



Letter of Intent to Apply to Open a Tennessee Public Charter School

For Charter School Sponsors Planning to Submit a



Charter School Application by February 1, 2026

Letter of Intent to Apply to Open a Tennessee Public Charter School

Overview

The first step in creating a new public charter school is for a sponsor¹ to file a letter of intent with the selected authorizer² and the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (Commission) using the form below. Sponsors must complete a separate letter of intent for each public charter school application they plan to submit.

The purpose of the letter of intent is to provide an authorizer with advance notice that an application to open a public charter school may be forthcoming. Sponsors should provide the most accurate information available at the time of submission.

This letter of intent form is for non-replication applications only. If a sponsor is seeking to replicate an existing Tennessee public charter school, the sponsor must complete a different letter of intent form, which can be found on the Tennessee State Board of Education’s (State Board) [website](#).

Submission Requirements

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-107(a), all sponsors must file a Letter of Intent at least 60 days prior to the application deadline of February 1. Therefore, this letter must be delivered no later than December 3. If December 3 falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or state-observed holiday, the Letter of Intent is due on the next business day.

An electronic copy of the letter of intent must be converted to a PDF file and submitted to the selected authorizer and the Commission by the deadline. Sponsors must contact the authorizer to determine the process for filing the letter of intent with the authorizer and submit a copy to the Commission via email at CharterSchool.Applications@tn.gov.

Within 10 business days of receipt of a letter of intent, the authorizer shall share with the sponsor the most up to date per-pupil estimate of combined state and local funding. Sponsors must input that number into the budget template that accompanies the application to support accurate budgeting.

¹ “Sponsor” means a proposed governing body filing an application for the establishment of a public charter school, that is not a for-profit entity; nonpublic school as defined in § 49-6-3001; other private, religious, or church school; or postsecondary institution not regionally accredited; and does not promote the agenda of any religious denomination or religiously affiliated entity. T.C.A. § 49-13-104.

² “Authorizer” means a local board of education or the Tennessee public charter school commission as defined in § 49-1-614, that makes decisions regarding approval, renewal, and revocation of a public charter school application or agreement. T.C.A. §49-13-140.

Primary Point of Contact

In the table below, identify the primary point of contact (PPOC) for this letter of intent. The PPOC will handle all communications, scheduling, and notices related to the application. The PPOC is responsible for ensuring timely dissemination of information to all involved parties. All information provided in this form is considered public information.

Name	Zachary Wishart
Role in proposed school	Executive Director
Mailing address	448 N. Cedar Bluff Road, Ste. 404
Mailing address line 2	
City, State, Zip code	Knoxville, TN 37923
Primary telephone	865-257-6105
Alternate telephone	
Email address	zachwishart@gmail.com

General Information About the Proposed School

Complete the table below.

Name of proposed charter school	The Wilberforce Academy of Knoxville		
Sponsor/Sponsoring Entity	The Wilberforce Academy of Knoxville		
Proposed Authorizer	Knox County Schools		
Academic Focus of Proposed School	Faith-Based Christian with focus on civics and entrepreneurship		
Grade Structure (e.g., K-5, 6-8, 9-12)	Year 1	Year 5	At Capacity
	K-1	K-5	K-8
Projected Enrollment	Year 1	Year 5	At Capacity
	100	300	450
Neighborhood and/or community in which the school plans to locate	Cedar Bluff		
Projected opening school year	2027		

Sponsor Eligibility

Tennessee law limits who may sponsor a charter school and prescribes the type of entity that may operate a charter school.³ Please read the following statements and check the box to confirm eligibility to apply and verify the status of, or plans for, the governing body.

Note: Sponsor is not a "for-profit entity," "nonpublic school," "other private, religious, or church school," or "postsecondary institution"; but Sponsor does "promote the agenda of any religious denomination or religiously affiliated entity." T.C.A. § 49-13-104(15).

The sponsor of this charter school is not: "a for-profit corporation;" "a non-public school, as defined in Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3001(c)(3)(A), or other private, religious, or church school;" and the proposed charter school is not cyber-based.

Charter schools must be operated by entities that are exempt from federal taxation under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Please check one of the following, as applicable:

The sponsor of this charter school is a not-for-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status.

The sponsor of this charter school is a not-for-profit organization and has applied for 501(c)(3) status.

Sponsor History and Intent

Read the following statements and select "yes" or "no" to indicate whether each of the following descriptors is true of the sponsor or sponsoring entity's history or intent. Sponsors may indicate "yes" to more than one descriptor. Sponsors will be required to complete an addendum to the charter school application for each descriptor to which they respond "yes".

Yes	No	Sponsor History and Intent
	X	The sponsor currently has, or has previously had, any affiliation with a charter school in the United States, including but not limited to, its establishment, operation, or management.
	X	Sponsors proposing to open a new school that will create a network or as part of an existing network/ charter management organization (CMO).
	X	The sponsor is seeking to contract with a third-party education service provider (ESP), including a CMO.
	X	The sponsor is seeking approval of multiple schools during this application cycle.
	X	The sponsor is seeking to convert a non-charter public school to a charter school.
	X	The sponsor is seeking to open an Opportunity Public Charter School.

³ T.C.A. § 49-13-106: The complete Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act is contained in T.C.A. §§ 49-13-101 through 145.
 Tennessee's Charter School Application Letter of Intent
 August 2025

	X	The sponsor is a higher education institution seeking to open a charter school.
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By my signature below, I affirm that all the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Zach Wishart
Signature of Authorized Representative

11/25/2025
Date

Zachary Wishart
Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Executive Director
Title of Authorized Representative