

PART III – REQUIRED PROGRAM INFORMATION

Instructions

Using no more than three (3) pages, please provide a budget narrative that describes specifically how grant funds will be used for the planning and implementation of the school's charter as granted by the Board of Education. As much as possible, organize the narrative to align with the budget categories in *Part II – Budget Detail Pages*. When writing your budget narrative, recall the specific restrictions and address the requirements for the use of grant funds described in the RFP under *Fund Use*.

For All Eligible Charter Schools

1. Indirect Costs (line 9) may **not** be charged to this grant.
2. Capital construction and facilities lease costs may **not** be charged to this grant, with the exception of minor renovations required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and for **Option A – Planning Period only**, funds may be used for up to three months of facilities lease costs.

For Option A – Planning Period

1. The budget narrative should describe at least \$5,000 for *fiscal policies and procedures development* and \$10,000 for *curriculum and assessment system development*.

Fiscal Policies and Procedures Development. The development and documentation of sound business policies and procedures during the start-up period is a critical element of establishing a strong basis for charter school operation. This requirement of the grant is intended to help school leaders and Board members proactively set systems in place for prudent fiscal management.

Curriculum and Assessment System Development. Comprehensive development of the school's proposed curriculum and its supporting assessment system prior to opening helps to ensure that students are well served and that the school has critical tools in place. Prior grant recipients were surveyed recently about what areas of development they wish they had invested in. Most respondents ranked curriculum and assessment system development the highest.

Option B – 1st Year Implementation

1. Budget narrative should describe at least \$10,000 for *data management systems*.

Data Management Systems. In the same survey of prior grant recipients, investment in appropriate data management systems from the outset was highlighted as crucial in the early stages of running a school.

Option C – 2nd Year Implementation

1. Budget narrative should describe at least \$5,000 for *governance development*.

Governance Development. This requirement of the grant is intended to help school leaders and Board members proactively meet their legal responsibilities for governing a public charter school. Activities might include funding the evaluation of current Board governance, policies, and practices. Other possible uses include holding a Board retreat, training for administrators and Board members, or funding the development of written management and governance policy manuals. *A school may request to waive this spending requirement if it can demonstrate that it has secured and committed funds from other sources for this purpose.*

If your charter school wishes to request a *waiver* of any of these spending requirements, provide documentation that demonstrates that the school has either already completed the requirement or has secured and committed funds from other sources for this purpose in the form of a letter from the fund source.

Name of Grant Program: Charter School Start-Up Assistance Program

Fund Code: 535

There are no other explicit restrictions; however, please keep in mind that this grant is intended to support *start-up activities* and is not intended to support general operating expenses. Note that if an employee is part of the Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System (MTRS) and is funded by a federal grant (such as this one), 9% of that employee's salary must be paid out of the grant as a surcharge. (See <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/procedure/forms/j.doc>.) This 9% is in addition to the employee payroll deductions that are already paid to MTRS on behalf of the employee by the school.

Other suggested start-up activities that can be paid for out of grant funds include:

1. development of the school's Accountability Plan and support of an infrastructure to track progress toward the measurable school performance objectives;
2. front-loading the development of systems and policies that normally would not be supportable by per-pupil tuition in the school's early years (e.g., funding full-time business and special education staff to set up appropriate systems or consultants to monitor closely the initial implementation of various programs);
3. teacher training programs (e.g., through stipends); and
4. material start-up costs, such as classroom supplies, materials, technology, furniture, and equipment.