STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

2019 CALL FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS
SUMMER CYCLE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Schools Opening Fall 2020 and Beyond

Applicant Instructions for Tracks A-D

Summer 2019 Application Tracks

The table below details some of the differences between eligible applicant types and tracks:

	Track A: Start-Up Applicant	Track B: Start-Up Applicant Contracting with EMO	Track C: Start-Up Applicant Independently Replicating a Proven School Model	Track D: Experienced Non-Profit Applicant Which Already Governs High Achieving Charter Schools
Eligible Applicant	Committee to Form	Committee to Form	Committee to Form	Non-Profit Charter Management Organization Which Directly Holds Charters in NV or Other States or Nevada Non-Profit Affiliate of Such a CMO
May Applicant Contract with Education Management Organization (For Profit/Non-Profit)?	No-Not Permitted for Track A	Yes-Required for Track B	No-Not Permitted for Track C	Yes-Permitted But Not Required for Track D
School Type(s)	New School Model Created by Applicant	New School Model or Successful Existing School Model Developed by EMO	Replication: Successful Existing School Model Which Applicant Wants to "Clone" in New Location	Successful School Model Developed by CMO
Link to Specific Application Template	1. WORD VERSION 2. PDF VERSION	1. WORD VERSION 2. PDF VERSION	1. WORD VERSION 2. PDF VERSION	1. WORD VERSION 2. PDF VERSION
Page Limit (including all questions)	127	132	129	132

The State Public Charter School Authority has adopted a multiple track application format which features questions focused on the particular academic, financial, organizational, and governance opportunities and challenges associated with a variety of common applicant profiles, including those individuals seeking to start a school on their own, those groups which have elected to contract with an education management organization, and successful governing boards of charter schools which are seeking to oversee new schools in Nevada.

Prospective applicants who are unsure of which application track is most suitable for their particular proposal are encouraged to contact the State Public Charter School Authority by phone at 775-687-9178 or via email at charterstarters@spcsa.nv.gov.

Specifications

- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the content is complete, detailed, and easily understood and followed by reviewers; external experts; and parents, families, and the general public.

- This RFP may be completed with responses following each question (e.g., the questions following the headings *Parent and Community Involvement, Driving for Results, Human Resources*, etc.). ***Please leave the text of the question in the document*** to facilitate review and public transparency.

- All narrative elements of the application must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 11-point Cambria font, single-spaced.

- All headings must be in 11, 12, or 14 point Cambria font.

- Tables may be in either 11 or 10 point Cambria font.

- Each major section (Executive Summary, Meeting the Need, Academic Plan, etc.) must begin on a separate page, as indicated in the RFP document.

- All pages must be consecutively numbered in the footer, including all attachments.

- The table of contents must identify the page number of each major section of the narrative and each required attachment.

- Schools are encouraged to utilize Microsoft Word's cross-referencing features to allow for automatic updates to page numbers within the document for any element discussed in more than one section. Simply referring reviewers to content in another section or expecting reviewers to seek out and infer an answer from information which may or may not be found in an attachment is unacceptable and will be deemed unresponsive. Petitioners are expected to exercise appropriate judgement in balancing responsiveness with excessively duplicative content. It is highly advisable to answer the question posed and refer the reviewer to additional contextual information that will inform review with transitional and referential phrases such as "As discussed in greater detail in the Section____beginning on page , the school will..." and "Reviewers seeking more information on____may wish to refer to the section labeled ____ beginning on page___. More specifically, the school will..."

- References and citations should be placed in the footer.

- The name of each major section and attachment, e.g. "Attachment 1," etc. must be placed in the footer to facilitate easy review and navigation of the materials. Bookmarking of individual sections and attachments in Acrobat is strongly encouraged to enhance readability and facilitate a thorough review.

- Schools are encouraged to use Microsoft Word's styles features (http://shaunakelly.com/word/styles/stylesms.html) to manage formatting, provide for bookmarking and cross-referencing, and facilitate the generation of the table of contents and other features through the heading styles functionality.

- If a particular question does not apply to your team or application, simply respond with an explanatory sentence identifying the reason this question is not applicable to your team or proposal AND including the term "not applicable" within the sentence.

- All questions, including those identified as "Not Applicable" and tables not utilized must be left in the document. Responses may not exceed 100 pages of narrative responses and tables, meaning that the final submission will vary based on the applicant track. Please review the summary on the previous page.

- Tables which are accompanied with directions permitting the school to modify the number of rows and to customize the designated content may be changed as indicated.

- Attachments are not included in the narrative page limit.

- All required attachments should be clearly labeled and uploaded in the file format specified and with the file names provided.

- Applicants MUST submit applications electronically following instructions provided by the SPCSA. All other attachments may be formatted at the applicant's discretion. All documents, other than budget documents and data submissions better suited to Excel, must be submitted as PDF documents. All PDF documents, other than those individual pages containing signatures which are inserted into converted documents, must be submitted as fully converted (not scanned) documents.[1]

  o Application Coversheet

  o Proposal Narrative Template—*Note: There are four separate RFPs outlining different applicant models. Please select the correct one. Applicants are encouraged to bookmark each section of the PDF document to facilitate thorough review.*

  o Charter School Board Member Information Sheet Template—*Note: There are separate Start Up and Experienced CMO Board Member versions.*

  o Board Membership Template

  o Incubation Year Planning Table

  o Financial Plan Workbook (submit in Excel)

- When submitting resumes and biographies of committee to form members, proposed board members and staff, label each document with the individual's affiliation with the proposed school (planning/committee to form member, board member, principal, teacher, etc.) and combine the files into a single converted PDF document. Bookmarking of individual sections is strongly encouraged to enhance readability and facilitate a thorough review.

- Complete all sheets in the Financial Plan Workbook.

- Review all elements of your application for completeness before submitting. Incomplete applications will not be accepted, and applicants are not able to amend, revise, or supplement their application after it has been submitted unless the SPCSA, at its sole discretion, requests additional information or the SPCSA board votes to reject the application and the applicant chooses to resubmit a revised application during the statutory resubmission window.

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to maintain final Microsoft Word versions of all written materials. In the event that an unsuccessful applicant elects to resubmit an application with additional content and documentation during the statutory resubmission window, the applicant will be expected to use the Track Changes function to identify any additions or deletions to the application. Specific format requirements for such resubmissions will be furnished to applicants prior to the beginning of the resubmission window.

- The following is a list of attachments to accompany the application:

Attachment	Description	Required for Track A?	Required for Track B?	Required for Track C?	Required for Track D?
1	Letters of Community Support/Partnership	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Leadership team job descriptions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Resumes and student achievement data for school leader	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Competencies used for school leader selection	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Teacher Evaluation Tool(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	School leader Evaluation Tool(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Board Member Template	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Board Member Information Sheets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Board Bylaws, Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	Incubation Year Planning Table	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	College/University Dual Credit agreement documentation or Attestation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Operational execution plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	Proof of Facility Commitment or Attestation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	Insurance Coverage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	Budget Narrative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	Financial Plan Workbook	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	EMO/CMO/Replication School Historical Financial Documents	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	EMO/CMO/Replication School Achievement and Audit Data	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	Regional Director Resume and/or Job Description	No	Yes	No	Yes
20	Network Organizational Charts	No	Yes	No	Yes
21	Budget for the Operator at the Regional Network Level	No	Yes	No	Yes
22	EMO Audits and Historical Financial Documents	No	Yes	No	Possibly
23	EMO Services Contract	No	Yes	No	Possibly

- Applicants are reminded that all application submissions are public records and are posted on the SPCSA web site. Once a school is approved, it is expected that the complete charter application and any subsequent amendments will be posted on the school's web site or will otherwise be made available via electronic means upon request from any member of the public. To ensure the broadest range of accessibility for public documents, the SPCSA strongly encourages applicants to consult the Accessibility Guidance offered by our peer authorizer, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: http://www.doe.mass.edu/nmg/MakingAccessibleDocuments.pdf and http://www.doe.mass.edu/nmg/accessibility.html. The usage of the Microsoft styles feature discussed earlier will also help to facilitate accessibility.

Submission Instructions

1. To be eligible to submit a full proposal for the Summer 2019 application cycle, **applicants must first submit the Notice of Intent by March 15, 2019**. Applicants who have submitted a Notice of Intent for a previous round must submit a new Notice of Intent to allow for planning of reviewing activities and other authorizing work.

2. Applications should be prepared using the templates and online submission process established by the SPCSA.

3. In order to complete and submit your RFP packet, you will need to meet the following minimum technology requirements:

    a. A local copy of Microsoft Office Word 2007 and Microsoft Office Excel 2007 or later
    b. A local copy of Adobe Acrobat Standard or Professional or a third party PDF-creation solution that allows for converting, combining, and consecutively paginating files into an ADA accessible portable document format[1]
    c. A local copy of Microsoft Office Project and Microsoft Office Visio or other software or a school-selected suitable web-based equivalent (e.g. Lucidchart for flowcharts) with the capacity to produce detailed Gannt charts, flowcharts, and explanatory graphics for inclusion in the Microsoft Word narrative or the requested attachments
    d. Microsoft Internet Explorer Version 9 or above OR Google Chrome Version 40 or above
    e. A reliable Internet connection
    f. A laptop or desktop computer with at least 50 Mb of free space to store downloaded RFP documents and local copies of your RFP submission

4. The submission portal is located on the Epicenter platform maintained by the Charter School Authority. The portal will automatically shut down access to all applications at 5:00 pm PT on July 15, 2019 It can take several weeks to complete the entire Epicenter process, so please be sure to allow adequate time to upload all documents in each section of the platform well before the deadline. Upon receipt of the Letter of Intent, the Committee to Form liaison will receive an invite to Epicenter where they will upload their submission. Late submissions, including applications that are partially uploaded, will not be accepted. *Applicants are strongly encouraged to limit the number of scanned pages due to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws that apply to both the Authority and to charter schools. Scanned pages should incorporate alt text that reflects the contents of the scanned page to ensure accessibility to students, parents, and members of the public with disabilities.*

5. Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin accessing and using Epicenter immediately upon receipt of their user name and password.

6. You will upload each element of the application (e.g., Cover Sheet, Proposal, Financial Workbook, attachments, etc.) separately using Epicenter.

---

[1] Some third party PDF creation solutions, including Microsoft Office's built in PDF conversion settings, do not result in ADA accessible documents. Applicants without access to Acrobat Standard or Professional may wish to seek in-kind support from a business that uses this software or determine if a local library or print shop has this software loaded onto its computers.

7. Once the Committee to Form Liaison has accessed the Epicenter account, open up the Tasks by selecting the Tasks queue found in the upper left corner of the Epicenter home page. You can use the headers to sort the tasks in your queue. To complete a compliance requirement task listed in your My Tasks queue, please complete the following steps:

   a. Select the Title in the Description column of the task that you want to complete. This will bring you into the Submission Upload page.

   b. The Organization that the requirement is for will be listed at the top. Therefore, make sure you have opened the correct task. Review any Description, Resources and Instructions that have been provided.

   c. Fill in any Submission Tags that are required to be entered. Required submission tags will have an *.

   d. Use either the Upload New File button or **Previously Uploaded File** button and attach your file(s). If the requirement is a Narrative you can type in a response to the submission requirement, upload a file or complete both.

   e. Enter in any messages to the reviewers/approvers.

   f. Select Submit.

   g. Your submission can then be viewed in Epicenter.

8. If an applicant needs to search for a previously uploaded document it can be completed using a search in the Document Center. As soon as a submission has been uploaded to Epicenter, it is available for accessing in Document Center. After selecting Document Center, you will have three areas that provide submission searches. They include the following:

   a. Simple Search Box: The simple search box will allow you to search for a submission type name or filename across all entities that you have access to. If you don't know the exact name of the submission or only want to search across a specific entity, then we recommend using Advanced Search.

   b. Advanced Search: The Advanced Search allows you to use Search Criteria options to filter and locate the submissions. You will see a "Search Criteria" section in the left hand panel of the page. You can proceed to the next search criteria option using the Next button. You can also complete your search at any time by selecting the Search Now button. The following provides an overview of the Search Criteria options:
      • Entities: The entities are grouped by organization and then by entity type. You can select the + symbol next to your organization's name to see a listing of the Entity Types. You can then select the + symbol next to each of the Entity Types to view the listing of Entities. You have to select an Entity before you can advance or complete a search.
      • Content: The search criteria options within this area are all

optional. You can bypass these filters by select the Search Now button.

- Submission Types: The submission types are first grouped by organization, then Entity Type and then Category. You can select the + symbols next to each of the various levels to expand the section.

- Timeframes: Based on the submission types selected, you will be presented with the specific Timeframes (i.e. school year) or a Specific Date (i.e. Expiration Date, Board Meeting Date, etc.) to select.

- Submitted Date and Status: This page allows you to search by the Submitted Date and/or the submission Status.

- Sort Order: You can specify a Sort Order and you can also specify how many results (submissions) you would like in each page.

9. Applicants may upload proposals up to 5:00 pm PT on July 15, 2019. Once the proposal is submitted, applicants will be unable to access, edit, or revise proposals. The SPCSA Executive Director, may, at his sole discretion, grant a brief extension of the application window in the event that the Authority observes a connectivity or server issue related to the portal. Applicants are strongly encouraged to upload application documents well before the deadline.

10. To permit the Authority to address public transparency requirements during board meetings, two complete paper copies of the application must be received within 5 business days of the submission of the online application. Each paper application must include an assurance that it is identical to the electronic submission. The SPCSA reserves the right to direct applicants to submit additional paper copies. The paper copy of the application will not be reviewed by staff or external reviewers.

11. Charter proposals are read and scored by an external team of evaluators from Nevada and across the nation, each of whom has expertise in academics, operations, and/or finance, as well as the communities being served.

Guidance and Resources for Applicants

Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with **current** Nevada law and regulations relating to charter schools. As Nevada's statutes and regulations are continuing to evolve, it is advisable to monitor and evaluate all changes to ensure that any proposed elements meet current expectations. The Authority does not have the capacity or the statutory authority to provide individual guidance or legal advice. Charter school applicants are encouraged to consult the Charter School Association of Nevada and an attorney who is well versed in charter school law for guidance in interpreting those elements of statute and regulation for which the Authority has not incorporated its policy expectations in this document.

Nevada Revised Statutes: NRS 388A contains the vast majority of law pertaining to charter schools: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-388A.html.

NRS 388A incorporates multiple legal changes which were made during the 2015 legislative session that impact charter schools. Some bills did include language which impacted other chapters of the Nevada Revised Statutes in 2015, when the state adopted a number of reforms related to charter schools. Key bills which passed include:

- SB509: Balances additional operating flexibility for charter schools with broad changes in charter school authorizing and accountability: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Bills/SB/SB509_EN.pdf

- SB460: Provides for an accountability framework to evaluate the performance of a small subset of charter schools which have a mission to exclusively serve opportunity youth, students with   disabilities, and other particularly vulnerable populations: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Bills/SB/SB460_EN.pdf

- SB208: Codifies existing minimum expectations regarding the notification of families when a new charter school is scheduled to open in a community and changes the expectations around   recruiting and enrolling students: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Bills/SB/SB208_EN.pdf

- SB390: Permits but does not require charter schools to give admissions preference to students who attend overcrowded schools or underperforming schools within a 2 mile radius of a campus: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Bills/SB/SB390_EN.pdf

- SB200: Permits but does not require charter schools on military bases to give admissions preference to students of personnel residing on or employed by the military base: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Bills/SB/SB200_EN.pdf

Nevada Administrative Code: As a state with a biennial legislature, Nevada relies heavily on its regulatory framework to provide guidance on the interpretation and execution of its laws. The provisions of NAC 386.010 through 386.47 govern the administration of the state's charter school program: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-386.html.

Due to the legislative changes during the 2015 session, applicants should anticipate that many of these regulations will be revised to reflect the most current law as Nevada continues to adopt best authorizing and oversight practices and policies from other leading charter school states.

Pursuant to SB509, the Authority may require that schools enter into amended and restated charter contracts as a condition of granting an amendment; this mechanism allows us to require schools to develop additional technical amendments and contractual changes as statutory and regulatory requirements evolve.

Additionally, the State of Nevada recently received a federal Charter Schools Program grant. Charter school applicants are strongly encouraged to review the federal non-regulatory guidance related to the Charter Schools Program and to consult the eligibility and approval criteria for those grants. A copy of the approved CSP grant application can be found at http://bit.ly/1R0aeJf. Please note that CSP grant funds are highly competitive and there is no guarantee that an approved charter school applicant will be awarded a CSP grant from the Nevada Department of Education or   that the amount will meet the full startup needs of the school. It is important to

note that, pursuant to federal law and the conditions of the grant program, these funds cannot be used to pay for facilities. Additional information on the CSP grant can be found at http://www.doe.nv.gov/Charter_Schools/NCSP/.

Additional Guidance and Resources for Schools

The Nevada charter school movement and the SPCSA have undergone dramatic changes in the past four years as a result of legislative changes in the 2013 legislative session and the sweeping education reforms adopted during the 2015 legislative session. As noted above, the policy and operating landscape for charter schools has undergone significant shifts, including some changes which have yet to be codified into regulation and standard practice.

In light of these changes and the Authority board's deep commitment to accountability and continuous improvement, the expectations and standards for charter application approval and for ongoing operation have continued to evolve and our process has become increasingly more rigorous. Consequently, applicants are strongly cautioned against excessive borrowing of language from "boilerplate" Nevada charter application material and sample resources that are widely available on the internet, including legacy materials on a variety of state web sites, and documents maintained for a subset of existing schools on the SPCSA website.

As they plan their schools, the Committees to Form of Start-Up charter schools in conjunction with an EMO are encouraged to reach out not only to Nevada's leading 4 and 5 star schools, but also to t h e top performing charter schools in leading charter school markets, including not only states in t h e western United States, but also schools in places like New York, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia. While there are some contextual differences between states, you will find that many of these networks have experienced challenges as they have grown and can share lessons learned about how to grow intentionally, strategically, and effectively.

Applicants are encouraged to avoid quoting entire statutes or regulations, or including documents that can referred to rather than provided in their entirety in the application. Do not print materials off the Nevada Department of Education's website or the State Public Charter School Authority's website for inclusion in the application; the Review Team can access those websites if necessary. Including documents and statutes and regulations in their entirety will result in an unmanageably large application. Rather than quoting or including the entire text of statute, regulation and/or documents in the application, include only relevant excerpts or summarize the statute, regulation or document. Do not hesitate to provide citations of relevant statutes or regulations along with a thoughtful, original discussion of *how* the school intends to implement the requirements of the law, regulation, or process in a way which is *fully aligned* with the mission, vision, and program outlined in the application. In designing their policies, processes, and procedures, schools are encouraged to consider the who, what, where, when, and why for each element in the school's operating system.

Overview of the Summer 2019 Application Evaluation and the Application Cycle

The State Public Charter School Authority views the granting of the charter as an investment of public dollars and the public trust in the service of public schoolchildren. The evaluation of each application and each applicant revolves around the same essential question: will this school be an academic, organizational, & financial success? The application is evaluated based on the strength of the plan in each of those domains, while applicants are evaluated based on their *capacity* to execute the program they've proposed both based on the

coherence, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness of each element of the application and on the data gathered during both the capacity interview process and background research and due diligence on both proposed members of the governing board and proposed staff members.

Successful Applicants Will Demonstrate…

	Track A	Track B	Track C	Track D
Governance	Strong Founding Team with Capacity to Transparently and Accountably Govern Multi-Million Dollar Public Entity	Strong Founding Team with Capacity to Transparently and Accountably Govern Multi-Million Dollar Public Entity	Strong Founding Team with Capacity to Transparently and Accountably Govern Multi-Million Dollar Public Entity	Strong Governing Team with Proven Track Record of Transparently and Accountably Governing a Multi-Million Dollar Public Entity
Leadership	School Leader with Exemplary Track Record of Academic Results with Similar Model/Population	School and Network Leaders with Exemplary Track Record of Academic and Operating Results with Similar Model/Population	School Leader with Exemplary Track Record of Academic Results with Similar Model/Population	School and Network Leaders with Exemplary Track Record of Academic and Operating Results with Similar Model/Population Strong Operating Team with Track Record of Transparently and Accountably Operating a Multi-Million Dollar Public Entity
Academic Accountability	Promising School Model Likely to Produce 4/5 Star Results with Target Population	Proven School Model With Track Record of Producing 4/5 Star Results with Target Population	Proven School Model With Track Record of Producing 4/5 Star Results with Target Population	Proven School Model With Track Record of Producing 4/5 Star Results with Target Population
Fiscal Accountability	Strong School Financial Model Likely to Result in Increasing Annual Fund Balances Strong Business Plan Worthy of Public Investment	Strong School Financial Model With Track Record of Increasing Annual Fund Balances Track Record of Clean Audits	Strong School Financial Model With Track Record of Increasing Annual Fund Balances Strong Business Plan Worthy of Public Investment	Strong School and Network Financial Model With Track Record of Increasing Annual Fund Balances Track Record of Clean Audits
Business Relationships	Transparent and Appropriate Client/Vendor Relationship with Any Identified Service Providers	Transparent and Appropriate Client/Vendor Relationship with Reputable EMO and other Identified Service Providers	Transparent and Appropriate Client/Vendor Relationship with Any Identified Service Providers	Transparent and Appropriate Client/Vendor Relationship with Any Identified Service Providers

Developing a high quality charter school application is a challenging and time-consuming endeavor that requires extensive collaboration by all members of the committee to form the charter school. Reading and making recommendations on charter applications and applicants is also a time- consuming activity for SPCSA board members, staff, and the external evaluators whom the Authority works with to ensure a diversity of perspectives and expertise in the review process.

It is important to note that in contrast to other statewide independent charter school board authorizers with similarly sized portfolios, the SPCSA currently has very limited staff approved to manage school communications, the charter application process, the amendment request process, the pre-opening process for new charter schools and new campuses, performance management of existing charter contracts, or the process for renewing and closing charter schools based on performance issues. All State Public Charter School Authority employees other than the Director are primarily funded as either state agency fiscal support staff or as staff to the agency's district-

like local education agency function.   Consequently, schools are cautioned that timelines for review and   feedback may be subject to change or modification.

Schools approved in this cycle would be able to open no earlier than Fall 2020. Due to the short amount of time between charter approval and opening, successful applicants under this timeline likely will be experienced applicants and those replicating a proven model with significant external support. Prospective applicants who are unable to submit an application which meets their own high standards during the Summer round are strongly encouraged to begin working on an application for the Winter 2020 cycles as soon as possible. Developing a high quality charter school is a challenging, but rewarding endeavor. The application process is rigorous by design. Many of the nation's most successful charter schools experienced setbacks and initial denials and had to go back and significantly revisit their initial plans and assumptions and expand their capacity and level of commitment. While there are likely to be some changes to the timeline, process, and format in future application cycles and even the addition of new application models and cycles for specific applicant types and strategically important programs as SPCSA policy and capacity evolves, the   essential questions will remain the same.