

# Rhode Island Charter Public Schools Charter Schools Program | Dissemination Grant Guidelines

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Office of Charter Schools

**Rhode Island Department of Education**

<i>Announcement of competition:</i>	April 2015
<i>Application Due Date:</i>	<i>Full year grants:</i> July 24, 2015 <i>Short-term grants:</i> Rolling (accepted after July 24); subject to availability of funds.

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# Table of Contents

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<b>SECTION 1. CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (CSP) GRANT INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Description of Grant Program .....	2
1.2 CSP Dissemination Grants.....	2
1.3 Eligibility to Apply .....	3
1.4 Allowable Activities.....	4
1.5 Grant Parameters.....	4
1.6 Technical Assistance.....	5
1.7 Submission Instructions.....	5
1.8 Review of Grant Applications .....	6
1.9 Reporting Requirements .....	6
1.10 USDE Reporting .....	6
1.11 Reimbursement Requests .....	7
<b>SECTION 2. CSP DISSEMINATION GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Design Considerations .....	8
2.2 Application Requirements .....	8
<b>SECTION 3. CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (CSP) ASSURANCES.....</b>	<b>10</b>

## Section 1. Charter School Program (CSP) Grant Information

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### 1.1 Description of Grant Program

The purpose of the US Department of Education’s Charter Schools Program (CSP) is to increase understanding of the charter school model by expanding the number of high-quality charter schools in the United States by providing financial assistance for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools; and evaluating the effects of charter schools, including their effects on students, student academic achievement, staff, and parents.

In 2010, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) was awarded a State Education Agency (SEA) CSP grant with the goals of a) increasing the number of highly-effective, high-achieving charter schools in Rhode Island, and b) disseminating successful practices of charter schools to positively impact student achievement. Through its grant, Rhode Island manages *startup grant competitions* for qualified applicants, as well as *dissemination grant competitions* for qualified existing charter schools that are collaborating with other public schools to expand successful practices to more students and more schools.

CSP grants awarded by RIDE are federally funded under the US Department of Education Charter Schools Program (CFDA 84.282B & CFDA 84.282C). Awards are subject to the availability of funds through the CSP. Additional federal guidance can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>.

### 1.2 CSP Dissemination Grants

In FY2016, Rhode Island’s CSP dissemination grant competition will support partnerships between Rhode Island charter schools and other public schools and/or districts that build upon existing strengths of the partners to expand successful strategies and opportunities for students. More information on allowable activities of dissemination grants can be found in Sections 1.4 and 1.5 of these *Guidelines*.

Dissemination grant awards range in size from \$50,000 to \$120,000, with a typical award size of \$100,000 for dissemination projects spanning a full school year (Aug/Sept to June). The size of any award will be contingent on the quality of the proposed project and project goals, the justification and clarity of the budget request, and the availability of funds. RIDE anticipates awarding between three and six dissemination grants in this competition.

CSP DISSEMINATION GRANT	
<b>Uses</b>	Partnerships between charter and other public schools for the purposes of: expanding the impact of successful leadership and instructional practices; expanding successful operational practices; development of new, high-quality curricular materials and/or assessments; development of board and school policies; development of information, reporting, and outreach systems.
<b>Range</b>	\$50,000 – \$120,000
<b>Award date</b>	Date satisfactory application is received by RIDE
<b>End date</b>	June 30, 2016

### 1.3 Eligibility to Apply

*REQUIRED: Primary Applicant.* The FY2016 CSP dissemination competition is open to individual Rhode Island charter schools that have a) been in operation for at least three consecutive years, and b) demonstrated overall success in academic and operational practices, including:

- A CIS rating of “typical” “leading” or “commended” in each of the last two consecutive years;
- Unqualified financial audits in each of the last two consecutive years;
- The management and leadership capacity to sustain a partnership over the grant period, indicated by strong and consistent organizational leadership, a strong and active governing board, a history of compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, and a track record of timely and accurate compliance submissions.

*REQUIRED: Partner Applicant.* To be eligible for a FY2016 dissemination grant, Rhode Island charter schools must apply with a partnering applicant or applicants. Applications should include at least one, and no more than two, eligible partner applicants. Eligible partners include:

- Rhode Island public schools (non-charter)\*
- Rhode Island public school district central offices.

\* This grant places a high priority on partnering with schools currently classified as “focus” or “priority” under Rhode Island’s system of accountability. Please see Section 2.1 for more information.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES ON ELIGIBILITY :

- Section 5202 (d) of the federal CSP statute states that charter schools may not receive more than one dissemination grant. If a charter school has received a CSP dissemination grant at any time in the past, the charter school is ineligible to participate in this dissemination grant competition.
- Any funds awarded must remain under the care and control of the primary applicant (i.e. the Board of Directors of the charter school that applied for and was awarded the grant). Each grantee’s project must be designed and implemented in conformance with all applicable state and federal regulations.

## 1.4 Allowable Activities

In accordance with Title V, Part B Sec. 5204 (f) (3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), successful applicants may use dissemination grants for the following activities:

- Expanding the impact of successful leadership practices;
- Expanding the impact of successful instructional practices;
- Expanding successful operational practices;
- Expanding or enhancing opportunities for students by sharing resources;
- Development and implementation of high-quality curricular materials and/or assessments;
- Development and implementation of board and school policies;
- Development and implementation of information, reporting, and outreach systems.

## 1.5 Grant Parameters

All CSP grantees are expected to complete the goals and objectives described in the approved grant application, complete all activities described in the approved grant application, and adhere to the budget described in the approved grant application. Failure to do so may result in the rejection of grant reimbursement requests and the withdrawal by the Rhode Island Department of Education of the charter school's eligibility for additional grant funding through the CSP. RIDE reserves the right to remove ineligible or undocumented costs from funding consideration and reimbursement requests.

CSP funds shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, state, local or other funds providing for the operations of charter public (or other public) schools. Recurring operational expenses, such as teacher or administrator salaries, are not allowable under the charter schools program (CSP). Facilities costs, including lease, acquisition, purchase, construction, renovation, improvements, or services such as utilities, are not allowable.

Applications will be subject to a full programmatic and fiscal review by RIDE's Office of Charter Schools and Office of Finance. Applications including activities that are not allowable may be rejected. General guidance regarding allowable expenses for federal grant funds may be found within Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87. It is located on the OMB web page at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>.

In the event that a charter school is awarded CSP funds, but is notified that its charter will be revoked during the grant period, the charter school's eligibility for grant reimbursement will coincide with the date of notification of charter revocation or nonrenewal.

### *Grant Start Date/End Date*

Applicants receiving dissemination grants will receive a Grant Award Notification (GAN). The GAN will identify the start date for the grant. Typically, the grant start date coincides with the date RIDE received a complete and satisfactory grant application from the applicants.

Any funds awarded in the FY2016 dissemination competition must be completely drawn, and all reimbursement requests submitted, by or before 5:00 PM on June 30, 2016. Any expenses incurred after that date will not be reimbursed. Any reimbursement requests received after that date will not be reimbursed.

## 1.6 Technical Assistance

A technical assistance meeting for prospective charter school applicants and public school partners will be held in early June; date and location to be determined and will be announced once it is scheduled. [Please check the RIDE website for more information.](#)

Additional technical assistance may be provided to applicants and grantees. Please email questions to Drew Allsopp, RIDE Charter School Coordinator, at [drew.allsopp@ride.ri.gov](mailto:drew.allsopp@ride.ri.gov). All questions and responses will be posted on the RIDE website and accessible to all applicants and grantees.

## 1.7 Submission Instructions

The deadline for submission of grant projects lasting a full year is July 24, 2015. After July 24, RIDE will accept and review dissemination applications on a rolling basis for shorter-term dissemination projects, subject to fund availability after awarding full-year projects. RIDE encourages applicants to submit grant applications for full-year projects, as the goal of the grant is to maximize the impact of deep and lasting charter public/non-charter public school partnerships.

Please adhere to the following guidelines to assemble the application and accompanying materials:

- A complete application includes: a cover letter signed by both the applicant charter school's Board's Chair and by a district administrator of the partnering applicant(s), executive summary, description of need and opportunity, project narrative, benchmarks and outcomes, budget, attachments, and signed assurances.
- Applicants must use the *Budget Form for FY2016 CSP Dissemination Grants*. This form can be found on the RIDE website ([link here](#)) under the "Resources" heading.
- All pages of the narrative must be standard letter size, 8½" X 11" using 12 point, Times New Roman or comparable font.

Please submit **ONE (1) bound, signed original** and **ONE (1) PDF/electronic version** of your grant application. The electronic version of the application must be submitted as a single PDF file. Applications will not be returned. Please keep a copy for your records.

Applications should be submitted to:

Office of Charter Schools  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
ATTN: Drew Allsopp, Charter School Coordinator  
255 Westminster St.  
Providence, RI 02903  
[drew.allsopp@ride.ri.gov](mailto:drew.allsopp@ride.ri.gov)

## 1.8 Review of Grant Applications

CSP grant applications will be reviewed by a committee of education professionals, which may include qualified administrators in existing charter schools not currently applying for a CSP grant. The purpose of the review is to assess the quality and viability of the proposed program plan, goals, budget, and financial management procedures described in the CSP grant application.

**NOTE: Only complete and timely applications will be considered.**

While reviewing grant applications and implementing the CSP dissemination grant program, RIDE reserves the right to:

- Request and review certified audited financial statements and/or other appropriate supplementary documentation including, but not limited to, interim financial statements;
- Request references and to contact any or all references;
- Waive requirements or amend these requirements upon notification to all applicants;
- Adjust or correct cost or cost figures, with notice, if mathematical or typographical errors exist;
- Reject any or all portions of any offer, to negotiate terms and conditions, and to make an award for any or all remaining portions;
- Request clarifications from applicants, and further, to request or require revisions from applicants prior to award;
- Terminate award with written notice.

## 1.9 Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients are required to submit periodic project and fiscal progress reports. Reports for this program will be due as follows:

Interim report:	Date of Grant Award Notification (GAN) through December 30, 2015
	Interim report due: January 29, 2016
Final report:	Date of Grant Award Notification (GAN) through June 30, 2015
	Final report due: July 15, 2016

These reports should indicate progress toward all benchmarks and outcomes described in the approved grant application, a narrative describing progress on all proposed grant activities, and an up-to-date budget summary.

In addition to the interim and final report, RIDE reserves the right to schedule monthly calls as needed or as required to track and monitor progress toward grant objectives. For short-term grantees, RIDE will provide a reporting schedule according to the terms and length of the awarded grant.

## 1.10 USDE Reporting

RIDE will utilize data collected from CSP grantees to develop its annual report to the US Department of Education. USDE collects a variety of data from RIDE regarding charter school enrollment, performance, and progress toward the goals set in RIDE's approved grant. USDE will evaluate RIDE through analysis of the accomplishments of its multi-year strategic objectives as set forth in the SEA CSP grant.

## 1.11 Reimbursement Requests

For grantees, reimbursement requests should be submitted using the form titled *Rhode Island Charter Schools Program (CSP) Request for Reimbursement*. In addition to the standard request form, all reimbursement requests must include:

- A signature from the charter school's Board Chair certifying that the request has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors in an open and public meeting;
- All backup documentation, including copies of invoices, receipts, and other supporting documentation.

RIDE reserves the right to refuse reimbursement for: expenses incurred that are not allowable under the grant's parameters, expenses that do not have corresponding legible invoices and receipts, and expenses incurred outside of the award period.

## Section 2. CSP Dissemination Grant Application Guidelines

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The purpose of this section is to provide potential applicants with instructions and guidance for developing an application for projects that will meet the purpose and goals of this grant program. Before preparing applications, potential applicants should review description of the CSP grant program (Section 1 of these *Guidelines*), and all federal guidance, to ensure a full understanding of the grant program and purpose.

### 2.1 Design Considerations

FY2016 dissemination grant applicants should design projects that build upon existing strengths of the partners to expand successful strategies and opportunities for students. For the FY2016 grant competition, RIDE has identified three (3) priorities to encourage meaningful opportunities for innovation and collaboration created through charter and school/district partnerships. Strong applications will respond to one or more of the following priorities:

*Priority 1:* Include in the partnership Rhode Island public schools current classified as “focus” or “priority” under the Rhode Island system of accountability ([more information here](#));

*Priority 2:* Increase the impact of successful leadership and instructional practices for students with disabilities and students learning English;

*Priority 3:* Establish or strengthen a partnership that leverages the expertise and resources of both charter and non-charter participants to achieve mutually beneficial objectives.

### 2.2 Application Requirements

#### *Cover Letter*

Include a brief cover letter signed by the applying charter school’s board chair and by a district administrator of the partner(s).

#### *Executive Summary*

Provide a one-page executive summary of the proposed partnership between the charter school and other partners, including proposed objectives, activities, and outcomes. Do not include information that is not included/supported elsewhere in the application.

#### *Description of Partnering Organizations*

Include a brief description of each partnering school and/or district, including mission statements, student demographics, and relevant context. For each partnering school and/or district, assign a primary project lead. Include a description of the project leads’ current roles within their organizations. Describe how each project lead will have the capacity to lead and carry out grant activities.

#### *Required Attachments*

- ✓ Brief biographies, contact information, and resumes for project leads.

### *Description of Needs and Opportunities*

Justify the need for the CSP dissemination grant. Describe the current challenges and/or the current unrealized opportunities that the partnership will address. Describe the current conditions that make the proposed partnership a promising response to the identified needs and opportunities.

### *Project Narrative*

Include a detailed narrative that describes the overall grant project design and plan, as well as budgeted items (this section should function as both a project and budget narrative). Justify how the quality and scope of grant activities will successfully address the goals of the partnership. Support your cost assumptions.

- 1) Describe the main objectives of the grant project.
- 2) Describe all proposed grant activities. Include specific scopes of work, projects to be developed, trainings to be attended, systems to be built, etc.
- 3) For all grant activities,
  - a. Include budget estimates, and support your cost assumptions.
  - b. Identify point people responsible for various stages of each grant activity.
  - c. Discuss when each activity would occur, during the term of the grant.
  - d. Describe how the proposed grant activities will meet the priorities of this grant competition.
- 4) Discuss how the grant activities will impact the schools beyond the end of the grant period.

### *Required Attachments*

- ✓ Financial management, conflict of interest, and monitoring policies to be used by the charter school's board to ensure effective use and oversight of CSP funds during the planning period.

### *Project Benchmarks and Outcomes*

Identify benchmarks for the early, interim, and final stages of grant activities and how progress will be measured toward these benchmarks. All benchmarks and goals should be clearly written, manageable, and measurable. These benchmarks should be directly linked to the stated needs of the program, and will be used to quantitatively track progress toward grant objectives.

### *Budget*

Create a budget using the *Budget Form for FY2016 CSP Dissemination Applications*. The applicant's budget must remain within the funding parameters described in these *Guidelines* and demonstrate efficient use of resources. The budget will be reviewed to ensure customary and reasonable costs for all grant activities. The actual amount awarded will be contingent on the applicant's ability to support the proposed budget items in the application and cost eligibility.

### Section 3. Charter School Program (CSP) Assurances

By submitting this application, the applicant ensures that the primary applicant will:

- provide to United States Department of Education (USDOE) and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) such information and assurances as may be required;
- cooperate with USDOE and RIDE in evaluating the program assisted through the grant;
- maintain care and control of all funds through the oversight of the Board of Directors of the charter school;
- operate in accordance with the federal definition of a charter school:
  - (A) 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;
  - (B) 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;
  - (C) 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;
  - (D) provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
  - (E) is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
  - (F) does not charge tuition;
  - (G) 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, and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
  - (H) is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that admits students on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated;
  - (I) agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit and reporting requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such requirements are specifically waived for the purpose of this program;
  - (J) meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
  - (K) operates in accordance with State law; and
  - (L) 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.

#### GENERAL ASSURANCES

In accordance with Section 14306(a) of ESEA, the primary applicant assures that:

- a) CSP funds will be used only to supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the level of funds that would, in the absence of the Federal funds, be made available from non-Federal (State and local) sources for the education of participating students. In no case, may an LEA use Federal program funds to supplant funds from non-Federal sources;

- b) unless and until existing requirements are waived, the applicant will continue to comply with all operational requirements of each program. Each program will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications;
- c) the control of funds provided under each covered program and title to property
  - (1) acquired with program funds will be in a public agency or in a nonprofit private agency, institution, organization, if the law authorizing the program provides for assistance to such entities; and
  - (2) the public agency, nonprofit private agency, institution or organization will administer such funds and property to the extent required by the authorizing statutes;
- d) the applicant will adopt and use proper methods of administering each such program including:
  - (1) the enforcement of any obligations imposed by law on agencies, institutions, organizations and recipients responsible for carrying out each program; and
  - (2) the correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through audits, monitoring or evaluation;
- e) the applicant will cooperate in carrying out any evaluations of each program conducted by or for the State Educational Agency, the Secretary of Education, or other Federal officials;
- f) the applicant will use such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures as will ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, Federal funds paid to such applicant under each such program;
- g) the applicant will:
  - (1) make reports to the State educational agency and the Secretary of Education as may be necessary to enable such agency and the Secretary to perform their duties under each such program;
  - (2) maintain such records, provide such information, and afford access to the records as the SEA or the Secretary may find necessary to carry out the SEA's or the Secretary's duties

## **CIVIL RIGHTS ASSURANCES**

All recipients of assistance under these grants made pursuant to the ESEA shall comply with the following Federal and State civil rights statutes and regulations:

- (a) 42 USC, Sections 1981 and 1983 (acts prohibited on the basis of race);
- (b) Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (acts prohibited on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin);
- (c) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 United States Code 1681 et. Seq. (acts prohibited on the basis of sex);
- (d) 42 USC, Section 1601 et seq. (acts prohibited on the basis of age);
- (e) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 20 USC 794 (acts prohibited on the basis of handicap);
- (f) 24 USC, Section 12100 et seq. [The Americans with Disabilities Act] (acts prohibited on the basis of disability);
- (g) Section 16-38-1 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended (discrimination because of race or age);
- (h) Section 16-38-1.1 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended (discrimination because of sex);
- (i) Chapter 42-87 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended (Civil Rights of Individuals with Handicaps); and
- (j) Sections 28-5.1-13 and 28-5.1-14 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended (Private education institutions – compliance with state policy of non-discrimination and affirmative action).

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION – LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS**

This certification is required by the Department of Education regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 34 CFR Part 85, for all lower tier transactions meeting the threshold and tier requirement stated at Section 85.110.

Certification:

- (1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this application, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
  
- (2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this application.

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Signature of Primary Applicant (Charter School) Board Chairperson or Authorized Representative

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Print name and title

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Date