

# New Hampshire Charter School Program, Grant FAQs

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## General Grant Questions

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***Will there be more funds available next year? How many CSP Grant Competitions will there be?***

Yes. NH DOE plans to have four annual competitions, with 2021 being the first year. However, any charter school who receives funding through this round of CSP Grant awards will not be eligible in the remaining three years.

***Will there be more competitions this year?***

There is a potential to have another competition. It would depend on a number of factors including the level of response to this first round.

***Will the grant still be for three years?***

Yes, the maximum timeframe to use the funds is three years.

***Are their limits to funding allocations per school?***

Yes, the current limits are:

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| New School:  | \$1,200,000* |
| Replication: | \$1,200,000  |
| Expansion:   | \$ 600,000   |

*\*New schools may be eligible for up to \$1.5 million dollars if they meet other measures.*

***When will funds be distributed to the awardees?***

We anticipate award notifications in August with funds released in early September.

***Do funds for year 1 end on September 30, 2021?***

We will use a calendar year from the time of award. As an example, if grants are awarded August 30, year 1 will be August 30, 2021 – August 29, 2022. The following year's grants will also follow the calendar year from the date of that award.

***Does getting the application in prior to July 22 effect our chances to receive the greatest amount possible, or will the DOE review all apps and then decide on how to fund?***

No, this grant will be competitive in nature and not first come, first serve annually. We will wait to receive all applications prior to reviewing them.

***How many grants will be awarded each year?***

Ultimately, the awards will depend on the applications received and the available funding. New Hampshire, at a minimum, would like to fund 20 new schools, 7 replications, and 5 expansions over the grant period.

***What if we underestimate our need in our application?***

NH DOE will award based on what is asked for in the application. If you find you have underestimated your need, you will need to look to other resources to close the gap.

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## Application Questions

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***Does an expansion in curriculum or programming count as an expansion of a charter school?***

Yes, provided the expansion is a significant addition to existing programs or courses. Expansion applicants must meet the definition of high-quality under ESEA §4303 (8) A and D, demonstrate 3 years of improved educational results, and apply funds to activities that are not duplicated from previous awarded sub-grants.

***What is considered a replication?***

A replication is 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, under an existing charter or an additional charter. Replication applicants must meet the definition of high-quality under ESEA §4303 (8) A and D, demonstrate 3 years of improved educational results, and apply funds to activities that are not duplicated from previous awarded sub-grants.

***What documentation does the DOE require to verify high quality status as identified in the CSP grant application?***

During the review process there will be a review of state provided assessments and EOY data. If you have additional supporting data that you feel would help provide further understanding of your school feel free to include.

***If a charter application has not been approved by the NH State Board of Education, are they eligible to apply for the grant?***

A charter school can apply for the grant, however, no funds can be released without an approved charter.

***Under Eligibility in the application, it lists the dates for certain state approvals. Are these accurate? If so, can the amendment be for anything reasonable?***

Yes, the dates are correct. Items 1 and 2 are for start-up grants for new schools and replications, while items 3 and 4 are for expansions. If your school is open, you are eligible to apply for an expansion grant. Expansion grants cover: expanding grade levels, expanding for increased enrollment, or offering new programs. An expansion does not automatically trigger an amendment, but amendments can be for a number of reasons. For expansions around program expansion, you will need to show that the programs or courses are a significant addition to your existing program.

***What are you looking for in Question 4?***

***“Describe in detail the roles and responsibilities of each eligible applicant, partner organization, and charter management organization, including the administrative and contractual roles and responsibilities of each partner. “ Should we include all of the different aspects of the school Board, Admin, Faculty, Parent Council, our lawyer, the district special ed liaisons? It seems that some of this is elsewhere in the application.***

This question is seeking to understand if you are working with an external entity or establishing a partnership with an outside organization to start-up or assist in operating the school.

***How do I find a district’s ESSA information or Federal Accountability Determination?***

The iplatform does not provide district level ESSA information, please choose instead the school within the district that most resembles your school/population you serve.

Step 1: Visit the State’s iPlatform site located here: [iPlatform | Department of Education \(nh.gov\)](#)

Step 2: Scroll down and select the iReport Application

Step 3: From the pull down menus, choose the appropriate Town and the school that is most comparable (location, grade span, populations served) and click VIEW REPORT

**TIP:** when selecting items from the pull down menu, hit APPLY before leaving menu

Step 4: Look along the top tabs to the far right and select the ESSA tab

Step 5: The bottom left corner of the new page will list the school's Federal Accountability Determination

***How do you define at-risk students and how can we show we target them?***

At-risk students are students that are either special needs, ELLs, or those who are eligible to receive welfare assistance. New Hampshire also uses location in determining at risk based on the Federal Opportunity Zones designated by the USEDPA and Frontier and Remote (FAR) Zones designated by the USDA. For a more detail on these designations, refer to the appendix for links to these programs. A method to show you are reaching at risk is to provide details on how you plan to structure your process to particularly target these students. For example, include a lottery that provides weight to at-risk population or develop a recruitment plan around at-risk students.

***Do we need to create statements regarding how we meet the requirements outlined at the beginning of the application?***

***Or is it an assumption the applicant has met those criteria if they are submitting and application?***

No, we will assume you meet them. Please note, upon award, you will certify you do.

***If we use the form provided, does that satisfy the formatting requirements?***

Yes, the guidelines provided are for when you are not able to use the template or choose to submit additional narratives.

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## Allowable Costs & Budgets

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***The budget summary tab object codes are not aligned to the function codes listed in the New Hampshire Financial Accounting Handbook. How should we adjust our template?***

Please see new template updated 7/12/2021.

***How detailed do you want the budget detail tab in the budget template?***

***Do I list supplies and other budget items on one big list or on different tabs according to object codes?***

We need to understand how you plan to spend the grant dollars. In general, we need line items that tell us what you will spend it on, how much/many will you get, for whom/what purpose, and when. For example, you could have a line item that says "10 computer tables for the student computer lab" and put the expenditure in the correct year column. Please make sure your descriptions are clear enough that we can understand how it clearly fits into the needs of the school and supports the overall story of your application.

Please stick to the single detail budget tab which is known as Form 5.

***What costs are allowable in the grant program?***

In general, costs must be one-time in nature, incurred *during* the grant project period, connected to a grant objective, and **cannot** include ongoing operational costs. Items like furniture, equipment,

books, training, program/curriculum development, hardware and software are generally allowed. Salaries, travel, professional services, and outreach expenses come with limitations. Construction, reoccurring expenses, and promotional items are not allowed. Budget guidance will be posted on the website to provide for more detailed guidance.

***Are there any provisions for costs that come-up in the first or second year that might be considered as start-up costs?***

Yes, one example would be a phased opening plan.

***Can funds be used for student transportation?***

***Regarding one-time start-up cost for transportation to and from the school, is that referring specifically to start of day and end of day travel? For instance, outdoor education and engaging in the local environment is a core part of our mission as a school, if vans were purchased to provide transportation to and from the school for regularly occurring field trips and outings, would that be an acceptable use of funds?***

Yes, funds cannot be used for ongoing transportation needs (ie contracted month rates for busing service) but a one-time fee to support the overall mission of the schools is acceptable or to transport students to and from school (including the purchase of buses).

***Can we use grant dollars to fund an after-school program?***

No, implementation costs under the CSP grant program are for start-up activities only. One time activities such as expanding or developing new curriculum for the after-school program may be allowable, but the normal costs associated with running the program are considered ongoing costs and are not allowable. It is the sub-grantees responsibility to provide justification regarding costs and why they should be considered start-up costs.

***Do start up expenses need to be separate from our implementation period expenses?***

There are expenses that are not allowed in both phases. For example, only allowable in planning and not implementation. We will craft some budget guidance and publish it to the website as a tool for planning your budget.

***Can we use funds to develop curriculum beyond start-up planning?***

***Could we use the funds to pay staff to develop curriculum during years 2 and 3? Could we cover her work this summer with CSP funds, since it is essential to the start-up of our school in creating a strong base of systems infrastructure?***

You can include expenses associated with curriculum development. If this is performed by a staff member with other duties, the time spent on grant related activities must be tracked completely separately and be well documented. It can also be for a fixed period of time, not a part of an ongoing payment towards salary. As these funds fall under the 2 CFR 200, please see the NH DOE's Federal Fund Fact Sheets for more information and helpful tips located here: [Federal Fund Fact Sheets | Department of Education \(nh.gov\)](#).

***Do moving expenses for faculty coming from across the country count as a start-up expense?***

We would encourage you to make a strong case in your application for how and why this passes the reasonable cost test. Do they have special skills, etc.?

***What type of facility work is allowed?***

***The application states "Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction)." The language "applicable statutes and regulations" is fairly broad. Should we assume this includes required improvements based on all applicable statutes and regulations from the State of NH, DOE and the town/city where the school is located?***

The grant can assist in making the building operational and assist with complying with requirements made by local or state inspectors/authorities to make the building safe or accessible. The purpose of the grant is not to increase the value of the building or property asset. Make sure you include a good case for these expenses in your application.

***Could we use initial implementation funds for a marketing position to set up a marketing program and create marketing materials?***

Yes, marketing services are allowable for recruitment (staff and students) and for outreach activities. This includes brochures, website creation, etc. Promotional "giveaway" items (like those seen at tradeshow, clothing, etc.) are not allowable. PLEASE NOTE: If this work will be done by a staff member who will be performing these tasks either in whole or as a part of their position you must provide a detailing of time and expenses for work which is specifically allowed under the grant. Activities cannot go beyond the grant period.

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## Process Questions

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***I need to amend my charter to apply for a grant to expand my school. How do I do that?***

An amendment to a charter must be submitted prior to the submission of the grant application. The process for requesting a charter amendment through the State Board is:

- Email a letter (on school letterhead) to Commissioner Edelblut and copy Jane Waterhouse on the email: [Louis.F.Edelblut@doe.nh.gov](mailto:Louis.F.Edelblut@doe.nh.gov); [Jane.A.Waterhouse@doe.nh.gov](mailto:Jane.A.Waterhouse@doe.nh.gov)
- Provide details of the amendment and justification for the request.
- Once the letter has been received, the request will be an item on the next scheduled State Board meeting

***What if our plans for expenses change post award?***

***For example, if we put money into our grant for specific building improvement projects and then we end up needing to move to another space, could we revise the grant to match the space in which we end up? Or would the money allocated for building improvements no longer be accessible?***

We could work with you to identify areas that resources could be allocated to that align with your plan and the application. However, if this cannot be achieved, the funds will not be allocated or released. It is highly recommended that if this constitutes a big portion of your grant application and the chance that you will need to pivot is marginal or better, that you do not include it in your budget. It will be hard to find other appropriate areas to fund the farther you get into your grant.

As these funds fall under the 2 CFR 200, please see the NH DOE's Federal Fund Fact Sheets for more information and helpful tips located here: [Federal Fund Fact Sheets | Department of Education \(nh.gov\)](#).

TO SUBMIT A QUESTION NOT LISTED ABOVE, PLEASE EMAIL:

Kasey Silva, CSP Grant Specialist

[Kasey.C.Silva@doe.nh.gov](mailto:Kasey.C.Silva@doe.nh.gov)

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## Appendix

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### ***US EDA Opportunity Zones in New Hampshire***

See [www.nheconomy.com/grow/opportunity-zones/opportunityzonemaps](http://www.nheconomy.com/grow/opportunity-zones/opportunityzonemaps) for the specific zone data.

### ***FAR Zones in New Hampshire***

See [USDA ERS - Frontier and Remote Area Codes](#) for more data.