSP funding in the past then please provide the following documentation:

1. At least three years of improved educational results
2. Compliance with §4310 (8) parts A through D
3. Evidence that the previous CSP grant received is not for the same activities for which GSCT CSP funding is being sought

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Notification Letter

As required by [ESEA §4310 \(6\) \(B\)](#) (page 267/449) all applicants wishing to apply for the Charter School Program funding under the GSCT Project are required to provide timely and adequate notice to the authorizer, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

This can be done by submitting a **Notification Letter** to the CSDE between **September 8 – 13th, 2023**. **September 13th is the deadline to submit the Notification Letter to the CSDE.**



Notification Letter - Instructions

1. Download the Notification Letter template as a MS Word document.
2. Complete the template and save it as a PDF document.
3. Email the completed PDF document to Felicia Canty at the State of Connecticut Department of Education at the following email address: felicia.canty@ct.gov.
4. The GSCT team must be copied on the above email communication at the following email address: msp@ctcharters.org
5. Save a PDF copy of the email to the CSDE, clearly showing both email recipients.
6. Combine the Notification letter and PDF email copy into one PDF and upload this combined PDF into the Notification Letter Section of the Eligibility Check on the GSCT application portal.



Notification Letter - Template

Notification Letter

This letter is to notify the Charter School Office at the Connecticut State Department of Education that (insert school name): _____ intends to apply for the CSP funding in the Great Schools for Connecticut (RFA202301) grant cycle.

GSCT Project Grant Budget request \$ _____

Purpose of funding: Choose an item.

Charter School Information

School Name: _____

Applicant Contact: _____

Signature: _____

Name of Proposed School: _____

Current Mailing Address: _____

Office Phone: (____) _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____

Email: _____

Type of Charter: State Charter School Local Charter School

Projected Student Enrollment for the first year of opening: Choose an item.

Grade Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Year 1															
Year 2															
Year 3															
Year 4															
Year 5															
Total															



Peer Review and Pre -Award Process

Peer Review

All applications will be vetted by independent peer reviewers, CTCSA does not determine outcome of grant application

Only applicants meeting cut-off score (70 – 75%) of total score of 126 points will be considered for funding

Capacity Calls

Applicants who meet cut-off scores will be invited to capacity call with peer reviewers, CTCSA to observe

Final award will occur post capacity call



Award and post -award processes

Awarded applicants will sign contract with CTCSA agreeing to abide by federal requirements for the CSP grant, include monitoring and reporting requirements.

Monitoring Guide will provide guidance towards fulfilling monitoring requirements.

Monitoring includes submitting annual Monitoring Rubric Sheet, completion of a pre -award self-risk assessment sheet, CTCSA site visits and board meeting attendance, fiscal and programmatic review and more.

Deficiencies in meeting grant requirements will require a Corrective Action Plan and all monitoring findings will be made public on the CTCSA website and shared with CSDE.



Award and post -award processes

Programmatic reporting is at regular intervals and frequency will be determined by risk assessment. At a minimum all grantees will submit an annual Monitoring Rubric Sheet, an annual report 90 days after end of grant year, and a final report after the end of the grant period.

Financial reporting will be covered in-depth during the Budget webinar (scheduled for 9/22/2023). CSP is a reimbursement -based grant and all reimbursements will be required on a monthly basis, budget reconciliation will be on a quarterly basis.



Technical Assistance (TA)

GSCT will offer subgrantees TA pre-award and throughout the life of the CSP grant. Aim of TA is capacity building for new and existing schools.

Office hours to be held at each stage of the application process, applicants and eventual subgrantees are encouraged to utilize this time well.

Targeted TA will be offered throughout grant lifecycle based on risk assessment, findings during annual monitoring review, monthly and quarterly budget updates.

Targeted TA will assist subgrantees in developing parent communication, leadership fellowships, board member TA, special ed. TA and more

Authorizer TA will also be offered to offer support to the CSDE



Important Dates

Event	Date
Notification Letter Due to CSDE	September 8 – 13th, 2023
Letter of Intent Submission Window	September 11– 18, 2023
Pre-RFA Webinar	Monday, September 18, 2023 (10:30 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.)
Budget Webinar	Friday, September 22, 2023 (10:30 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.)
RFA Submission Window	October 2 – October 27, 2023
Capacity Calls with Peer Reviewers	November 17, 20, 27, 28, 29
Awards to be announced	Dec 11- 13, 2023

Questions?

Important emails:

csp@ctcharters.org

cspfinance@ctcharters.org

Website: <https://csp.ctcharters.org/>





Connecticut
Charter Schools
Association