

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS  
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 08/30/2024 09:50 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California School Finance Authority (S282D240004)  
Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need For Facility Funding		
1. Need For Facility Funding	30	20
Quality Of Plan		
1. Quality Of Plan	40	38
The Grant Project Team		
1. The Grant Project Team	10	9
The Budget		
1. The Budget	10	10
State Experience		
1. State Experience	10	10
Sub Total	100	87
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority		
1. CPP	10	0
Sub Total	10	0
Total	110	87

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFIG Panel - 1: 84.282D

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: California School Finance Authority (S282D240004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need For Facility Funding

#### 1. (a) Need For Facility Funding (30 points).

(1) The need for per-pupil charter school facility funding in the State.

(2) The extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.

#### Strengths:

1)

The California School Finance Authority, the grant applicant, cites the growth of the number of charter schools since 1992, when they became the second state to adopt charter school legislation. There is an annual growth rate of 13 percent as compared to traditional schools that have a growth rate of less than 1 percent during the same 30-plus years.

This data is strong evidence for the need of additional charter school facility funding in California.

Additionally, the charter school enrollment has grown equally as fast in comparison to traditional schools. (page e11)

2)

Beginning on page e11 through page e14, there is extensive documentation regarding how California funds charter schools on a per-pupil basis. It is stated that since 2002, the state has provided roughly \$[REDACTED] for school K-12 facilities. Currently, there are two state-funded charter school facilities funding programs. These are administered by the California Finance Authority. The current per-pupil funding rate for FY 2024-25 is \$[REDACTED] per unit of average daily attendance ("ADA").

There are four grant opportunities utilizing these funds: base grant, grade span adjustments, supplemental funding, and concentration funding. (page e13)

The grant application states that state charter schools are at a disadvantage when attempting to fund facilities. One of the challenges charter schools face is their inability to issue tax-supported bonds. Charter schools, instead, must pay for facility costs by borrowing against

what would otherwise be per-pupil operational monies. (page e17) Additionally, it is stated most charter schools have low credit ratings and are thus not allowed access to another funding mechanism such as lease-back financing. (page e17)

#### Weaknesses:

1)

There is insufficient data documenting new charter schools that have been implemented in the last five years. Although the data shows growth in the charter school landscape, the data does not delve into specifics with current numbers. (page e11)

Nor is there any data regarding the projected number of charter schools that exist or are new that might apply for this funding.

2)

There is no proposal on how to close the facilities funding gap. The applicant provides information regarding the grants and monies California has allocated to charter schools for facilities. Some of the state funds are legislatively appropriated and some are from different voter-approved propositions. (pages e15 to e17) The applicant has also noted the challenges facing charters such as the inability to pass general obligation bonds.

Yet, there is insufficient evidence to show how this [REDACTED] grant request will close the inequity of traditional per-pupil facilities funding compared to that of charter schools.

**Reader's Score: 20**

### **Selection Criteria - Quality Of Plan**

#### **1. (b) Quality Of Plan (40 points).**

- (1) The likelihood that the proposed grant project will result in the State either retaining a new per-pupil facilities aid program or continuing to enhance such a program without the total amount of assistance (State and Federal) declining over a five-year period.**
- (2) The flexibility charter schools have in their use of facility funds for the various authorized purposes.**
- (3) The quality of the plan for identifying charter schools and determining their eligibility to receive funds.**
- (4) The per-pupil facilities aid formula's ability to target resources to charter schools with the greatest need and the highest proportions of students in poverty.**
- (5) For projects that plan to reserve funds for evaluation, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for this purpose.**
- (6) For projects that plan to reserve funds for technical assistance, dissemination, or personnel, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for these purposes.**

#### **Strengths:**

1)

There is strong evidence that California will increase the per-pupil facilities funds from the existing levels. For instance, the applicant provides tables on pages e18 and e19 showing the expected per-pupil increase over the next five-year federal grant period, which addresses the State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant Program (SFIG) requirements that federal funds supplement and not supplant state funding for charter schools.

Additionally, the state received three Charter Schools Facilities grants from 2004 to 2019 that allowed the distribution of facility money to charter schools. The applicant has been the management agency responsible for these funds. These grant funds will be used to maintain the current levels of facility funds, and it is projected that the California legislature will increase its budgeted funding for this area. (page e19)

2)

There is strong documentation provided that demonstrates California's willingness to allow charter schools the flexibility to utilize some grant funds as either base rent, debt forgiveness, or for the purchase, construction, or renovation of facilities (page e20)

3)

The Authority documents they have a well-established and successful program to identify those who would receive grant funds. (pages e21 to e23). They not only notify potential charter schools of the opportunity to apply for this funding but also do the notifications in Spanish to ensure access is completely transparent. (page e22).

It is stated there are extensive measures in place to notify the California charter schools. Furthermore, it is stated that the requirements to apply are stringent and that these are verified to ensure compliance.

4)

To ensure the charter schools with the greatest needs will receive funding, the Authority rewards preference points to schools based on the number of economically disadvantaged students a school has enrolled. (page e22) Additional preference points are given based on the school's location. If a school is located in an area of high poverty, more preference points are awarded. (page e24) Thus, the evidence is strong that resources will be targeted to schools with the greatest need.

5)

The budgeted administrative costs for this grant include evaluation, technical assistance, and dissemination in Year 1, [REDACTED] Year 2, [REDACTED]; Year 3, [REDACTED]; and Year 5, [REDACTED] for a five-year total of [REDACTED] This will allow [REDACTED] of the grant funds to be distributed to charter schools. The Authority justifies these expenditures as minimal to ensure the bulk of the funding goes to the schools. (Table 2 page e33)

6)

The applicant provides a strategic plan with budget amounts to reserve funds for technical assistance and dissemination of the grant. (page e24)

#### **Weaknesses:**

1)

No weaknesses were found.

2)

When listing the areas of expense flexibility for subgrantees the grant application fails to list flexibility to be given to subgrantees in the areas of lease-hold or administrative costs. Both of these expense items are allowable under the grant guidelines. (page e20)

3)

No weaknesses were found.

4)

No weaknesses were found.

5)

No weaknesses were found.

6)

No weaknesses were found

**Reader's Score: 38**

#### **Selection Criteria - The Grant Project Team**

##### **1. (c) The Grant Project Team (10 points).**

**(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project manager and other members of the grant project team, including employees not paid with grant funds, consultants, and subcontractors.**

**(2) The adequacy and appropriateness of the applicant's staffing plan for the grant project.**

**Strengths:**

1)

This applicant has the advantage of a team that has managed three other federal grants and is experienced with different facets of the grant. This strengthens the applicant's position as there will be a slight learning curve to have all team members vested, and thus, funds may be expedited for disbursement within a year. (page e25)

With over 30 years of experience, the Authority's Executive Director will shift to be the project manager for this grant. Resumes for the five team members are available on pages e222 to e232)

2)

Besides the applicant's strong staffing plan (pages 25-e31), they will contract with the Charter School Development Center to assist with implementation. Other support that strengthens this staffing plan includes utilizing the resources of the California Office of the Treasury. This office will utilize the Accounting Department, the State Controller's Office, and the Administrative Department will assist with any staffing adjustments or administrative changes. Finally, the Communications Department will assist with announcements (page e31)

**Weaknesses:**

1) No weaknesses found.

2)

The applicant lacks evidence to justify the project leaders' contracting with IMPACTS USA Advisory Services (page e30). This organization is stated to assist with the implementation of the Program. The description of this need for contracting with this organization seems to duplicate and be repetitive with other financial contractors they list on pages e25 to e30.

**Reader's Score:**      **9**

**Selection Criteria - The Budget**

**1. (d) The Budget (10 points).**

**(1) The extent to which the requested grant amount and the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed grant project.**

**(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students served and to the anticipated results and benefits.**

**(3) The extent to which the non-Federal share exceeds the minimum percentages (which are based on the percentages under section 4304(k)(2)(C) of the ESEA), particularly in the initial years of the program.**

**Strengths:**

1)

The requested [REDACTED] grant has budgeted reasonable project costs to meet the goals of providing California charter schools with the highest need that serve the economically disadvantaged with facilities funding. This funding will allow those schools to not use classroom funds or staffing salary funding for facilities costs. (page e31)

If awarded, the intent is to begin to receive applications in the spring of 2025 with disbursements to begin that summer. Beginning in Year 2, the applicant plans to disburse [REDACTED] over three years for renovation, new builds, and lease/rent assistance. The remaining [REDACTED] is budgeted for salaries and fringe benefits over the four-year grant.

(page e32)

2)

As stated in the application, California's real estate is costly, and renovations/construction, although competitively bid, are high compared to other U.S. regions; therefore, the [REDACTED] ask is reasonable. (page e31) During the previous 15 years of funding, over 150,000 students were impacted, and this number is projected to increase during this grant cycle.

(page e33)

These facts justify the appropriate grant ask to serve the anticipated number of students.

3)

The Authority provides extensive documentation that the state will provide matching funds of \$ [REDACTED] during the first years of the grant. (page e35)

**Weaknesses:**

1. No weaknesses found.
2. No weaknesses found.
3. No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - State Experience**

**1. (e) State Experience (10 points).**

**(1) The experience of the State in addressing the facility needs of charter schools through various means, including providing per-pupil aid and access to State loan or bonding pools.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant details there are two state-level agencies providing major assistance to charter schools. They are the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California School Finance Authority (CSFA). The CSFA was initiated in 2002 and since then has been primarily focused on assisting charter schools to meet their facility and working capital needs. (page e36) Also, there are nine (9) programs which these two entities administer and distribute funds to charter schools. The level of expertise is extensive when it comes to managing federal programs. (pages e37 to e40)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority**

**1. (1) Competitive Preference Priority:**

**Applicants that have not previously received a grant under the program.**

**Strengths:**

This was not applicable to the applicant.

**Weaknesses:**

This was not applicable to the applicant.

**Reader's Score:**      **0**

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**Status:**               Submitted  
**Last Updated:**      08/30/2024 09:50 AM



Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 08/30/2024 10:21 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California School Finance Authority (S282D240004)  
Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need For Facility Funding		
1. Need For Facility Funding	30	21
Quality Of Plan		
1. Quality Of Plan	40	38
The Grant Project Team		
1. The Grant Project Team	10	9
The Budget		
1. The Budget	10	10
State Experience		
1. State Experience	10	10
Sub Total	100	88
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority		
1. CPP	10	0
Sub Total	10	0
Total	110	88

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFIG Panel - 1: 84.282D

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: California School Finance Authority (S282D240004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need For Facility Funding

#### 1. (a) Need For Facility Funding (30 points).

- (1) The need for per-pupil charter school facility funding in the State.
- (2) The extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.

#### Strengths:

- (1) The applicant notes that over the past 30 years, charter school enrollment has grown by 13% annually, currently serving 12% of students (p. e11), leading to a shortage of suitable facilities (p. e11). They state that the School Facilities Program (SFP), which allows local education agencies (LEAs) to apply for matching funds for facilities, is primarily financed through bond issuances. However, charter schools cannot access the tax and local bond funding that LEAs and counties can utilize (p. e17). The applicant emphasizes the need for additional funding by highlighting "up-front" funding requirements that necessitate loans that are difficult to secure (p. e17).
- (2) The applicant provides evidence that this proposal will meet the need to fund charter schools on a per-pupil basis. Table 1 (p. e52) shows the amounts set aside for per-pupil funds and the amount awarded per pupil. Table 2 (p. e466) demonstrates that ample funding for per-pupil charter facilities funding in the subgrants is set aside.

#### Weaknesses:

- (1) Although the applicant provides evidence of extensive charter school enrollment growth, they fail to demonstrate how this will require additional per-pupil facility funding sufficiently. There is no mention of demand, nor does the proposal illustrate an issue with supply. The applicant states that despite ample funding opportunities, the shortage of suitable facilities is a challenge (p. e11). The applicant does not adequately demonstrate how this funding will close the gap between LEA and charter school facility funding, such as providing specific amounts for each.
- (2) No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 21

### Selection Criteria - Quality Of Plan

#### 1. (b) Quality Of Plan (40 points).

- (1) The likelihood that the proposed grant project will result in the State either retaining a new per-pupil facilities aid program or continuing to enhance such a program without the total amount of assistance (State and Federal) declining over a five-year period.
- (2) The flexibility charter schools have in their use of facility funds for the various authorized purposes.

- (3) The quality of the plan for identifying charter schools and determining their eligibility to receive funds.
- (4) The per-pupil facilities aid formula's ability to target resources to charter schools with the greatest need and the highest proportions of students in poverty.
- (5) For projects that plan to reserve funds for evaluation, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for this purpose.
- (6) For projects that plan to reserve funds for technical assistance, dissemination, or personnel, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for these purposes.

**Strengths:**

- (1) The applicant states that the purpose of the grant is to continue its current funding program. The total amount of assistance is based on matching the Charter School Facility Program and SB740 funds, and this grant will allow that practice to continue (p. e19). Several current programs are listed (SB740, Proposition 39, and the L Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) (p. e19) that will continue to fund the charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.
- (2) The applicant provides evidence that charter schools have flexibility in using the funds (p. e20). Two types of awards are described for renting or purchasing.
- (3) The applicant begins its process by notifying all California charter schools of the upcoming funding, including the forms and instructions for applying and informing all charter school associations within the state (p. e21). This information is translated into several languages. Eligibility requirements, such as having a charter in place and being in good standing with the authorizer, attempt to limit applicants to high-quality charter schools (p. e23). Further requirements ensure a high likelihood of success. Authorizers must verify that the schools are in good standing (p. e22).
- (4) The applicant indicates that program regulations ensure that targeted schools have the greatest advantage in applying for funds (p. e24). Preferences based on the number of free and reduced-price meals and overcrowding assist schools with the greatest facility needs. Additional priorities include academic achievement, geographic location, and first-time applicants (p. e24).
- (5) The applicant sets aside funds each year for administrative costs. [REDACTED] of the funds are for evaluation (p. e24). The applicant details the amount of funding for evaluation (p. e466). The budget narrative describes a plan for evaluation expenses and assigns a per-pupil cost to this component (p. e463).
- (6) The applicant has set aside funds yearly for administrative costs—[REDACTED] of the funds. The applicant presents in detail the amount of funding set aside for technical assistance (p. e466).

**Weaknesses:**

- (1) No weakness found.
- (2) The applicant does not sufficiently describe the specific flexibility within each program, offering the two types of grants uses as evidence of flexibility.
- (3) No weakness found.
- (4) No weakness found.
- (5) No weakness found.
- (6) No weakness found.

**Reader's Score:**      38

**Selection Criteria - The Grant Project Team**

**1. (c) The Grant Project Team (10 points).**

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project manager and other members of the grant project team, including employees not paid with grant funds,

consultants, and subcontractors.

**(2) The adequacy and appropriateness of the applicant's staffing plan for the grant project.**

**Strengths:**

- (1) The applicant provides a clear picture of the program's management structure. The applicant has administered three SFIGs over the last 20 years (p. e26). The project director and the support staff are all experienced staff with strong backgrounds in education and finance. The proposal includes the consultants who will assist in the program implementation and their roles in the project (p. e27). A public finance advisor will be used to create financial models and credit analyses and advise on bond issuance (p. e28).
- (2) The applicant's experience administering the SFIG program demonstrates that it understands what is needed to carry out the required functions. The details provided appear to cover all elements of the project.

**Weaknesses:**

- (1) The applicant did not describe the program evaluation team or its members. The only evaluation mentioned is that of evaluating applications for subgrants (p. e24).
- (2) No weakness found.

**Reader's Score:** 9

**Selection Criteria - The Budget**

**1. (d) The Budget (10 points).**

- (1) The extent to which the requested grant amount and the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed grant project.**
- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students served and to the anticipated results and benefits.**
- (3) The extent to which the non-Federal share exceeds the minimum percentages (which are based on the percentages under section 4304(k)(2)(C) of the ESEA), particularly in the initial years of the program.**

**Strengths:**

- (1) The applicant describes the current situation as a "facilities crisis," a rationale for the reasonableness of the request (p. e31, e47). The proposal states that funds are requested to "revitalize" the applicant's prior SFIG programming and provide additional per-pupil funding that has not been available and can be used for construction, maintenance, and leasing (p. e31).
- (2) The applicant anticipates serving 36,248 students in the project, with per-pupil awards of [REDACTED] for rent or debt service and [REDACTED] for purchase, construction, or renovation. For SB740 awards (p. e 34), on average, awards would be [REDACTED] per pupil. These costs are similar to the state awards for SB740 ([REDACTED] per pupil), which indicates that the rationale for these amounts is reasonable (p. e34).
- (3) The applicant demonstrates that state funds are over [REDACTED] the amount of the federal funds. The applicant plans to use state facility funding from SB740, which spends \$[REDACTED] on facilities, with a portion going to charter schools (p. e35). Table 3 (p. e53) shows the federal and non-federal expenditures and shows a declining percentage of federal funds.

**Weaknesses:**

- (1) No weakness found.
- (2) No weakness found.
- (3) No weakness found

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - State Experience****1. (e) State Experience (10 points).**

**(1) The experience of the State in addressing the facility needs of charter schools through various means, including providing per-pupil aid and access to State loan or bonding pools.**

**Strengths:**

(1) The applicant, as part of the state education structure, is responsible for allocating grants and loans to schools in the state, including charter schools. The applicant provides audits that indicate sound practices. Since 2002, the CSFA has been focused on working with charter schools through the administration of SB740, the charter school revolving fund, and three iterations of the SFIG (p. e36). In addition, the applicant is responsible for administering other U.S. Department of Education (e.g., CSP grants) without any issues (p. e36). The applicant lists nine charter school programs it has administered to demonstrate its ability to implement the program (p. e37).

**Weaknesses:**

- (1) No weakness found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Priority Questions****Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority****1. (1) Competitive Preference Priority:**

**Applicants that have not previously received a grant under the program.**

**Strengths:**

(1) The applicant has administered three previous grants and made fifteen rounds of awards (p. e18).

**Weaknesses:**

(1) The applicant has administered three previous grants and made fifteen rounds of awards (p. e18).

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/30/2024 10:21 AM

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 09/03/2024 09:31 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California School Finance Authority (S282D240004)  
Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need For Facility Funding		
1. Need For Facility Funding	30	20
Quality Of Plan		
1. Quality Of Plan	40	36
The Grant Project Team		
1. The Grant Project Team	10	7
The Budget		
1. The Budget	10	10
State Experience		
1. State Experience	10	10
Sub Total	100	83
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority		
1. CPP	10	0
Sub Total	10	0
Total	110	83

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFIG Panel - 1: 84.282D

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: California School Finance Authority (S282D240004)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need For Facility Funding

#### 1. (a) Need For Facility Funding (30 points).

(1) The need for per-pupil charter school facility funding in the State.

(2) The extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.

#### Strengths:

1. The strength of the application addressing the criteria on the need for facility funding in the State is the detail it provides about the size and growth of the charter school sector in California. The rapid growth rate at 13% growth for the period of 1992 to 2024. This rate of growth outstrips the rate of growth in traditional public schools by 13 times. (e11) As of 2024, charter schools educate 12.2% of California's total student body, suggesting that there is an ongoing need for facilities funding in the state. (e11) Further evidence of the need the state of California has implement solutions for charter school facilities, including provision of access to grants, loans and other financing tools. (e11) The applicant further notes that at present most of these programs are, including options for funding from local school districts, have historically been "oversubscribed." (e18) In addition, California currently has a bond currently on the November ballot to provide per-pupil for charter school facilities. (e12). Finally, the applicant notes that charter schools do not have access to the same opportunities for funding as traditional public schools, e.g. developer fees, access to certain debt instrument without voter approval. (e17).

2. One of the strengths of the application addressing the criteria on the extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis is that over 5 years, California intends to make an extensive investment in charter school facilities, growing from approximately [REDACTED] in year 1 to [REDACTED] in year 5. (e54) This large investment of state dollars, in addition, to federal funds indicates a high likelihood that this program is likely to have an effect.

#### Weaknesses:

1) The applicant's response to criterion on the need for per-pupil charter school facility funding in the state is sub-par. Notwithstanding the application's presentation on growth of the charter sector in California, it did not provide information on the condition of charter school facilities within in the state. Specifically, the applicant has not identified the facilities age, state of repair or over level of overcrowding of charter schools in California. Without this information it is difficult to assess the scope of need for facilities funding in California. Alternatively, the applicant has not presented a reliable, valid study (or other secondary sources materials) on the conditional of charter schools facilities in California.

In addition, the applicant describes existing programs for charter schools facilities funding in California as "oversubscribed" without defining this term, or explaining the circumstances leading to the oversubscription of each program.

2) The extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis is unknown. From a financial perspective, it is challenging to fully assess the extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis criterion. The applicant has not identified how the proposal's plan will close or



partially close the charter school facilities funding gap on a per pupil basis. The proposal also has not identified, or reasonably approximated, the current funding gap. While the applicant identified the amount of fund it intends to contribute towards charter school facilities over five years, it has not provided a quantified statement of need.

**Reader's Score: 20**

### **Selection Criteria - Quality Of Plan**

#### **1. (b) Quality Of Plan (40 points).**

**(1) The likelihood that the proposed grant project will result in the State either retaining a new per-pupil facilities aid program or continuing to enhance such a program without the total amount of assistance (State and Federal) declining over a five-year period.**

**(2) The flexibility charter schools have in their use of facility funds for the various authorized purposes.**

**(3) The quality of the plan for identifying charter schools and determining their eligibility to receive funds.**

**(4) The per-pupil facilities aid formula's ability to target resources to charter schools with the greatest need and the highest proportions of students in poverty.**

**(5) For projects that plan to reserve funds for evaluation, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for this purpose.**

**(6) For projects that plan to reserve funds for technical assistance, dissemination, or personnel, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for these purposes.**

#### **Strengths:**

The applications response to the criteria on the quality of the plan is well-developed.

1) The application includes convincing evidence that there is substantial likelihood that the proposed grant project will result in the State continuing to enhance such a program without the total amount of assistance (State and Federal) declining over a five-year period. California's existing charter schools facilities funding formula, the longevity of that formula, and the information contained in tables 1 and 3 suffice to satisfy the criteria. (e19, e52, e53, & e54). It is clear that California intends to increase its investment in charter schools facilities from approximately [REDACTED] over 5 years.

2) Another strength is the applicant's plan for identifying charter schools and determining their eligibility to receive funds is well developed. It opens transparently with an open call for applications through sending notice of a funding opportunity to all charters in the state, a website posting with contact information, and series of webinars where eligibility criteria and the selection process are discussed. Applications are then reviewed. This plan is sufficient to identify charter schools and determine their eligibility to receive funds. (e21)

3) Another strength is applicant's plan for a per-pupil facilities aid formula that targets resources to charters with greatest need and the highest proportions of students in poverty is excellent. (e24) This points-based system is excellent. The higher value of points it attaches to students that qualify for free and reduce students, schools considered overcrowded, or schools serving communities with greatness needs is appropriate.

4) No strengths identified.

5) No strengths identified.

6) No strengths identified.

**Weaknesses:**

1. No weaknesses identified.

2. A weakness of this application is that it has not identified whether subgrantees will have the flexibility to use funds for administrative costs or leasehold improvements. (e20)

3. No weaknesses identified.

4. No weaknesses identified.

5. The application identifies [REDACTED] for evaluation but has not identified a plan for the use for of these funds with any sufficient degree of detail. Specifically, there is no discussion of an evaluative question, objectives, targets, methods, or activities. (e466)

6. The application identifies [REDACTED] for technical assistance but presents no identifiable plan for implementation of these activities.

**Reader's Score: 36**

**Selection Criteria - The Grant Project Team**

**1. (c) The Grant Project Team (10 points).**

**(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project manager and other members of the grant project team, including employees not paid with grant funds, consultants, and subcontractors.**

**(2) The adequacy and appropriateness of the applicant's staffing plan for the grant project.**

**Strengths:**

1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project manager and other members of the grant project team, including employees not paid with grant funds, consultants, and subcontractors are sufficient to lead this project to success. (e25)

2) No Strengths identified.

**Weaknesses:**

1) No weaknesses identified.

2) The adequacy applicant's staffing plan for the grant project is unclear since it does not appear to match the plan as described in the budget narrative. (e25 & e464). The narrative describes a named project director, named assistant program director, two named staff services managers 1, a staff services analyst and an associate government program analyst. The budget narrative omits the first four roles and replaces them with 2 FTE staff services analysts and 1 FTE associate governmental program analyst in project years one, two and three, and other part time roles. Because of these discrepancies it is hard to determine with precision whether or not the time commitments of the named individuals on page e25 and following are adequate to allow them meaningfully to participate in this project.

It is not clear that it is appropriate to hire two financial advising firms. Additionally, it is unclear how hiring two financial advising firms will contribute to the success of the project. (e27).

**Reader's Score: 7**

#### **Selection Criteria - The Budget**

##### **1. (d) The Budget (10 points).**

**(1) The extent to which the requested grant amount and the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed grant project.**

**(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students served and to the anticipated results and benefits.**

**(3) The extent to which the non-Federal share exceeds the minimum percentages (which are based on the percentages under section 4304(k)(2)(C) of the ESEA), particularly in the initial years of the program.**

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant's budget plan is well-developed.

1) The extent to which the requested grant amount and the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed grant project is high. The applicant's proposal is an ambitious program at [REDACTED] over 5 years. It is proposed in a high-cost jurisdiction and these costs are in line with similar existing programs in California.

2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students served and to the anticipated results and benefits is high. These funds are anticipated to benefit 66 charter school students in California. (e34) Currently 12.2% of California students attend a charter school. (e11).

3) The extent to which the non-Federal share exceeds the minimum percentages (which are based on the percentages under section 4304(k)(2)(C) of the ESEA), particularly in the initial years of the program is high. California's proposed grant amount is well below the percentage guidelines set forth in the applicable regulations. (e34)

#### **Weaknesses:**

1) No weakness identified.

2) No weakness identified.

3) No weakness identified.

**Reader's Score: 10**

#### **Selection Criteria - State Experience**

##### **1. (e) State Experience (10 points).**

**(1) The experience of the State in addressing the facility needs of charter schools through**

various means, including providing per-pupil aid and access to State loan or bonding pools.

**Strengths:**

The applicant's experience in addressing the facility needs of charter schools through various means, including providing per-pupil aid and access to state loan or bonding pools is excellent. California has implemented previously numerous programs and generously funded charter school facilities through previous grant and Credit Enhancement programs or providing access to debt instruments. (e37) Specifically, California has previously administered the State Charter School (UDOE ) that uses a 110 point matrix to target schools with large free and reduced price lunch populations, overcrowding and administered by non-profits. (e38)

For debt instruments, the Charter School Facilities Program provides charters with a 50/50 grant/long term loan and Charter School Revolving Loan Fund Program provides [REDACTED] to new charter schools. For bonds, the California Charter School Finance Authority's Conduit Finance Program enables it to issue bonds (which has done successfully for over 150 schools). (e39)

California's standout strength is its Credit Enhancement programs. Judging by the success of its issuances, relative to the amount leveraged, California has seen tremendous success with the previous Credit Enhancement programs. Considering that Charter Access to Bank Loan Enhancement Program leveraged [REDACTED], Project Acceleration Notes and Credit Enhancement Alternatives Program leveraged [REDACTED] in bond financing and Charter Finance Enhancement Program leveraged [REDACTED]. (e39)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses identified.

**Reader's Score:** 10

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority**

**1. (1) Competitive Preference Priority:**

**Applicants that have not previously received a grant under the program.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has administered previous SFIG grants.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has administered previous SFIG grants.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/03/2024 09:31 AM

