2021-22 Charter School Facilities Fund
Competitive Grant Application

Background

In 2017, the Tennessee legislature established a public charter school facilities program, pursuant to which State funds are allocated annually to charter schools to assist them with acquiring and improving their facilities. After budgetary cuts due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in no charter school facilities funds for FY21, the legislature approved a one-time allocation of $24 million for FY22 and $6 million in recurring funds for future years. $6 million of the FY22 funds will be allocated to schools based on their student enrollment. The remaining funds will be awarded to schools through this competitive grant process.

Grant Information

Awarded funds may be used for the purchase or lease of property, general capital improvements to existing and available buildings, and the repayment of debt incurred for existing capital outlay projects. These funds will be made available on an *equitable basis for the benefit of public charter schools of all sizes, characteristics, geographic locations, and authorizers.*

Grantees may be awarded up to $500,000 in facilities funds. Awards will be based on the number of applications, specific needs identified by applicants, total funds available and competitive score. It is anticipated that $5 million will be allocated for the expansion of high-quality schools and $13 million will be allocated for need-based charter school grants.

Competitive Grant Types

There are two types of competitive grants. A charter school may only apply for one competitive grant.

(1) <u>High-Quality Charter Expansion Grants</u>: Eligible applicants include either: (a) the sponsor of a new charter school that has been approved by an LEA or the Commission, but is not yet open; or (b) the operator of an existing charter school that has received its authorizer's approval to expand enrollment or grade levels beyond that set forth in the original charter agreement. The applicant must provide a clear record of driving student achievement and outcomes.

(2) <u>Need-Based Facility Grants</u>: These grants will be awarded to charter schools with demonstrable unmet facility needs impacting the student learning environment. Charter schools that are currently open and providing instruction to students are eligible to apply.

Accountability Requirements

All awards will be reimbursement-based. Awarded applicants will be required to submit proof of work performed by a contractor or architect licensed in Tennessee, or proof of a facilities lease or purchase. The grantee must submit all verification documentation through the department's ePlan system. The department reserves the right to request any additional documentation deemed necessary to verify the use of funds.

Use of Funds

1. Funds may be used for the purpose of purchasing:
   (a) real property upon which to build school facilities,
   (b) permanent school facilities, or
   (c) re-locatable school facilities (i.e., portables).
2. Funds may be used for any costs associated with the purchase of underutilized or vacant property available pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-136.
3. Funds may be used for lease or mortgage payments.
4. Funds may be used for the service of debt incurred for existing capital outlay projects.
5. Funds may be used for the reimbursement of renovations and future capital outlay projects.

Capital Outlay Project Requirements

Capital outlay projects must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. The charter school must:
   a. Own the facility or property upon which it plans to build/modify; or
   b. Be able to demonstrate it is in the process of purchasing the facility via lease-purchase agreements; or
   c. Have a long-term lease with at least two years remaining; or
   d. Have a memorandum of understanding with its authorizer for the use of facilities that allows for the capital projects being proposed.
2. The proposed facilities activity must be:
   a. Necessary to ensure the health and/or safety of all students; or
   b. Necessary to ensure an academic environment conducive to learning.

Examples of construction or renovation projects that **WOULD** meet requirements include:

- ✓ HVAC replacement or repair
- ✓ Electrical/plumbing/roof repair or enhancement
- ✓ Security renovations or enhancements
- ✓ Removal of asbestos or other hazardous materials
- ✓ Addition or modification of classroom or multi-purpose learning spaces
- ✓ Addition, renovation, or re-design of spaces dedicated to physical activity
- ✓ Assessment of facilities related to student safety and well-being (e.g., testing of drinking water for lead content, structural soundness of facility, etc.)
- ✓ Costs or fees associated with ensuring code compliance and/or associated inspections including lead in drinking water testing

Examples of construction or renovation projects that **WOULD NOT** meet requirements include:

- ✖ Exterior landscaping
- ✖ Renovations or additions to spaces not utilized for student learning or well-being (e.g., administrative offices)

Application Format

Applicants shall submit the following information in ePlan.

1. Application Cover Page
2. Signed Assurances
3. Project Narrative (Maximum of 8 pages)

   Applicants should address Part I and the applicable section of Part II of the project narrative, commencing on page 4. The project narrative should clearly identify the need for the proposed facility expenditure and how it will drive student outcomes.

4. ePlan Budget and Budget Narrative with Project Timeline (Maximum of 2 pages)

   Applicants must complete a budget with their requested allocation in ePlan using the account and line item numbers identified in *Attachment B*. They must also upload into ePlan a document addressing Part III, the budget narrative and timeline.

5. Appendices

   Any relevant supporting documents not already specified but that are germane to the application request should be uploaded. Examples include construction quotes or proposed architectural fees. Please do not attach curriculum, commercial publications, or videos.

All pages must be standard letter size (8 ½" by 11"). Please utilize Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins. Number all pages and include the charter school's full name in the header of each page. The project narrative, budget narrative, project timeline and appendices should be saved as one pdf document and uploaded into ePlan. Requests for clarification or additional information on the application should be sent to Charter.Schools@tn.gov.

Application Submission

Charter school applicants shall submit all application materials (including any necessary supplemental documentation) through the ePlan platform. By signing and submitting the application and assurances, the school acknowledges, understands, and agrees to comply with the grant application requirements and assurances and confirms that all the guidelines have been reviewed and understood by all relevant parties.

Applications must be submitted in full via ePlan no later than 4 p.m. on May 20, 2022. Any application received after this deadline, that takes exception to any of the stated requirements, or that fails to comply with specified procedures will not be eligible. Applications will be reviewed and scored in accordance with the rubric set forth in *Attachment A*. If selected as a grant recipient, applicants will be notified in June of 2022. The department will provide instructions and documentation required of grantees. All reimbursements are subject to approval by the department.

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Project Narrative (not to exceed 8 pages)

Part I: Project Overview

All applicants must answer the questions below.

1. Describe your current school facility or your proposed facility (if you are an approved charter school that has not commenced instruction). Provide all relevant details, including but not limited to:
   a. How old is your facility?
   b. How old are its major systems or components, such as roof, HVAC, etc.?
   c. Has the facility been negatively impacted by any recent weather events?
   d. How long have you occupied the facility?
   e. Is the facility owned or leased?
   f. How many students does the facility currently serve?
   g. Based on its current composition, what is the facility's maximum student capacity?
   h. How many rooms does the facility contain, and how many rooms are used exclusively for instructional purposes?

2. Describe the particular facility needs or challenges faced by your school that could be addressed through financial support from the Charter School Facilities Fund. Indicate which of the following categories of expenditures would apply:
   a. Purchase of property;
   b. Lease or mortgage payments;
   c. Service of debt incurred for existing capital outlay projects; and/or
   d. Future capital improvements or renovations to facilities.

3. Indicate the amount of funding you are requesting, and how you would utilize it to address the previously identified needs or challenges. Note: the maximum amount that may be awarded to any one school is $500,000. You may describe projects that exceed the maximum, as long as you address how the funding will contribute to the total project expenses.

Part II: Grant-Specific Narrative

Applicants should answer only the questions under the section assigned to the grant to which they are applying.

Option 1: High-Quality Charter Expansion Grant: The applicant should describe how the facilities funding will support replication or an increase in the number of high-quality student seats.

1. List your enrollment projections based on capacity added through the use of these funds. Provide evidence that a demand for these additional seats exists in your desired community.

2. Provide evidence of past academic performance that would indicate the additional seats added would be high quality. Applicants must, at a minimum, address state assessment data including TCAP and TVAAS scores, English Learner (EL) assessments, and the ACT (if applicable), for each charter school that the applicant currently operates in Tennessee.

3. Describe other metrics of success that indicate new seats would be high-quality seats, including but not limited to: graduation rates, attendance and chronic absenteeism rates, student retention data, teacher retention data, or any other data aligned to the mission and goals of the school.

4. Explain your organization's operational and financial capacity to support the increased seats created as a result of receiving this grant. Include verifiable revenue, staffing, professional development needs, curricular costs, technology, etc.

5. Attach as an Appendix:

    a. Most recent audit, if applicable, and financials for the organization's most recently completed fiscal year.

    b. The most recent Charter School Annual Report for each charter school currently operated by the applicant in Tennessee.

Option 2: <u>Need-Based Facility Grant</u>: The applicant should provide evidence demonstrating that funding will address unmet high-need facility concerns impacting the learning environment.

1. Describe how the funds will be allocated to meet high-priority needs of the school. Indicate below which prioritized needs will be addressed and how.

Priority Level	Description	Examples
1	Urgent Health and Safety Concerns for Students and Staff	- Damage caused by natural disaster (e.g., flood, tornado, severe storm) - ADA compliance - Fire code compliance - Asbestos removal - Mold treatment - Lead-based paint removal - Debt service for addressing above issues since 7/1/21
2	Ongoing Health and Safety Concerns for Students and Staff	- Roof replacement - Repairs of HVAC, plumbing, or electrical systems - COVID-19 related improvements - Food service-related improvements - Purchase of new building with evidence that current facility does not meet health and safety needs of students and staff - Debt service for addressing above issues since 7/1/21
3	Improving Instructional Capacity	- Internet connectivity - Renovation of instructional spaces - Facilities improvements benefitting special populations - Purchase of new building with evidence that current facility does not meet space needs - Debt service for addressing above issues since 7/1/21
4	Other Identified Facility Needs	- Non-emergency building improvements - Purchase of new building - Lease payments - Debt service

2. Complete the chart below to indicate the priority level, amount, and percent of total grant funds requested for each budget item. The total in this chart must match the total grant amount requested in Part I, Question 3.

Facility Funding Request by Priority Level (add rows if needed)

Priority Level	Budget Item	Amount Requested	Percent of Total Request Funds
1		$	%
Totals for Priority Level 1:			
2		$	%
Totals for Priority Level 2:			
3		$	%
Totals for Priority Level 3:			
4		$	%
Totals for Priority Level 4:			
Totals for All Priority Levels:		$	100%

3. Provide evidence of the negative impact of the current facility on student and staff health and safety, instructional capacity, student or staff retention, or any other facility-related effects. Provide justification for how your facilities project will address and improve these issues.

Budget Narrative (not to exceed 2 pages)

Part III: Budget Narrative and Timeline
All applicants should describe the following:
- the specific sub-costs associated with the proposed investment,
- the expected timeline for completion,
- identification of any components that might be subject to variance in expected cost or time, and
- contingency plans.

Attachment A: Scoring Rubric

Applications will be reviewed by three (3) individuals, who will norm on the scoring in advance. The total scores of each of the reviewers will be averaged to determine the applicant's final score. Applicants must earn a minimum of 75% of possible points (18 points) to be eligible for a grant. Funding will be awarded to the applicants with the highest scores.

APPLICATION COMPONENT	MAXIMUM POINTS	ASSIGNED POINTS
1. Cover Page	Pre-Requisite (no points)	
2. Signed Assurances	Pre-Requisite (no points)	
3. Part I: Project Overview	4	
4. Part II: Grant-Specific Narrative	12	
5. Part III: Budget, Budget Narrative and Timeline	8	
6. Appendices	If applicable (no points)	
SCORE (maximum possible score = 24)		
Evaluator Identification:		

Project Overview: Part I Scoring Rubric				
Project Overview				
0 Points	**1 Point**	**2 Points**	**3 Points**	**4 Points**
The narrative fails to describe the applicant's current or proposed facility AND fails to describe a facility need.	The narrative describes a facility need but fails to provide the context for the need.	The narrative describes a facility need and its context, but the amount requested is unreasonable OR the explanation for how the funds will address the need is unclear or unrealistic.	The narrative describes a need that can be addressed through financial support from the grant, but the amount of requested funding is unsupported.	The narrative describes a clear, compelling need that can be addressed through financial support from the grant; and the amount of requested funding is reasonable and supported by evidence.

| Project Narrative: Part II Scoring Rubric – High-Quality Expansion |

Projected Enrollment and Community Demand

0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points
The narrative fails to provide specific enrollment projections AND a demonstrated demand for additional seats in the community.	The narrative fails to provide specific enrollment projections OR fails to demonstrate demand for additional seats in their community.	The narrative provides enrollment projections, but they are unrealistic, or it is unclear how they will address the community demand.	The narrative provides reasonable enrollment projections for new charter seats that address a community demand.	The narrative provides reasonable enrollment projections for new charter seats that address a documented community demand.

Evidence of Strong Past Performance

0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points
The narrative fails to provide evidence of strong past academic performance or other metrics of success.	The narrative provides some evidence of strong past academic performance or other metrics of success, but fails to include state-level performance data.	The narrative provides evidence of strong past academic performance or other metrics of success, but they do not compare favorably with district metrics.	The narrative provides evidence of strong past academic performance, including recent TVAAS scores of a 4 or 5 for math and reading, and other metrics of success that compare favorably with district metrics.	The narrative provides compelling evidence of strong past academic performance, including recent TVAAS scores of a 4 or 5 for math and reading, and success metrics, that compare favorably with district metrics and demonstrate consistently high performance across all subgroups.

Demonstrated Capacity

0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points
The application does not include an operational or financial plan.	The operational and financial plan fail to demonstrate the school's capacity to support additional seats.	The operational and financial plan may demonstrate some capacity, but the plan is incomplete or unrealistic.	The applicant provides a complete and realistic operational and financial plan demonstrating capacity to support the increased seats.	The applicant provides a complete, realistic and compelling operational and financial plan demonstrating capacity to support the increased seats; and provides an example of past expansion success.

Project Narrative: Part II Scoring Rubric – Need-Based

Prioritization and Impact

0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points
The narrative fails to identify how the applicant has prioritized facility needs AND how the needs will be addressed.	The narrative fails to identify how the applicant has prioritized facility needs OR how the needs will be addressed.	The narrative identifies how the applicant has prioritized facility needs and how the needs will be addressed, but the plan is unclear or unrealistic.	The narrative identifies how the applicant has prioritized facility needs and provides a clear, realistic plan for addressing them.	The narrative identifies how the applicant has prioritized facility needs and provides a clear, realistic plan for addressing them that is supported by quotes or other evidence.

Addressing Highest-Need Issues

0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points
0-.9% of funds requested are for Level 1 and Level 2 priorities.	1-49.9% of funds requested are for Level 1 and Level 2 priorities.	50-69.9% of funds requested are for Level 1 and Level 2 priorities.	70-89.9% of funds requested are for Level 1 and Level 2 priorities.	90-100% of funds requested are for Level 1 and Level 2 priorities.

Evidence of Need

0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points
The narrative fails to provide evidence of negative impacts of current facility status AND how this funding will address these impacts.	The narrative provides evidence of negative impacts of current facility status, but it is unclear how the requested funding will address these impacts.	The narrative provides evidence of negative impacts of current facility status, and how the requested funding will address these impacts.	The narrative clearly describes two or more realistic positive impacts on the learning environment and/or student needs as a result of the funding.	The narrative clearly describes two or more realistic positive impacts on the learning environment and/or student needs as a result of the funding, which are backed by research or proven best practices.

Part III: Project Budget, Budget Narrative and Timeline Scoring Rubric				
Application Budget				
0 Points	**1 Point**	**2 Points**	**3 Points**	**4 Points**
The applicant fails to break out expenses by budget line item AND fails to provide any required detail.	The applicant breaks out expenses by budget line item, but fails to provide any required detail.	The applicant breaks out expenses by budget line item and provides any required detail, but the budget is unreasonable.	The applicant breaks out expenses by budget line item and provides any required detail, such that the budget is reasonable and aligns to the application narrative.	The applicant breaks out expenses by budget line item and provides any required detail, such that the budget is reasonable, aligns to the application narrative, and is supported by one or more quotes.
Budget Timeline and Plan				
0 Points	**1 Point**	**2 Points**	**3 Points**	**4 Points**
The applicant fails to describe a timeline for the project AND fails to identify any contingency plan for variances.	The applicant describes a timeline for the project, but fails to identify any contingency plan for variances.	The applicant describes a timeline for the project and a contingency plan, but the timeline or plan may be unrealistic or unclear.	The applicant describes a clear and realistic timeline and contingency plan for the project.	The applicant describes a clear and realistic timeline and contingency plan supported by quotes or other evidence.

Attachment B: Account and Line Item Numbers

Account Number / Line Item Number	72620 - Maintenance of Plant	76100 - Regular Capital Outlay	82130 - Principal	82230 - Interest
304 - Architects		Yes		
308 - Consultants		Yes		
321 - Engineering Services		Yes		
330 - Operating Lease Payments	Yes			
331 - Legal Services		Yes		
335 - Maintenance & Repair Services - Building	Yes			
336 - Maintenance & Repair Services - Equipment	Yes			
399 - Other Contracted Services	Yes	Yes		
418 - Equipment & Machinery Parts	Yes			
426 - General Construction Materials	Yes			
499 - Other Supplies and Materials	Yes			
599 - Other Charges	Yes			
601 - Principle on Bonds			Yes	
602 - Principle on Notes			Yes	
603 - Interest on Bonds				Yes
604 - Interest on Notes				Yes
610 - Principle on Capitalized Leases			Yes	
611 - Interest on Capitalized Leases				Yes
612 - Principle on Other Loans Payable			Yes	
613 - Interest on Other Loans Payable				Yes
699 - Other Debt Service				Yes
706 - Building Construction		Yes		
707 - Building Improvements		Yes		
715 - Land		Yes		
717 - Maintenance Equipment	Yes			
724 - Site Development		Yes		
799 - Other Capital Outlay		Yes		