



**U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Charter Schools Program  
Recording Transcript – May 2024  
FY 2024 State Entity Using Technical Assistance Set-Aside Funds on High-Impact TA Activity  
Pre-Application Webinar**

Welcome to today's Charter Schools Program, State Entity Pre-Application webinar, Using Technical Assistance Set-Aside Funds on High-Impact TA Activity. This webinar is being recorded and will be posted along with the slides on the SE competition website after today's presentation.

As we prepare to dive into the content of today's webinar, it's important to first ground ourselves in a common understanding of what we mean by high-impact technical assistance. In the context of the CSP SE grant program, we characterize high-impact technical assistance, or TA, as the following, "Purposeful, targeted, ongoing, and robust support to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies to assist them in carrying out CSP SE program activities and improving authorizer quality." Section 4310.6 of the ESEA defines eligible applicants as "Developers that have (a) applied to an authorized public chartering authority to operate a charter school and (b) provided adequate and timely notice to that authority." High-impact TA should meet the needs of these stakeholders to build their capacity so that they may establish equitable schools and strengthen the charter sector in their state.

This type of TA typically results in observable impact and measurable changes in the state's charter school sector across various metrics. This is not drive-by TA work, so to speak, and requires meaningful collaboration among the state entity grantee and key charter sector stakeholders. The hope is that ultimately high-impact TA leads to increased opportunities and outcomes for traditionally underserved students and improved performance management and evaluation of charter schools. Our hope for today's webinar is that prospective CSP SE grant applicants will gain insight into the seven percent technical assistance set-aside funding in the CSP SE grant program, and how to incorporate a high-impact proposal for use of those funds in their grant applications.

So, here's our agenda for today's webinar. We'll start with the purposes of the CSP grant program, the importance of high-impact technical assistance, move to some examples of high-impact TA activities, and then finally discuss how you might incorporate high-impact TA activities into a grant application for the SE program.

So, I'd like to begin with a brief overview of the purposes of the CSP SE grant program and the set-aside funds in particular. The CSP statute identifies seven main purposes of the CSP related to the SE grant program. For the purposes of today's webinar, I'm not going to discuss each purpose in detail, but we'll say that generally the CSP provides federal financial assistance for the planning, program design, initial implementation, replication, or expansion of high-quality charter schools. To include assistance with charter school facilities financing, sharing information about promising practices, and investing in national initiatives that support the charter sector.

Per the statute, at least 90 percent of grant funds in the CSP SE grant program must be used to provide subgrants. At least seven percent of grant funds must be reserved for technical assistance to eligible applicants and charter school authorizers. And up to three percent of grant funds may be reserved for administrative costs, which may include technical assistance. This at least seven percent of funds used for TA is the focus of this webinar. We want to think about how to maximize those funds on high-impact activities, keeping in mind the characteristics I named earlier that can lead to lasting change in your charter sector.

So, let's get to the "why" behind this webinar—the importance of high-impact TA. As noted in the purposes of the CSP, value is placed on having strong charter school authorizing practices. A key function of the CSP SE grant is to provide technical assistance to authorized public chartering agencies and work with authorized public chartering agencies in the state to improve authorizing quality, including developing capacity for and conducting fiscal oversight and auditing of charter schools. As we discuss authorized public chartering agencies, the statute defines them as "State educational agency, local educational agency, or other public entity that has the authority pursuant to state law and approved by the Secretary of Education to authorize or approve a charter school." And under the department's regulations at 34 C.F.R. 77.1, "The term public as applied to an agency, organization, or institution means that the agency or organization or institution is under the administrative supervision or control of a government other than the federal government."

The importance of quality authorizing is further emphasized in the absolute priority for the FY 2024 SE competition, which all applicants must address. That priority is best practices for charter school authorizers. And to meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the state entity has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing. Additionally, the CSP issued a report in May 2023 looking at how SE grantees are using their TA funds. That report found that all grantees in the study were using TA set-aside funds for TA to subgrantees, and all but one were using TA for support to quality authorizing. However, the amount of those set-aside funds going toward quality authorizing was not equal. Only about 2.5 percent of funds were used to support quality authorizing of the seven percent.

Digging into this report a little more, 22 grantees of the 27 studied reported contracting or planning to contract with national organizations to support quality authorizing practices. Contractor activities included developing resources based on authorizer best practices, providing trainings for authorizers, and offering support directly to authorizers. So, what are the takeaways from that report? Well first, we see that CSP SE grantees are doing great work providing TA to eligible applicants. Collaboration between charter school authorizers and SE grantees is crucial to achieving the goals of the grant program. We also found that there's room to improve on how CSP SE grantees use the TA set-aside funds to strengthen charter authorizing in their state. And the department is excited about CSP grant proposals that seek to implement high-impact TA activities, particularly around charter school authorizing.

With all of this in mind, let's take a look at some examples of high-impact TA activities. So, the first example I want to share today is one that we've seen where high-impact TA was used to support charter authorizing in developing or strengthening charter school performance frameworks. We've seen SE grantees working with national charter school experts, similar to what you saw we found in our study, to support the development of the performance frameworks, incorporating best practices from around the country. The most successful projects have engaged the charter community, conducting focus groups or needs assessments to zero in on how to get the most out of the performance frameworks.

Another high-impact TA activity example is the Charter School Authorizer Incubator Program. An SE grantee created a charter authorizer leadership academy to support LEA or district authorizers in the state. The grantee describes it as follows. “The Leadership Academy is a comprehensive program for district leaders who are currently or aspiring to use authorizing practices to improve the number of high-quality, best fit school options in their district.” To do this work, they used a cohort model, training participants to lead change in their districts and implement effective authorizing practices. So, these are just a couple of examples we’ve seen to share with you, to get the juices flowing as you think about how you might want to move forward with proposing high-impact TA for your project. With that, I’ll transition to my colleague, Sam.

Thank you, Sareeta. As you consider the two examples we just shared, you may start to think about what might make sense in your state’s charter school context. So next, we will discuss some ideas on how you might incorporate your ideas into an SE grant application. As you consider planning a high-impact TA proposal for the SE grant application, I want to again highlight a part of the definition of high-impact that we shared at the outset. High-impact technical assistance is characterized by purposeful, targeted, and ongoing support for charter school developers, charter school leaders, and authorized public chartering agencies. Some questions you might ask with your organization as you begin planning for high-impact TA activities fall into four categories. They are engaging stakeholders and assessing needs, creating a grant objective, budgeting for charter authorizer TA, and developing specific high-impact TA activities. With this in mind, we suggest you think about ways to engage stakeholders and assess needs in your charter school sector so you can develop a purposeful and targeted TA proposal that meets the needs of those stakeholders.

Building relationships with charter authorizers and SEAs as well as assessing the needs in the charter sector will best position your organization to develop an impactful TA proposal. Additionally, you may consider a grant objective aligned to your proposal. No doubt you will have many goals for your SE grant project. Including a grant objective specifically aligned to strengthening charter school authorizing in state is a great way to make high-impact TA in this area a priority of your grant project. You may also consider developing specific performance measures aligned to proposed TA activities for charter school authorizers in the state.

So, we’ll now turn our attention to addressing some budget implications. With the mention of budgets, I’d like to take a moment to quickly plug the CSP SE’s Pre-Application Budget webinar, where you will find lots of helpful information and details about developing a budget proposal. The webinar will take place this Monday on May 13 at 2 p.m. Eastern, and a recording will be uploaded to our FY 2024 SE competition website.

So, back to the budget. As you carefully plan your budget proposal, you should work to gain a solid grasp on the funds you will have available to implement the high impact TA activity or activities. This is an important consideration during your planning for high-impact TA, as well as all aspects of your grant project proposal. How you decide to split the seven percent TA set-aside between TA to subgrantees and TA to support charter authorizing would likely be based on the level of need identified. When you sit down to develop your TA activities, refer to what you learned about authorizing needs from engaging with stakeholders. As we’ve discussed throughout this webinar, high-impact TA to charter authorizers is connected to the FY SE competition’s absolute priority and presents an opportunity to build your response to the absolute priority as well as components of the selection criteria and application requirements. With all of the elements we have reviewed today in mind, you should develop specific high-impact TA that you believe will result in observable and measurable changes in the state’s charter sector.

Should all TA be related to the absolute priority? So no, not necessarily at all. So, the absolute priority specifically speaks to best practices in charter authorizing. However, as we noted in the statute under this program, TA, the seven percent set-aside is for both TA for authorizers as well as for eligible applicants. And so, you have to decide what makes the most sense. We wanted to specifically focus on authorizer TA because based on that report, we found that folks were not using it 50/50, and they don't necessarily need to, but we just saw that there was perhaps a need there to think about activities relating to authorizer TA that we wanted to highlight because we think that that might be an area where folks need some more ideas and are thinking through how they could do this. And so, we wanted to highlight some examples of that to really start shifting, making that change that I know so many of you are hoping to achieve with this program.

I see a question. So, "Is this only available for oversight agencies?" I'm not entirely sure, if you could elaborate a little bit more on what you mean. But, if you're speaking to "who is eligible for the SE grant," so I'm not quite sure what you mean by oversight agencies, but the SE grant is open to four kinds of different categories of eligibility. So, you have governors of a state, charter support organizations, statewide public charter school boards, as well as SEAs. So those are the entities that are eligible for SE grants and may then propose projects to do this technical assistance support we're describing in this webinar today. But, if I'm misunderstanding your question, please do feel free to clarify and add additional information.

I see a question here around an example for sole authorizer state that's not an LEA. So, the first example that we shared, so this is an example that would work, I think, in depending on different charter landscapes in your particular state. So, if you were a sole authorizer state, supporting charter school frameworks is something that we have seen in sole authorizer states or states that are not just LEA authorizers. So, this I think, works in any kind of setting. The incubator program would be more geared toward states that have those LEA authorizers or many different types of authorizers in the state. But here, this is I think, a good example of one that works in a sole authorizer context.

All right. So, I think that will wrap it up for us here in terms of questions. Unless there are any additional ones, I'll pass it back to you, Sam.

Thank you so much, Sareeta. So, please keep in mind just a couple of reminders. You must register at SAM.gov to obtain a unique entity identifier, UEI. And then the deadline to submit an application to Grants.gov is 11:59 p.m. on June 13, 2024. And that is Eastern time.

Thank you for attending today's webinar. Please reach out with any follow-up questions to the CSP SE at our competition email [se\\_competition@ed.gov](mailto:se_competition@ed.gov).