

Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools Program (CSP)  
Grants to State Entities  
(CFDA Number: 84.282A)  
Project Abstract  
U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation & Improvement  
Charter Schools Program

**State:**

Minnesota

**PR Award Number:**

U282A170007

**Duration (Years):**

5 Years

**Year 1 Funding:**

\$12,251,279.00

**Total Expected Funding:**

\$45,757,406.00

**Total Estimate of charter school support over lifetime:**

55 new, replication, or expansion charter schools

**Minnesota Department of Education:**

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## Minnesota Department of Education

Charter schools have flourished in Minnesota since passage of the nation's first charter school law in 1991. Minnesota consistently receives high marks in national rankings of state charter school laws because of the extensive autonomy charter schools enjoy, as evidenced by their freedom to innovate, high degree of control over their own budget and expenditures, and equitable state funding and facility lease aid. The number of charter schools continues to grow steadily and with growth comes educational programs that address the needs of students with the greatest challenges to success in school. The 2016-2017 school year saw a record high of 166 charter LEAs in Minnesota, serving 54,192 students (6.2% of Minnesota's total K-12 public school enrollment). The educational focus is diverse and includes STEM, arts, project-based learning, language immersion, cultural competency, classical education, environmental, and internship-based schools and more.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), a state entity in a state with a statute (Minnesota Statutes 124E) specifically authorizing the establishment of charter schools and an eligible applicant, received and is managing a 2012 CSP grant. Charter Center staff provide support, resources, and technical assistance that has encouraged and supported growth and quality in the charter sector. The MDE Charter Center team looks forward to continuing its leadership in the charter school community under a new five year CSP project. To meet today's needs, the CSP project will support the following four ambitious, yet attainable objectives:

**Objective #1:** Increase the number of high-quality charter schools that serve disadvantaged students and the overall number of students served by charter schools in Minnesota.

**Objective #2:** Support charter schools in achieving the goals of Minnesota's World's Best Workforce legislation.

**Objective #3:** Increase the quality of Minnesota charter schools through authorizer training and evaluation.

**Objective #4:** Increase the sustainability of Minnesota charter schools.

These objectives reflect MDE's interest in growing the number of charter schools and authorizers while also making significant strides in sustainability and increasing quality. They are in response to challenges in the areas of financial management, governance, school safety, and special education that have emerged in the last several years for charter school boards and directors. Minnesota has a vibrant and highly engaged charter school community, many of whom contributed to shaping this project and its objectives. Stakeholders are very supportive of its implementation and the continuation of our collaborative work, growth, and progress in Minnesota. This project also includes all eight competitive preference priorities.