



**Charter Schools Support Grant –
GEER Fund 1.0
Charter School Expansion
Grant Application**

General Information

Award period: Post-award through September 30, 2022

Maximum Award Amount: \$1,000,000

Deadline: **March 22, 2021 by 4:00 pm (CT)**

Purpose

In the spring of 2020, Congress set aside funds from the CARES Act for the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER 1.0). Under GEER 1.0, the U.S. Department of Education awarded grants to Governors for the purpose of providing education-related entities, including charter schools, with emergency assistance as a result of COVID-19. Tennessee received approximately \$63.6 million in GEER 1.0 funds. Governor Lee allocated \$10 million of GEER 1.0 to fund charter schools. Approximately \$5 million of GEER 1.0 is dedicated to supporting the expansion of charter schools in the State of Tennessee. This portion will be referred to herein as GEER 1.0 - Charter School Expansion.

The primary purpose of GEER 1.0 - Charter School Expansion is to expand the number of high-quality charter school seats available to students throughout the State. Subgrants will provide financial assistance for the planning, program design and implementation of high-quality charter schools.

Eligibility

The following entities are eligible to apply for GEER 1.0 - Charter School Expansion subgrants:

- A sponsor with no existing schools seeking to start a new charter school;
 - An existing operator seeking to replicate an existing charter school;
 - A charter management organization (CMO) seeking to start a new charter school;
- or

- An education-related non-profit (including an education management organization), foundation or other organization seeking to start a new charter school.

One grant application should be submitted for each charter school to be established by a grantee. While grantees may seek to start a charter school in a district that currently authorizes charter schools, grantees are encouraged, as detailed in the competitive priorities, to develop charter organizers and create charter school interest in districts where there currently are no charter schools. It is the expectation that each grantee will be submitting an application to start a charter school in the application cycle immediately following the date of the grant award.

Each grantee must enter into a contract with the TDOE that details its rights, responsibilities and obligations with respect to the use of the funds and includes assurances.

A grantee may not receive more than one grant for activities associated with the planning and implementation of a charter school.

Grant awards

A grant award is not a guarantee of total funding. Funds will be made available to grantees for reimbursement in phases based on achieving certain milestones or deliverables, as shown in the table below:

Milestone/Deliverable	Reimbursement of Actual Expenses Incurred Up to the Specified Percent of the Award
Awarded a subgrant (start)	20%
Identification of district/location with evidence of support	40%
Submission of Letter of Intent	50%
Submission of Application	80%
Approval to start school or submission of appeal to Charter Commission	100%

For example, upon submission of a Letter of Intent to start a charter school, a grantee may submit reimbursement requests for expenses incurred that, together with all previously submitted reimbursement requests, equal up to 50% of the award. In order to receive continued funding, grantees must submit quarterly performance reports to demonstrate substantial progress in meeting the goals, objectives, and milestones of GEER 1.0 - Charter School Expansion, and must demonstrate effectiveness in fiscal

management, including reporting and reconciliation. Failure to do so may result in readjustment of award amounts, reallocation of funds to an alternate recipient, or both.

Tennessee's GEER 1.0 - Charter School Expansion subgrant competition is discretionary. Preference will be given to applicants proposing innovative models for new schools, such as STEM or CTE-based models, or those providing scalable options. The TDOE reserves the right to make final determinations as to all grant awards and funding. Individual awards may vary based on numerous factors, including strength of the application, performance of existing schools (if applicable), high-quality replication, and innovative models. All applicants will be scored according to the scoring rubric.

Funding will be provided on a reimbursement-only basis.

Grant Timeline

Application released	February 23, 2021
Technical Assistance provided	March 1, 2021
Application due	March 22, 2021
Awards announced; initial funds become available	April 1, 2021
All grant funds must be obligated.	September 30, 2022

At least once during each year of the grant period, grantees will be monitored to assess the extent to which they are implementing their approved grant projects in compliance with their contracts and state and federal statutes, regulations, and guidance. Monitors will also ascertain the extent to which grantees are supporting the overall strategy for increasing the number of high-quality charter school seats in the state.

All applications must be received electronically no later than 4:00 pm (CT) on March 22, 2021. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number & SAM registration

[CFR 200.32](#) states a DUNS number is required "to apply for, receive, and report on a Federal award." In order for federal funds to be disseminated to start or expand a public charter school, grantees must have a DUNS number. To obtain a DUNS number you can visit the [website](#) or call Dun & Bradstreet at 866-705-5711.

Grantees must also register in SAM (System for Award Management). To complete the SAM registration, go [here](#).

Allowable Use of Funds

Grantees may use subgrant funds only for the post-award planning, design and implementation of the educational program. Planning activities may include:

- Developing charter organizers/leadership teams
- Creating interest at the district level

- Studying models around the country and proposing models that work for Tennessee
- Identifying facilities
- Completing the application process

In addition, [Uniform Grants Guidance Title 2 - Subtitle A - Chapter II - Part 200 Subpart E](#) establishes principles for determining allowable costs for Federal grants. As a general matter, costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to meet the objectives of the grant. Budgets under this grant should be developed within the parameters created by applicable federal statutes and regulatory and nonregulatory guidance.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate how the proposed use of funds complies with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements and to articulate how the proposed use of grant funds aligns with the objective of expanding high-quality charter school seats.

Application Requirements

The subgrant application will contain two major required components and an optional third component:

- 1) Application narrative
- 2) Budget
- 3) Competitive priorities (optional)

The application narrative will require the applicant to describe the applicant’s proposed development activities, including the location, school model and leadership team, and outline a plan for meeting the milestones and deliverables. Budget and budget narrative information must be aligned, detailed, and leave no question regarding expenditures. The applicant must provide strong evidence that the funds will assist the applicant in developing high-quality charter school seats.

GEER 1.0 - Charter School Expansion is designed to foster innovative models for educating Tennessee students. Therefore, the subgrant application includes competitive priorities, with the opportunity for additional points awarded to applicants who demonstrate a clearly defined plan for:

- 1) addressing a demonstrated community need for career and technical education;
- 2) providing a STEM-based curriculum;
- 3) starting a school in a district that currently has no charter schools; and/or
- 4) partnering with local businesses, industries or institutions of higher education.

Submission Requirements

The TDOE will provide a technical assistance webinar to all eligible applicants on March 1, 2021. Applications must be filed electronically by emailing completed materials to charter.schools@tn.gov no later than **4:00 p.m. CT on March 22, 2021.**

To apply, complete and submit the following documents:

1. Application cover page
2. Application narrative: no more than twenty (15) pages
3. Budget narrative: no more than ten (10) pages
4. Grant budget: all three worksheets
5. Competitive priorities (optional – 3 pages)

Formatting Requirements

Number all pages of the application narrative and any supporting documents. Use one-inch margins and a 12-point font for the narrative. Heed all page limits. Only those parts of the application within the page limits will be judged as part of the grant competition. For questions related to the application, please contact Judy Spencer at judy.spencer@tn.gov.



**Charter Schools Support Grant –
GEER Fund 1.0
Charter School Expansion
Cover Page**

Submit to:
charter.schools@tn.gov
4 PM CT on March 22, 2021

Application Due:

Funds Requested	Grant Period
Up to \$1,000,000	Post-Award – September 30, 2022

Charter School Information	
Name of Applicant	
Mailing Address (Street, City, State, Zip)	
Grant Contact Person	Title
Phone Number	Fax Number
E-Mail Address	Website (if applicable)
Proposed Name of Charter School	
Proposed Date of Authorization of Charter School	Proposed School Opening Date
Grade(s) to be Served	Projected First and Second Year Enrollment
School District	Replication?

APPLICATION NARRATIVE

In 15 pages or less (single-spaced), please complete the following items.

1. Provide a brief overview of your plans for developing charter organizers and creating interest in expanding the charter sector in Tennessee.
2. Describe your process for evaluating charter school models and selecting the model to be implemented at the proposed charter school. Include (i) the grade levels or ages of children to be served; (ii) the curriculum and instructional practices to be used; and (iii) how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards. Provide evidence that this model leads to successful student outcomes, and explain why you believe that it is a good fit for Tennessee.
3. Describe how you will select the location and facility for the proposed charter school.
4. Identify the mission and vision for the proposed school.
5. Describe (i) the objectives of the charter school; and (ii) the methods by which the charter school will determine its progress toward achieving those objectives.
6. Explain how the establishment of this charter school addresses a community need.
7. Explain how parents, businesses and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design and implementation of the charter school.
8. Describe how students in the community will be (i) informed about the charter school; and (ii) given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.
9. Describe how the charter school will be managed.
10. Describe briefly how grant funds will be used to plan the school (you will provide more detail in the budget narrative).
11. Explain how use of the grant funds will help the TDOE meet its charter school program objectives (items 1-3 in Appendix A; you do not need to address each of the bulleted points beneath those objectives).
12. Describe how you will support continued operation of the school once this grant has expired.
13. Explain how other funds (federal, state, local, or private) are or will be leveraged to institutionalize effective practices. Note which federal funds the charter school will be requesting.
14. Describe how the charter school will comply with [Sections 613\(a\)\(5\) and 613\(e\)\(1\)\(B\)](#) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

BUDGET

The actual budget documents for this grant application are in separate Excel templates. Please use these as you prepare your budget.

Step-by-Step Instructions for Completion:

Worksheet 1: Expense-Income Analysis

On the first tab of the Excel budget spreadsheet, you will find the “Expense-Income Analysis” sheet. Please enter all of the required information. Cells D:10, 11, and 12 are protected and will self-populate when you enter the “Anticipated # of Students” and the “Approximate Amount per Student”. D:18 and 20 will also self-populate when items B 1-7 are entered.

Worksheet 2: Budget

Refer to Appendix B-*Grant Budget Line-Item Definitions* for information regarding the appropriate classification of proposed expenditures.

Header: Insert the name of the sponsor applying for this grant on the line that says *Grantee*. In parentheses, indicate the proposed name of the charter school.

Column D: Insert the amounts of grant funds budgeted for the planning period.

Worksheet 3: Grant Budget Detail

1. Look in Column C of Worksheet 2 (Budget) and note line items that require additional budget detail. These items say “(detail attached)”.
2. Underneath the appropriate heading for each item requiring budget detail, provide specific, descriptive information regarding expenditures. These may be grouped by category and with the amount listed for each category. The total for each set should equal the total in column F on the grant budget page. For Example: If you are listing items from line item 5 “Supplies” in the budget detail, you may be expending funds for computers and office furniture. On line one of the budget detail, you might list “25 MacBooks & 5 Laser Printers-\$25,000.” On line two, you might list “Four Teacher Desks and Executive Chairs-\$1,500.” The total for that section would be \$26,500.

BUDGET NARRATIVE
(Post-Award through September 30, 2022)

Instructions: Provide a narrative overview (maximum 10 pages) of how the grant award will be used to support the expansion of the charter sector and to open a new charter school. Provide justification and reasoning as to why the budget items constitute development, planning and start-up costs and not ongoing expenses. This narrative should be closely related to the budget detail. It should also demonstrate an understanding of applicable laws, rules and guidance.

COMPETITIVE PRIORITIES (OPTIONAL)

In three pages or less, respond to one or more of the following:

- 1) If you are addressing a demonstrated community need for career and technical education, describe and attach documentary evidence of the need, and address community stakeholder buy-in.
- 2) If you are providing a STEM-based curriculum, describe the curriculum and how students will be able to use their STEM skills and knowledge in the community.
- 3) If you are starting a school in a district that currently has no charter schools, describe and attach documentary evidence of the need for the charter school, buy-in from the community, and impact to the local LEA.
- 4) If you are partnering with local businesses, industries or institutions of higher education, describe how the partnership will benefit students and the community.

SCORING ALLOCATION CHART

Peer reviewers will use the following scoring allocation chart in evaluating each response and assigning points to each section.

Component	Maximum Points
Application Narrative	25
Budget	25
TOTAL SCORE	50
Additional points for priorities	25
Total points with priorities	75

Scores for applicants who choose not to complete the optional priorities will not be reduced by total points. Completion of one or more of the preference priorities will only add extra points to the applicant's final score.

A final score of at least 40 points (80%) is required to receive grant funding. Grant awards will be determined commensurate with each applicant's final overall score.

APPENDIX A

Project Objectives and Performance Measures

1. Increase the number of high-quality charter schools;

1A: TN will increase by 10 new Charter School Program sub-grants annually.

1B: Statewide, TN will increase by 5 high quality charter schools annually.

2. Decrease the number of academically poor-performing charter schools;

2A: Decrease the total number of academically poor-performing charter schools by 2 annually.

2B: By May 2019, 100% of TN authorizers will utilize modules to ensure best practices and accountability.

3. Support improving academic achievement at all schools with an emphasis on educationally disadvantaged students.

3A1. Annually, the percentage of charter school students in the 4th grade who are proficient in Math will increase by 5%;

3A2. Annually, the percentage of charter school students in the 4th grade who are proficient in Reading will increase by 5%;

3A3. Annually, the percentage of charter school students in the 8th grade who are proficient in Math will increase by 5%;

3A4. Annually, the percentage of charter school students in the 8th grade who are proficient in Reading will increase by 5%.

3B: The graduation rate in LEAs with charter high schools will increase by 1% during each year of the grant.

3C: There will be an increase in the number of charter schools designated as reward schools by 2 annually.

3D: Annually, at least 2 dissemination grants will be awarded.

APPENDIX B

Grant Budget Line-Item Definitions

Definitions are from the Tennessee Department of Finance & Administration's [Policy 3](#). That policy document includes references to applicable documents like the Office of Management and Budget's circulars. *Italics* are used to indicate applicable laws and the USDOE's nonregulatory guidance limit the use of these grant funds for certain expenses.

Line 1 — Salaries and Wages: *compensation, fees, salaries, and wages paid to officers, directors, trustees, and employees.*

Line 2 — Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes: *contributions to pension plans, employee benefit programs (such as health, life, and disability insurance) and for payroll taxes (such as social security, Medicare taxes, unemployment and workers' compensation insurance).*

Line 4, 15 — Professional Fees / Grants & Awards: *fees to outside professionals, consultants, and personal-service contractors and for awards, grants, subsidies, and other pass-through expenditures to individuals and to other organizations (including allocations to affiliated organizations, in-kind grants to individuals and organizations . . .). Examples: curriculum consultants, payroll services.*

Line 5 — Supplies: (typically consumable items) office supplies, housekeeping supplies, food and beverages, and other supplies. One commonly cited example might be for school uniforms.

Line 6 — Telephone: telephone, cellular phones, beepers, telegram, FAX, E-mail, telephone equipment maintenance, and other related expenses.

Line 7 — Postage & Shipping: postage, mailings, messenger services, overnight delivery, outside mailing service fees, freight and trucking, and maintenance of delivery and shipping vehicles. Does not include cost of supplies and printed materials.

Line 8 — Occupancy: *use of office space and other facilities, heat, light, power, other utilities, outside janitorial services, mortgage interest, real estate taxes, and similar expenses.*

Line 9 — Equipment Rental and Maintenance: *renting and maintaining computers, copiers, postage meters, other office equipment, and other equipment (except for telephone, truck, and automobile expenses). All charges, including overage fees are to be charged in this category.*

Line 10 — Printing and Publications: producing printed materials, purchasing books and publications, and buying subscriptions to publications (this line would include textbooks).

Line 11, 12 — Travel / Conferences and Meetings: travel, including transportation, meals and lodging, and per diem payments (including gas and oil, repairs, licenses and permits, and leasing costs for vehicles) and for conducting or attending meetings, conferences, and conventions (including facility rental, speakers' fees and expenses, printed materials, and registration fees. ***Expenses claimed cannot exceed those allowed by State of Tennessee Travel Regulations.***

Line 14 — Insurance: liability insurance, fidelity bonds, and other insurance. Do not include employee-related insurance reportable on line 2. Do not include property and vehicle insurance if reported on lines 7, 8, or 11.

Line 18 — Other Non-personnel Expenses: advertising, contingency provisions, independent research and development, recruiting, taxes, membership dues in associations and professional societies other fees for licenses, permits, registrations, etc. (NOTE: DO NOT include any expense that should be detailed in other line-items).

Line 20 — Reimbursable Capital Purchases: Only purchases that are \$5,000 or more, per item, are to be included in this category. All capital purchases must include copies of bids from at least three (3) vendors. Expenses for purchases of fixed assets. Example: computer hardware, furniture, laboratory equipment.