UTAH CHARTER SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM

Grant Writer's Training

Startup & Implementation Grants

April 9, 2012

Writer’s Training Overview

- General information
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General Information

- The purpose of Utah's State Grant is to expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to students in Utah by providing financial assistance for planning, program design and initial implementation of new charter schools.
- The State Charter School Board (SCSB) received $2,100,000 per year in FY13 – FY17 to subgrant to support qualified charter schools. In addition, the SCSB received $200,000 to provide administrative services and $200,000 for a Mentoring Program.

Eligible Applicants

- Grant applicants must conform to the requirements for charter schools in the Utah Charter Schools Act (U.C.A. §53A-1a-507).
- Grant applicants may be in the planning year (startup) or first two operational years with students (implementation)
- Schools that have received a state startup or implementation grant under another school name or before being reconstituted are not eligible.
- Should the charter school change to non-charter status within ten years of receiving grant funds, grant funds must be reimbursed to SCSB.

Lottery Requirements

- Enrollment preference for children of founding parents, teachers, or staff cannot exceed five percent (5%) of the school's total enrollment.
- Enrollment preference cannot be granted to any groups not explicitly approved in the charter agreement.
- A charter school may never charge families to be designated a founder or to be enrolled in the charter school.
- "Charge" means to impose a duty, responsibility, or obligation on (e.g., require volunteer hours, require donations, etc.).

Application Process

- Proof of Eligibility
- Startup (pgs. 11-16) or Implementation (pgs. 17-21) Grant Application
- Revised Budget (if applicable) NOTE: Subgrant funds may not be spent or encumbered until final written approval of budget is received.

Funding & Fundable Activities

- Grant funds must be used for the following:
  - Post-award planning and design of the educational program, including refining results (standards) and measurements (evaluation) of progress toward those results.
  - Research-based professional learning activities for teachers and other staff and training offered through the grant program.
  - Initial implementation of the charter school including:
    - Informing the community about the school,
    - Acquiring necessary equipment and educational materials and supplies,
    - Acquiring, developing or aligning curriculum, and
    - Other initial operational costs.
      - Costs associated with creating and implementing office functions;
      - Costs associated with the installation of computers, data systems, networks, and telephones;
      - Personnel expenses incurred either before or after the school's opening (not to exceed a total of $5,000 per month); and
      - Rental or occupancy costs for the school facility for a reasonable period of time in preparation for the school's opening.

Funding Levels

- Grant applicants under this program may receive up to $300,000 over a thirty-six month period.
- ‘Base + per pupil’ formula
  - Startup grant (year 1) –up to base + per pupil at 90% of projected enrollment
  - Implementation grant (year 2) –up to base + per pupil at 90% of projected enrollment.
  - Implementation grant (year 3) –up to base + per pupil at fall enrollment (year 2) and 90% of projected enrollment (if expanding)
- No funding level is guaranteed.
- Schools in grant years 2 – 3 may also request a supplementary grant award in November if the actual fall enrollment exceeded 90% of projected enrollment, not to exceed the base + per pupil at actual fall enrollment or overall maximum of $300,000.

Recipient Monitoring

- As a condition of this grant, USOE is responsible for monitoring charter schools to ensure that they adhere to their charter agreement. This monitoring system reviews charter schools annually as required in U.C.A. §53A-1a-501.6.
- The Charter School Section will keep track of specific information as a part of the grant. This may include attendance at mandatory trainings, submission of required reports, progress towards charter agreement performance goals, as well as other items.
- To assist with proper notification of requirements and school progress, grantee schools are required to notify Charter School Section of any administrator, leadership, or board turnover at the school during the full grant cycle.

Deadlines

- Deadlines
  - May 4, 2012: Grant Application due
  - May – June 2012: Revised Budget Narrative & Budget Form due
  - June 15, 2012: Applicant notified of grant status
  - June 1, 2013: Deadline for requesting a 90 day no-cost extension
  - June 30, 2013 End of fiscal year for all subgrants

  - NOTE: Grant funds may not be spent or encumbered until final written approval of budget is received.

Tips for Success

- Tips for success
  - Carefully read everything, paying particular attention to the scoring rubrics.
  - Allow yourself plenty of time to conduct planning, gather data, and collect the necessary information from other sources.
  - Consider the grant cap and funding requests over the entire thirty-six month grant period.
  - Follow the directions for the format and sequence of your proposal.
  - Proofread your final proposal.
  - When you have finished writing your proposal, have someone who has not been involved in the writing process read it and score it using the rubrics.
  - Utilize the Final Checklist (pg. 4).

Grant Writer’s Training

Questions?

Authorized Contact

- Definition: The person who has the legal authority to sign legal documents on behalf of the school. The authorized contact should be a member of the charter school and not an educational service provider. Board authorization needs to delegate responsibility to the authorized contact to execute the approved grant application, comply with the certifications of the grant program, including all fiscal requirements, and act as the board's authorized official for the grant award. The authorized contact can have no conflict of interest with any party (i.e., employee, contractor, vendor, etc.) that has a financial interest in the grant award.

- Responsibilities:
  - Oversight of the entire grant project.
  - Manage grant budget.
  - Responsibility for compliance with state laws and guidance regarding grant management.
  - Liaison with CSS and attend required meetings.
  - Liaison with charter school governing board to provide regular updates.

General Grant Management

- Change of Status. Should the charter school change to non-charter status within ten years of receiving grant funds, grant funds must be reimbursed to SCSB.
- Conflicts of Interest. The authorized contact and governing board members must have no real, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest with any vendors or personnel contracted to provide equipment or services funded under the grant except as provided in U.C.A. §53A-1a-518.
- Extension of Time to Expend Grant Funds. If grantee schools anticipate that they will be unable to spend grant funds by June 30, an extension request must be filed. An extension allows up to 90 additional days to expend funds. Extension requests should outline the reason for delay, the amount of carryover, and the anticipated new end date. The grantee is still bound by the approved budget. Extensions are subject to approval by SCSB and are not guaranteed. It's important to monitor spending throughout the year and make the necessary budget revisions to meet the June 30 deadline. An extension should be the last resort when budgeting funds. The following year's funding will be held until spending of the extended funds is complete.

Financial Responsibilities

- Audits. Grantee schools are responsible for annual financial audits, including these grant funds, and are expected to provide its fiscal agent with complete financial information to satisfy federal and state requirements.

- Financial Reports. An AFR and APR is required to be filed by October 1 each year. If the AFR and APR is not filed on time, complete, and accurate, grantees risk losing their funds for the following year.

- Termination of Award. If it is determined that any grant funds have been misused, grant funds must be returned to SCSB. SCSB may terminate a grant award upon 30 days' notice if it is determined that the applicant is not fulfilling the funded program responsibilities as specified in the approved application.

- Final report. Grant final reports are due within 30 days of the grant end date.

General Grant Management

Questions?