

FY 2018 Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools Program (CSP)
Grants to State Entities (CFDA Number: 84.282A)
Project Abstract

Colorado Department of Education

State:
Colorado

PR Award Number:
U282A180023

Duration (Years):
5 Years

Year 1 Funding:
\$814,786.00

Total Expected Funding:
\$55,171,335.00

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The Colorado Charter School sector is now 25 years old – one of the oldest charter sectors in the country. In that time, the Colorado Charter Schools Program (CCSP) has played a critical role in opening and expanding high-quality charter schools. Previous CCSP grant activities clearly demonstrate the impact that charter schools make on improving student academic outcomes, with particularly promising outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students. There are still many opportunities to build on these successes to improve practices and effectively serve more students and a wider diversity of students in charter schools.

Colorado strives to increase the number of high-quality charter schools, to help new schools overcome the unique challenges posed by Colorado's competitive charter environment, to increase adoption of best practices by charter leaders and authorizers, and to encourage and disseminate promising practices related to access and equity through a creative learning network with all public schools.

The 2018 CCSP application addresses each of the six Competitive Preference Priorities outlined in the Notice of Invitation to Apply (NIA) both by demonstrating the current work in Colorado and by demonstrating how this current work can be enhanced through the proposed new grant activities that will result in an increase in Colorado charters by 18% over the grant period. The new activities are woven through the Colorado Logic Model and the corresponding objectives, which include:

CSP Objective 1: Increase the number of high quality charter school options and the number of students who attend them. To achieve this objective, CDE will continue to emphasize high standards for charter applications, and will provide technical

assistance to school designers with a goal of issuing 45 subgrant awards over the life of the grant program. During the duration of the grant, the Schools of Choice office (SOC) will invest heavily in charter school developer coaching, charter sector research, best practice dissemination, and subgrant competition preparation. In year 1, SOC will also strategically update, fortify and apply new research to its program in order to roll out the first of four grant competitions in the fall of 2019. With this funding, we anticipate receiving a large applicant pool with high quality applications from which the state will be able to set a high bar for funding. Grants will be awarded to new, replicating, or significantly expanding charter schools for planning, program design, and implementation of the school or expansion project.

CSP Objective 2: Raise educational outcomes for all charter school students by increasing capacity among authorizers and charter school leaders to increase quality charter school programs and to successfully address access and equity gaps among educationally disadvantaged students. In addition to a robust subgrant program, CDE will direct training and support services to existing charter schools, authorizers and the broader parent and stakeholder community. To supplement this direct support, CDE will also contract with the Colorado Charter School Institute and other high quality education partners to extend technical assistance and best practice dissemination activities throughout the state. CDE is committed to engaging in meaningful topic-based research to better understand effective means of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for traditionally underserved student populations and the provision of resulting guidance to charter schools and their authorizers to address access and equity challenges.