

Public Charter Schools Program

The Public Charter Schools Program provides financial assistance for the design and initial implementation of charter schools and the evaluation of the effects of charter schools on students, student achievement, staff and parents.

This year a new competition for \$24 million will fund approximately 3-5 additional grants to 32 states and 30-50 additional grants to schools.

In the 1999-2000 school year:

- Approximately 1,700 charter schools are open (passing the halfway mark on the way to reaching the president's goal of creating 3,000 charter schools by the year 2002).
- Approximately 350,000 students attend charter schools.
- 36 states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico have charter school laws.

Grants and subgrants:

- FY1999 funding was \$100 million. FY2000 funding was increased to \$145 million.
- Public Charter Schools Program funds are awarded to states which then award subgrants to partnerships involving authorized public chartering agencies and individual schools.
- Individual schools from states without Public Charter Schools Program grants may apply directly to the Department of Education for grants.
- 29 states, as well as Washington, DC and Puerto Rico have state grants (41 schools in six states received grants directly).
- Annual amounts of state grants range from \$200,000 in Rhode Island to more than \$12,600,000 for California (average for 1999 was approximately \$2.8 million).

Subgrants:

- Subgrants help charter schools meet the costs of planning and starting a new school.
- Subgrants may be used for up to three years (18 months for planning activities before the school opens, and 24 months for initial implementation of the charter school).
- Surveys continue to document that charter school operators consider the lack of start-up funding to be the most frequent obstacle to implementing their school.
- Public Charter Schools Program funds were awarded to roughly 900 of the first 1,200 charter schools.
- states have discretion in determining subgrant size, duration and competitiveness.

- Recently states have moved toward funding nearly 100 percent of their new charter schools.

Dissemination Grants:

States can use up to 10 percent of their award to provide two-year subgrants to successful charter schools to disseminate their lessons to other public schools or to allow successful charter school operators to help other groups open new schools. Three states have requested and received waivers to spend more than 10 percent of their FY1999 funds on these new subgrants. To be eligible for a dissemination grant, a charter school must have been open for three years. In addition, they must have demonstrated high levels of parent satisfaction, increased student performance, and the leadership necessary to run an economically and educationally viable public school.

Public Charter Schools Program Contact Information:

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Examples

Massachusetts Department of Education, Boston, Massachusetts

Project Abstract:

The Massachusetts Department of Education has received a three-year grant under the PCSP program. Massachusetts has provided subgrants to each of the state's charter schools. Each school uses these subgrants to help meet its specific start-up costs. In addition to funds for purchasing materials, designing curricula and assessments and professional development, the Massachusetts Department of Education has directed each school to use a portion of its subgrant to develop an accountability plan that meets state standards and reflects the unique mission of the particular school. Massachusetts has also used a portion of the administrative funds from the grant to develop a statewide accountability plan that incorporates extensive site visits by teams of experts modeled on the British Inspectorate System.

The Village: A High School for Pregnant and Parenting Teens, Phoenix, Arizona

Project Abstract:

The Village High School's mission is to eliminate the barriers for pregnant and parenting teens 14-21, in grades nine through twelve, who have problems with self-esteem, childcare, transportation, prenatal care, parenting, family health and wellness issues, and social/personal concerns while completing a high school diploma. The charter school provides a program of comprehensive individualized instruction that promotes self-sufficiency. The Village's Home-Bound Process enables the student to continue her education while she is at home after the birth of her baby. Students can enroll their baby in the childcare center located on-site. Although the program is geared toward them, attendance at the charter school is not limited to pregnant and parenting teens. The major portion of the Public Charter School start-up grant was used to provide staff to implement the program, to provide program supplies, to provide professional

staff development training, and to provide for the childcare center.

Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy, Flagstaff, Arizona

Project Abstract:

The Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy (FALA) is a charter school that was created through a partnership with the Museum of Northern Arizona. The school is designed to provide a small school setting, with a rigorous academic approach as well as instruction in arts and leadership. Through its collaboration with the Museum of Northern Arizona the school is able to involve students in the artistic and cultural events of Flagstaff and the surrounding area, as well as in archaeological explorations. FALA's dissemination grant will be used to support three activities: providing new charter school operators with advice and planning on a variety of issues, such as development of a governing board, curriculum, policies, personnel, mission statement, vision and more; educating the general public and key stakeholders about the charter schools and potential partnerships; and promoting partnerships between all the educators teaching students in the community. This last component includes sharing peer mentoring programs, artists-in-residency and joint professional theater productions with FALA and the Flagstaff Unified School District, as well as an annual celebration, hosted by the Museum of Northern Arizona, to honor the efforts of all traditional public, charter and private educators in the Flagstaff area.

Publications

For more information on the Public Charter Schools program, please visit:

http://www.uscharterschools.org/res_dir/res_main.htm.

The following documents and materials are available on this site:

- *Sample School Budget*: Provides a [sample school operating budget](#), along with explanatory text, from Family Learning Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. For related information, please see our [budget, finance, and fundraising](#) page and the related [discussion group](#).
- *Special Ed Handbook*: [Charter Schools and Special Education: A Guidebook](#) was prepared by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education as an overview of requirements related to meeting the needs of students with disabilities in charter schools.
- *Charters and Bylaws*: Provides links to charters and other documents posted on the U.S. Charter Schools Web site, such as [Articles of Incorporation](#) and [Bylaws](#) from charter schools.
- *School Operational Documents*: Provides links to school operational documents posted on the U.S. Charter Schools Web site, such as a [school lease](#) and a [draft personnel policy](#).
- *Sample Documents from Charter Organizers*: Provides links to sample documents submitted by charter authorizers, such as [Chicago Charter School Agreement](#) and Colorado League of Charter Schools Draft [Accountability Plan](#).

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