



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education
Charter School Programs
FY22 Pre-Application Office Hours Webinar – Developer
Competition (ALN 84.282 B/E)
Session Transcript
Presented July 18, 2022

- [Dr.Hinton] Good afternoon, and welcome to the Pre-Award Office Hours Webinar for the FY 2022 Developer Grant Competition. My name is Anna Hinton, and I'm the director of the Charter Schools Program. Over the last several days, week or so, we have asked that interested applicants submit questions to the department for us to address. And we hope to take this time today to begin to answer some of your questions.

Our agenda. So as you can see, we have a ton of content to discuss in a very limited amount of time. But following my remarks and touching on some housekeeping issues want to, once again, reintroduce you to the developer team, go over webinar logistics, highlight some important notes and reminders, then provide a brief overview of the developer program just recapping some critical issues that we addressed in our initial Pre-Award TA Webinar.

And then really want to just transition into the purpose of today's webinar, which is to respond to your questions. We've sort of bucketed the questions by category based on eligibility, application requirements, expansion, budget and uses of funds, and then a final category is other.

We will then just conclude with, again, some reminders and sharing some competition resources with you. And then have one final Q&A period before we close. So with that, I would like to reintroduce you to the developer team. So, co-presenting with me today is Stephanie Jones, who serves as a supervisor over the Developer Grant Program.

Porscheoy Brice and Leslie Hankerson, who are program officers. Terms of webinar logistics, this is a listen-only session. However, we are accepting questions and answers and would ask that you submit them via the Q&A function. This session will also be recorded and posted to the Developer Competition website.

And then I'd also like to draw your attention to our email address developercompetition2022@ed.gov. This is the best way to communicate with the developer team. If you have any questions or need clarification on anything, we'd strongly encourage you to send us an email to this particular email account.

Notes and important reminders. First would like to stress that the department should be your one-stop shop for all things Developer Competition and updates and any changes or clarifications to eligibility requirements or anything concerning the competition. You should monitor the competition website honestly almost on a daily basis.

We only have a 30-day window to accept applications. And so as things change, if things change, the website will be the first place that we update that information. And then second would also like to remind you to, please, refer to the Notice Inviting Applications in the "Federal Register."

That document contains a complete listing of all of the eligibility and application requirements, priorities, and selection criteria for the program. This webinar slide deck does not contain a comprehensive sort of listing and certainly does not identify all the subparts associated with some of the actions that we plan on talking about like application requirements or priorities, and do want to just reiterate that you should not rely on this webinar slide deck or any of our previously recorded webinars or slide decks.

And then finally, just, again, a friendly reminder that August 5th is the deadline. We would encourage you to not wait until the last day, even to submit your application. You should try to aim to submit your application several days in advance.

Depending on the number of grant competitions occurring across the federal government, it may take maybe up to a day for your application to download. So to avoid any last-minute hiccups, we strongly encourage our applicants to submit as early in advance as possible.

So with that, we will jump right into the content, and I will turn it over to Stephanie Jones to provide an overview of the Developer Program. Thank you.

- [Stephanie] Thanks, Anna. So I'm going to give a brief overview of the Developer Grant Program. If you participated in our webinar last Monday, this will look familiar. So I will be brief, but I just want to make sure we're all starting on the same page. And I want to encourage you, if you haven't already, to listen to last Monday's webinar. If you go to our website, the slides are on there as well as a recording and a transcript of the webinar.

Next slide, please. So, once again, the purpose of the Developer Grants Program, it's intended to support charter schools that serve early childhood, elementary school, or secondary school students by providing grant funds to eligible applicants. And there are two funding streams, the ALN 84.282B, which is Opening of New Charter Schools, and then the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools, which is ALN 84.282E.

So you will hear us refer to both of these. Next slide, please. So, what is a developer? A developer is an individual or group of individuals, including a public or private nonprofit organization, which may include teachers, administrators, and other school staff, parents, or other members of the local community in which a charter school project will be carried out.

And this definition is also included in the NIA. Next slide. So, again, when you hear us refer to B versus E, B, again is the Opening of New Charter Schools and E is the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools. And here, we have the definitions of expand versus replicate, which you can also find in the NIA.

So expand in short, in regards to a high-quality charter school, means to significantly increase enrollment or add one or more grades to the high-quality charter school. Whereas replicate, when used with respect to a high-quality charter school, means to open a new charter school or a new campus of a high-quality charter school based on the educational model of an existing high-quality charter school.

And I also want to point out that we include a definition of what is a high-quality charter school in the NIA. And under both of these, applicants may only propose to support one charter school per grant application. Next slide.

So I'm not going to go through all of the eligibility because we're actually going to be touching on it in detail when we get to the questions. But I do want to point out that eligible applicants are developers that have, one, applied to an authorized public chartering

authority to operate a charter school, and two, provided adequate and timely notice to that authority.

And again, we'll be going through what that means a little more when we get to the questions. And most importantly, eligibility is limited to charter school developers in states that do not currently have a CSP State Entity grant under the ESEA. Next slide, please.

So here we have a table that actually lists states, and you can look up whether or not you are eligible for B or E. And you can also access this on our competition website. And I do want to point out two things. We inadvertently listed South Carolina as eligible originally, so that has been corrected here to not eligible for B or E.

And also case of Mississippi, we also inadvertently listed that as not eligible, so that has been corrected in the table. And once again, this table is available on the website, and we'll also be going through eligibility more when we get to the questions. Next slide, please.

So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to our program officers who are going to go through the questions that you submitted. Thanks, Porscheoy.

- [Porscheoy] Yeah. Thanks, Stephanie. And good afternoon, everyone. I'm Porscheoy Brice, one of the program officers on the developer team. And I'll be walking us through the responses to many of the questions that were submitted after last week's webinar and via email. Great. So the questions that were submitted have been organized into categories for ease of responding today.

The categories are eligibility, application requirements, expansion, budget and uses of funds, as well as other questions that didn't fall under these categories. So we'll go through as many questions as possible to give responses. Many of the questions submitted were repetitive or very similar in the ask. So they may have been combined, but I'm very excited for this opportunity and to answer your questions here today.

Great. So going into our first question. "During the 'CSP Developer Pre-Application Competition Webinar' on July 11th, you displayed a table with a list of states in which a charter school must be located to be eligible for a Developer Grant under ALNs 84.282B and 84.282E. Can you explain why an applicant in one of these states may not be eligible for a Developer Grant?"

And this is included in the NIA, but eligibility for this funding under this competition is limited to charter schools located in the states that do not currently have a CSP State Entity or a State Educational Agency grant approved for the activities under this competition. And that was on the last slide that was just shared earlier by Stephanie.

And again, you can also find that in the NIA, or last week's webinar. Great. So, "How and where can I find out if my state has an active CSP State Entity or a CSP State Educational Grant?" Same as before, so we do have that comprehensive list that's included earlier here. You can also find that again in the NIA, which you'll hear referenced often.

That's the most comprehensive information that you can find for the competition as well as our, last week's webinar. You can find that as well on our website. So charter schools that are included there and the states that are ineligible for funding under the CSP Developer Grant Competition.

And it'll tell you clearly if your state is eligible or ineligible in the chart. All right. "If a state previously received a CSP State Entity Grant, but is no longer disseminating funds, is an

applicant proposing to open a new charter school, or replicate, or expand a high-quality charter school in the state eligible for a Developer Grant this year?"

And to receive funding under the CSP Developer Grant competition, a charter school must be located in a state that currently does not have an active CSP State Entity Grant. And again, that list is included here and can be found in the places that I referenced before. All right.

"If we are applying for 84.282E, can we apply to replicate one school and expand other schools within the same application, or are we limited to one school per application?" So applicants may only propose to support one charter school per grant application. So the CSP Grants to Charter Management Organizations, what we refer to as our CMO Grants, are for the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools.

And those allow for replication or expansion of more than a single school, but not here for the Developer Grant competition and program. All right. "May a developer apply for the CSP Developer Grant if it has not yet applied to an authorizer for a charter, for example, it may apply for a Developer Grant in July of 2022 and plans to apply to an authorizer in fall of '22 to open in 2023?"

So the answer is no. The NIA explains that eligibility requirements, and it states that, among other things, eligible applicants are developers that have, one, applied to an authorized public chartering agency to operate a charter school, and two, have provided adequate and timely notice to that authority.

So, "Is a charter school that previously received CSP funds for replication of a high-quality charter school eligible to apply for a Developer Grant to expand the school?" So a charter school that has previously received CSP funds for replication, or expansion, or for planning or initial implementation of a charter school under ALNs 84.282A through state entities or 84.282M CMOs may not use funds under this grant for the same purpose.

However, the charter school may be eligible to receive funds under this competition to expand the charter school beyond the existing grade levels or student count and beyond the grade levels or projected student count provided in the last previous CSP award.

And likewise, a charter school that receives funds under this competition isn't eligible to receive funds for the same purpose. So that's the defining factor. "Are applicants required to have a facility secured or a lease before applying?" So, a charter school developer that has applied to an authorized public chartering agency for approval to operate a charter school is eligible to apply for a CSP Developer Grant, even if the developer has not yet received an approved charter or secured a facility.

"When an applicant submits its approved charter, does it need to submit the attachment or only the main document?" So, what you'll see here is taken from our NIA, which goes into full detail of what is actually required.

But to summarize, here's what each CSP Developer Grant applicant must provide. We have the name and address of the authorized public chartering agency that issued the applicant's approved charter. Or if the applicant does not yet have an approved charter, the authorized public chartering agency to which the applicant has applied, a copy of the approved charter, or again, in the case that the applicant doesn't yet have an approved charter, a copy of the charter application that was submitted, documentation that the applicant has provided notice to the authorized public chartering agency that it has applied for a CSP Grant, and a proposed budget.

Next slide. "There is a requirement for applicants to provide their most recent available independently audited financial statements. However, if a developer has yet to open a charter school, how can it be audited?" So, if an independently audited financial statement is not available, then an applicant may address this requirement by stating so in its application.

In doing so, an applicant should explain why one is not currently available. "Can we apply for a charter starting in 2023?" And the answer here is that when a prospective applicant applies for a charter, it's solely at the discretion of the applicant. To be eligible to apply for a Developer Grant, however, an applicant must have applied to an authorized public authority to operate a charter school.

Again, this information is included in the NIA and should be really helpful in the process. All right. Expansion. "May an applicant that plans to add one grade over the course of several years apply for an expansion grant, or does it need to apply for a new CSP Developer Grant every year because it is adding a new grade level every year?"

Great question. An applicant may propose to expand a high-quality charter school. In this context, what expand means is that to significantly increase enrollment or add one or more grades to the high-quality charter school. And adding grades annually falls under the parameters of an expansion grant, and an applicant may apply for 1 grant for up to 5 years that covers the addition of multiple grades over the period of the grant, which is again 60 months or 5 years.

"If an applicant has an open CSP Developer Grant to start an elementary school and just received approval from the state to expand a middle school, does it qualify for an expansion grant under the Developer Grant competition?"

So having an active CSP grant does not prohibit you from applying for another CSP grant. However, CSP grant funds cannot be used for the same activities. A charter school that previously received CSP funds for replication, or expansion, or for planning, or initial implementation of a charter school, whether that falls under 84.282A or 84.282M may not use funds under this grant for the same purpose.

However, the charter school may be eligible to receive funds under this competition to expand the charter school beyond the existing grade levels or student count and beyond the grade levels or projected student count provided in the previous CSP competition. Next slide. Thank you.

"To expand, does a school have to add grades? For example, if it currently enrolls 400 students in grades K-6, can it propose to expand to 700 or 800 students in K-6, or does it have to expand its grades served as well?" Short answer here is no. A school does not have to add grades.

The term expand, when used with respect to a high-quality charter school, means to significantly increase enrollment or add one or more grades to the high-quality charter school. "If a charter management organization is opening a new school in a new state, would it qualify as the new school or expansion under the CSP Developer Grant program?"

So, under the CSP Developer Grant competition, 84.282B is for the opening of new charter schools, and 84.282E is for the replication and expansion of high-quality charter schools. So if you're applying to open a new high-quality school based on your record of success, then this would be considered a replication.

And as noted earlier in the presentation, the NIA does include those definitions of what it means to replicate, expand, and also what it means to have a high-quality charter school. "If a charter school has been operating since 2000 and it is expanding its grade levels to include 8th grade, is this eligible for an expansion grant?"

Simple answer yes, if the school expanding is a high-quality charter school. As a general matter, we consider charter schools that have been in operation for more than five years to be past the initial implementation phase, and, therefore, you're ineligible to receive CSP funds under 84.282B to support the opening of a new charter school or under 84.282E for the replication of a high-quality charter school.

However, such schools may receive CSP funds under 84.282E for the expansion of a high-quality charter school. "If a charter school is expanding in a state that receives CSP State Entity Grant funds but the school is no longer eligible to receive CSP funds from the state entity, can an applicant apply directly to the U.S. Department of Education for funding?"

No. Eligibility is limited to charter school developers and states that do not currently have a CSP State Entity grant. Eligibility information, again, as it's been reiterated, can be found in the NIA. Also, if you go to our website, you are able to see this as well in our competition webinar from last week.

All right. And at this point, I'm going to hand it over to my colleague Leslie, who'll walk us through more of the questions.

- [Leslie] Thank you, Porscheoy. My name is Leslie Hankerson. I am a program officer also in the CSP Developer Program, and this section covers questions dealing with the budget and uses of funds. So our first question will be, when will CSP funds be awarded to new grantees? And so the answer is that CSP funds will be awarded to new grantees on October 1st, 2022.

Next slide, please. Okay. "Is the pool of funding for CSP Developer and State Entity grants the same?" CSP Developer Grants under ALNs 84.282B and 84.282E and State Entity Grants under 84.282A are separate programs and funding streams under the Federal Charter School Program.

Next slide, please. "Does estimated funding on the Budget Form SF 424 include Year 2 as it is frontloaded with Year 1?" No. Frontloading is a grant administrative action initiated by the department. Applicants should propose a budget for each year of the proposed project for up to five years.

Next slide, please. The question is, "If an applicant purchases an existing school building, are renovation costs the same as construction?" And then, "What is the difference between minor facility repairs and construction?" And the answer is that CSP funds may be used for necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations and minor facility repairs, excluding construction.

And to the extent that a permit is required for an allowable activity, for example, minor facility repairs, then the cost of the permit would also be allowable. No CSP funds may be used for construction or for permanent infrastructure. Next slide.

"Can planning funds be used to retroactively pay school leaders if they have been documenting unpaid hours?" And the answer is no. During the eligible applicants planning period, hiring and compensating teachers, school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel is an allowable activity. However, CSP funding payments should not be

for activities the personnel performed before October 1st, 2022, which is the start of the CSP grant performance period.

Next slide. Okay. "Does the U.S. Department of Education limit or set a specific dollar amount for the use of planning funds that may be used in the CSP Developer Grant prior to securing a lease, facility, or charter approval?"

A CSP Developer Grant may be for a period of not more than 5 years of which the grantee may use not more than 18 months for planning and program design. And each applicant must provide an assurance that they will not use any implementation funds for a charter school until after the charter school has received a charter from an authorized public chartering agency and has a contract, lease, mortgage, or other documentation indicating that it has a facility in which to operate.

But I also want to note, as it states on the next slide, the grant does not set a limit on the per year award amount, only the total award amount, which we will go into in this next slide. "Can the \$150,000 to \$300,000 per year estimated for CSP Developer Grant awards be for up to 5 years? For example, if a charter school opens one year from now, can it potentially receive a grant of \$225,000 per year for 2 to 3 years?"

The maximum limit of grant funds that may be awarded for a new charter school or a replicated or expanded high-quality charter school is \$1.5 million for up to 5 years. The estimated range of awards is \$150,000 to \$300,000 per year. And the grant does not set a limit on the per year award amount, only the total award amount.

And applicants must ensure that all costs included in the proposed CSP budget are reasonable and necessary in light of the CSP project's goals and objectives. Next slide, please.

"How does an applicant demonstrate the 'Need for Project?' What type of evidence should be provided?" And the answer is that the "Need for the Project" is one of the selection criteria in the NIA. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors.

A, the magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. And then B, the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided, or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. Applicants should use their discretion in identifying the information and evidence necessary to address this criterion.

An example may include feedback from parents and the community regarding the need for a charter school with a specialized instructional approach. Next slide, please. "How does a prospective applicant submit a letter of intent to apply?" Please send an email to developercompetition2022@ed.gov with "Intent to Apply" in the subject line, and please, include the applicant's name, a contact person's name and email address, and the Assistance Listing Number 84.282B or 84.282E.

Applicants that do not submit a notice of intent to apply may still apply for funding under this competition. And I'm now going to transition to Stephanie Jones for competition resources.

- Thanks, Leslie. So, just a few resources that we want you to be aware of. Next slide, please. This here includes direct links to the two application packages that are on grants.gov. The first is for 84.282 B, and the second is for 84.282E.

We also include the Funding Opportunity Numbers, which you can use to search for these application packages in grants.gov. And then we also include a link to the application package and other supporting materials that can be found on our website under the Developer Competition web page.

And finally, we also include a link to SAM.gov registration. Next slide, please. So we do want to remind you that we have other webinars for this competition available on our website, and they're on the Developer Competition website that we've mentioned multiple times. So, we have last Monday's presentation, which was the "Developer Pre-Application Competition Webinar," but we also have a pre-recorded "Budget Webinar," and then also one on "Logic Models and SMART Performance Measures."

And we're going to make this webinar available in the next few days on the website as well. Next slide, please. And another thing, you can actually access previously awarded developer applications, the winning ones that is, if you go to this link. And this here just provides a clip of how they're categorized.

So you'll be able to see the year they were awarded, the grantee, as well as their score, and it has direct links to the abstract, the application, and then the reviewers' comments. Next slide, please. And we've mentioned this as well, but just a reminder, contact information. So, you can email us at developercompetition2022@ed.gov, and we've also included the number and email address for grants.gov.

Next slide, please. So, at this point, I am going to turn it back over to Anna Hinton.

- Thank you, Stephanie. I found the button to unmute myself this time. So, this is time for you to submit any questions that you have for us to answer. We've already started to receive some questions in the chat box. So, I will get us started with trying to answer some of these questions. The first is, "Can you confirm that Mississippi schools are now eligible for the Developer Grant Program?"

Yes. We ask that you, please, refer to our website. There is a table, we have updated the table, and you will note in the table that Mississippi is eligible to submit. We are receiving applications from Mississippi and developer. The next question, "Will the CSP grant for CMOs be released this year? If so, when?"

So the timing associated with the release of that notice is unclear. However, we do anticipate having a competition for CMO. One thing to note on the CMO grant competition is that for the CMO grant competition, is that those grant funds, CMO grant funds, we have until March of 2023 to expend all of our FY22 grant funds.

So, the time period that we have to expend FY22 grant funds for CMO is a little longer than what we have available to spend the Developer Grant funds. Developer Grant funds for FY22 must be obligated by September of 2022, but for CMO, we have a little bit longer. And so that competition grant timeline is a little different.

There is a question about, "For pre-award spending, doesn't the Uniform Guidance allow for 90 days pre-award spending prior to the award date provided that it is approved by the agency?" Yes, you can claim pre-award costs, but that's assuming that they are allowable pre-award costs and are subject to approval by the department, assuming also that the applicant is successful at receiving grant funds.

Other questions that are coming in. Let's see. I think that is it. We're going through the questions really fast. Yeah, I think that's it.

So, this will conclude our question and answer period. If you have additional questions or if we did not get to your question, please, send your question to the email box, our inbox for the competition, and we will respond accordingly. With that, thank you all so much.

Appreciate your time. Do want to remind you to, please, refer back to the pre-award webinar that we recorded last Monday as well as the pre-recorded webinars if you have any questions about the requirements associated with the grant competition.

So, once again, thank you for your time. We do ask that you complete the survey. Just let us know how we did today, and good luck. Thank you.