



**U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Charter Schools Program  
Recording Transcript – May 2024  
FY 2024 CSP State Entity Grant Competition Pre-Application Webinar**

Good afternoon and welcome to the Pre-Award Technical Assistance webinar for the FY 2024 State Entity Grant competition. My name is Anna Hinton and I am the Director of the Charter Schools Program at the U.S. Department of Education. Today's webinar is the first in a series of five pre-award technical assistance offerings provided by the department's charter schools program office, and we are pleased that you could join us and we are ready to get started.

As you can see, we have a lengthy agenda for our pre-application webinar today. We plan to provide an overview of the state entity program, its purpose, and eligibility requirements as well as touch on and talk about the other program requirements. We will also review various components of the NIA [Notice Inviting Applications], discuss how to pull together a high-quality grant application, and review instructions for the submission of your grant application.

Before we get started, I would also like to note that in the program's FY 2024 appropriations, Congress provided guidance to the department and awarded CSP funds this year. One provision in particular is related to subgrantee access to high-quality technical assistance and support. We'll talk a little bit more about that on this webinar. And then, another provision provided increased flexibility for the department to effectively respond to the changing needs of the sector and the likelihood that federal funds will be invested in high-quality charter schools prepared to serve all students effectively. To meet this provision, I just wanted to clarify that although all CSP notices include an estimate for the funds available—so, in the case of state entity, I believe we estimated in the NIA that we have roughly \$46 million available—I just want to note that this is just an estimate. The provision that Congress offered the department in the FY 2024 appropriations now allows the department to move funds across programs as needed to ensure that we fund as many high-scoring applications as possible as we do have funds available, as funds would allow us to do so.

So, if we receive more high-scoring apps than estimated in the NIA for the state entity program as well as other programs, we will fund those applications as long as we have funding available to do so. Finally, throughout this webinar, we will pause for Q&A. I do want to note that we cannot guarantee that we will be able to answer every question submitted. Some questions may require us to consult with our office of general counsel and other questions just may be questions that we can't answer given the nature of the question in that it may require us to comment on a particular approach or aspect of a proposal and those are not questions that we can answer. So, this is our agenda for today.

Before we get started, I do want to take the opportunity to introduce today's presenters and the state entity's team. So, joining me as presenters today are Sareeta Schmitt, a special assistant to CSP leadership, as well as members of the state entities team—program officers, Jill Gaitens, Nora Kern, and Samantha Lyons will be joining me. Currently, I am the acting SE team supervisor, so I will also be participating in

leading our Q&A. But I would also like to introduce a new member of the SE team, Nicoisa Jones. She's a new supervisor. Although she's new to SE, she is not new to the Charter Schools Program. We will share all emails for program contacts throughout this webinar, so no worries there if you did not catch names. I will now turn it over to Jill to get us started with today's webinar. Thank you all for joining us.

This pre-application webinar is part of a series of webinars that will be provided by the CSP staff to support applicants. While most of the webinars in this series will be live with opportunities for questions, three of the webinars will be pre-recorded. On May 9, a live webinar on organizational readiness will be provided. While all applicants are encouraged to attend, this webinar will be of high interest for novice applicants who have never been approved for an SE project. On May 10, a high-impact TA webinar will be offered. This webinar will be focused on how applicants may use the required set-aside funding of at least seven percent of their grant project on high-impact TA. On May 13, a live webinar with budget guidance will be offered. A second pre-recorded budget webinar will also be posted on the competition website. Two additional recorded webinars on logic models and performance measures, and a needs analysis will also be available on the competition website. You will see disclaimers throughout the slide deck reminding interested applicants to be sure to read the entire NIA and the federal register and all competition-related resources on the Department of Education's state entity competition website. This is where you will find the NIA as well as the application package for the competition, which contains detailed instructions and guidance for submitting an application. Applicants should not rely solely on this webinar for information and guidance.

Before we jump into a detailed discussion about the state entity grant competition, we would like to provide some background on the overall purpose of the Charter Schools Program. The CSP statute identifies seven main purposes of the CSP. In the interest of time, I'm not going to discuss each purpose in detail, but I will say that generally, the CSP expands opportunities for all students, particularly traditionally underserved students, to attend charter schools and meet challenging academic standards; provides financial assistance for planning, program design, initial implementation, replication, or expansion of high-quality charter schools; increases the number of high-quality charter schools available; evaluates the impact of charter schools on student achievement, families, and communities; shares best practices between charter schools and other public schools; encourages states to provide facility support to charter schools; and supports efforts to strengthen the charter authorizing process.

The CSP consists of six key grant competitions, each of which supports activities important to the success of charter schools. Note: our ability to run competitions in each program annually depends on a number of factors including the availability of funds. The first reason you're here today—grants to state entities—make up the largest CSP grant competition. These grants can be awarded to state educational agencies or SEAs, governors, state charter school boards, or state charter school support organizations or CSSOs, which in turn award subgrants for planning an initial operation of new charter schools. Second, grants for replication and expansion of high-quality charter schools or CMO grants are awarded to not-for-profit charter management organizations that have shown evidence of success to help them open new schools or expand existing schools to serve more students. Third, grants for developers under this program in states where there isn't an active state entity grant, individual schools and developers may apply directly to the department for funds to support opening new charter schools or to replicate or expand a high-quality school.

Under national dissemination grants, the key purpose of these grants is to increase quality through the sector by disseminating best practices related to charter school operations and management. Facilities financing assistance includes credit enhancement for charter schools facility programs, which provides support for charter schools to acquire and renovate facilities. And finally, the state charter school facilities incentive grant, which provides matching funds for states that provide funding for charter school facilities

on a per-pupil basis. For the fiscal year 2024 CSP SE competition, the department anticipates that \$46 million will be available. The range of awards is estimated to be between two and 20 million dollars per year. The estimated annual size of awards is \$8 million. We expect to make between four and six awards. The application project period proposed should not exceed five years. If a proposed budget exceeds five years, the department will remove funding for all of the costs and activities that exceed the fifth-year project budget limit. In applicant budgets, the maximum amount for subgrantee award is also limited to five years and the maximum award is \$2 million.

The deadline for application submission is June 13, 2024. However, we encourage you to submit earlier than the deadline. You may resubmit your application if needed prior to the deadline if updates are needed. Although we fully address organizational readiness in a subsequent webinar on May 9, I do want to introduce you to this concept as we believe it is critical to the success of state entity grants. As a reminder, five additional webinars will be offered to assist you with your applications. As you attend this and other additional webinars, consider the capacity of your organization to implement, manage, and meet all application requirements; your current organizational and financial infrastructures, systems, policies, and processes appropriate to the grants' management for the effort level of the project you propose; how you will establish and meet measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound SMART grant goals; your organization's ability to build relationships with key stakeholders throughout the state, including authorizers; and the degree to which the number and type of subgrants you propose meets the needs of the charter community in your state. If your application relies on the use of contractors to provide activities required or proposed under this grant, please also consider your capacity to provide oversight of all activities and deliverables.

I'll now give an overview of the SE grant program starting with the purpose of grants to state entities. The SE grants are awarded to eligible state entities to support the opening, expansion, and replication of charter schools in the state as well as to provide technical assistance to potential applicants and charter school authorizers in the state. State entities with a state statute specifically authorizing the establishment of charter schools are eligible to apply for the CSP state grant program. Under Section 4303 (e)(1) of ESSA, no state entity may receive a grant under this program for use in a state in which a state entity is currently using a grant received under the program. Entities that can receive a grant include a state educational agency, a state charter school board, a governor of a state, or a state charter school support organization. Note that no applicant may receive a new award to conduct the same activities that are approved under an existing active grant.

Under Section 4303 (e)(1) of ESSA, no state entity may receive a grant under this competition for use in a state in which a state entity is currently using a CSP state entity grant. Under 34 CFR 75.261, a grantee may extend the project period of an award one time for up to 12 months without the prior approval of the department if the grantee meets the requirements for an extension in [Part] 2 CFR 200.308 (d)(2) and department statutes, its regulations, and the terms of the award do not permit such an extension. Please see also [Part] 2 CFR 200.308 (e)(2). State entities in a state in which a state entity has a current CSP grant that is not in its final budget period or is in its final budget, but the grantee plans to request a no-cost extension in accordance with 34 CFR 75.261 and [Part] 2 CFR 200.308 (e)(2) are ineligible to apply for a CSP state entity grant under this competition. Ineligible states are Alabama, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

State entities in states where a state entity has a current CSP state entity grant that is currently operating under a no-cost extension expiring September 30, 2024, or that is not operating under a no-cost extension but is in its final budget period and has notified the department that it does not intend to request a no-

cost extension are eligible to apply for a CSP state entity grant under this competition. These states are Arizona, Arkansas, New York, Michigan, Delaware, Colorado, North Carolina, and New Mexico. As stated earlier, state entities with a state statute specifically authorizing the establishment of charter schools that do not have a current CSP grant in their final budget year or operating under an NCE are eligible to apply for a CSP SE grant program. If multiple state entities in a state submit applications that receive high enough scores to be recommended for funding under this competition, only the highest-scoring applicants among such state entities will be funded. Are there any questions on SE grant eligibility or subgrant eligibility? We'll give you a minute to type them in into the Q&A and we'll review the questions so that we may provide our responses.

Hi, this is Anna Hinton. I will get us started with providing some answers to the questions we've received so far. We did receive a couple of questions from the first session. The first portion of our presentation, that is. The first question is the \$46 million just for FY 2025? And, yes, it is. And again, it's just an estimate. The CSP appropriation is an annual appropriation, so all of the funds that we have received this year from Congress must be obligated by the end of September.

We also received a question about single site charter school. "We are a single site charter school, which funding opportunity if any would apply to us?" I do want to clarify that this particular webinar is about the state entity grant program where we do not provide funding directly to charter schools or a single site charter school. The charter school program for which you may be eligible might be the developer grant program. Depending on the state that you are located in, the developer grant program provides funding directly to independent charter schools, so I would encourage you to check our website for upcoming pre-award technical assistance webinars for developers.

We also received a question about the federal process for allocating more CSP funds. "Can you clarify the process if more award funds are deemed necessary by the review teams? Is it a simple approval or does it require multiple approvals by agencies?" I would say that nothing is ever simple in the department, but it definitely is not a complicated process. Again, Congress has given us flexibility in appropriations language, so there isn't a process where we need to go through layers of approval. It really all just depends on the rank order, the scoring of the applications, and comparing and looking across multiple programs within the CSP. But I do not anticipate that that will slow down our processes at all.

"May a state receive both a state entity and a developer grant award from different applicants?" So, it is possible for a subgrantee, a state entity subgrantee to have received both a SE subgrant and then also a developer grant or a CMO grant. It depends on the proposed activities. So obviously, we cannot fund the same activities under multiple grant programs, but it really depends on the activities that are being proposed. So as long as we are not funding the same activities under multiple programs, it is possible for a developer grantee to also receive SE subgrant funds.

Thank you, and I will now transition to my colleague, Sareeta.

Thank you. We will now discuss the various components of your application. The application and all supporting materials for the CSP SE grant can be found at this link in Grants.gov (the link on the slide). Your grant must be submitted through Grants.gov. The application package and supporting materials can also be found on the CSP website. A tip: a webinar is available on developing a federal grant application on the department's website at the link or QR code noted on this slide. You are encouraged to review all available training offered by the department as you consider your SE application submission.

The application has three components. Component one includes all required forms including the ED standard forms, form 524, and both the assurances and certifications. Component two includes your

abstract and both the budget and project narratives. Component three includes attachments and appendices. Please keep in mind that links to outside websites provided in your application will not be reviewed. Also, it's helpful to provide a detailed table of contents. Your application will not be considered complete without both the standard forms listed on this slide and the required assurances and certifications. Additionally, please note that the General Education Provisions Act, GEPA, Section 427 form has been updated from previous years.

Pictured on this slide is the SF 424. In box one, you will select "application." In box two, you will select "new." Please use the legal name of your organization rather than a project or partnership title. The organization name provided must match the tax identification number and address for your organization. The address for your organization should be the official address. In box 8C of the SF 424, you will need your organization's unique entity identifier or UEI. The UEI is now the primary means of identifying entities registered for federal award, government-wide, in the system for award management or SAM. If your entity is already registered in SAM, it has been assigned a UEI. While the UEI is assigned by and viewable within SAM, Grants.gov users can also find it listed under their organization profile in Grants.gov.

For 16A and B, provide your Congressional district, enter the district the applicant organization is located in and the district in which activities will occur. For 17A and B, list the proposed project start and end dates. The start date will be October 1, 2024. This grant can be for up to five years, so the end date should reflect how many years are requested not to exceed five years. For 18, provide estimated funding, this should only reflect the first year of the project. For 19, this program is subject to executive order 12372. Executive order 12372, intergovernmental review of federal programs, was issued with the desire to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on state and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed federal financial assistance and direct federal development.

The budget summary or Section A of the ED 524 form is a required form you must submit with your application. This form must be completed for all years in which funds are requested. An important reminder, the funds requested in this form should match the detailed budget narrative required in another segment of the application. A few things to note: most of the funds you are requesting will land in the "other" category of this form since all subgrant costs should be included in the other category. As we'll discuss a little later in this webinar, subgrants should be at least 90 percent of the funds you request. All costs that are not subgrants will either be part of the at least seven percent technical assistance or the up to three percent administrative costs. Again, we'll speak about this a little bit more later in this webinar.

If you have an approved indirect cost rate, provide the details in the budget narrative as well as at the bottom of this form. Make sure to include your agreement. As a reminder, this is not a construction grant and construction is not an allowable cost. Although you see a line item for construction on this form, you must leave it blank or at \$0. Section B of this form should only be completed if you are making a matching commitment, but that is not a requirement of this grant program. We encourage you to visit the SE competition website to find additional resources to support you as you develop your proposal. This includes a separate pre-recorded webinar, Developing Your Grant Project Budget Part Two, where we go into further detail on each of these cost categories.

As mentioned on the last slide, if you have an approved indirect cost rate, provide the details in the budget narrative as well as in the bottom of this form. Make sure to include your agreement in your application package as an attachment. The indirect cost will be calculated as part of the administrative three percent maximum. A training is available at the link and QR code provided on this slide to both indirect and direct costs. As a reminder, construction is not an allowable cost. Subgrant costs should be placed in the other category. All costs that are not subgrants should be clearly identified as either administrative or technical assistance. And Section B of the ED 524 form should only be completed if you're making a matching fund

commitment. Please be aware that matching funds are not required as I stated, but if you do choose to include them, you will be reporting on them for the life of your project if you are approved.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act or GEPA requires an applicant for federal funds to include a description of the steps they will take to ensure equitable access to and participation in the grant project. The GEPA requirements have been updated and you will need to budget time in the application process to address the new requirements. Section 427 of GEPA requires an applicant for federal funds to include a description of the steps they will take to ensure equitable access to and participation in the grant project by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries. You must describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to and equitable participation in the proposed project or activity. Based on your proposed activity or project, you will identify barriers that may impede equitable access to and participation of students, educators, and other beneficiaries. Based on the barriers identified, you will include the steps you will take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the project activity. And, you must provide a timeline including targeted milestones for addressing these identified barriers. References to your GEPA statement may be made throughout your application and referenced in your GEPA statement. A training is available from the department and the link to that training is provided on this slide.

I'll now discuss the application narrative. There are three distinct components to the application narrative: the abstract narrative, the budget narrative, and the project narrative. The project narrative is where applicants discuss the competitive preference priorities, which are optional, the selection criteria, and the application requirements. On the next few slides, I will go into detail on what should be addressed in each component. First up is the abstract narrative. This should provide an overview of the proposed grant project. It should include basic information like the official name and address of the organization; the name, phone number, and email address of the contact person for the project; and the project title. Additionally, the abstract narrative should provide information on the goals, expected outcomes, and contributions for research policy, practice, etc. of the proposed grant project. This abstract should not exceed one page and should use language that can be clearly understood by a range of audiences.

I'm going to spend a little time here on the budget narrative section. So, the budget narrative is where applicants lay out and provide a clear justification for the funds they are requesting. Your budget narrative should be aligned to the ED 524 budget worksheet. It should also provide an itemized breakdown of all budget items by project year for each budget category in Section A of the ED 524 form. We have included on this slide some budget resources to support applicants in developing their budgets. There is a link to 2 CFR Part 200, the Uniform Guidance and cost principles, key sections of the NIA that relate to funding restrictions, and the uses of funds under this program are also noted.

Additionally, CSP has two separate pre-application webinars that are dedicated to developing budgets. The Developing the Grant Budget Part One is a live webinar that will be held on Monday, May 13, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern. And the Developing Your Grant Project Budget Part Two is a pre-recorded webinar that will be available on our CSP SE competition webpage. I also want to reiterate that CSP SE grants are for projects up to five years. The ED 524 form and its accompanying budget narrative should not include proposals that exceed five years. For more technical assistance on understanding and developing your CSP grant budget, please join us for our two-part pre-application budget webinars where we will recap this TA at the end of our presentation.

Applicants must ensure that all costs included in the proposed budgets are reasonable and necessary in light of the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Any cost determined to be unreasonable or unnecessary will be removed from the final budget. The budget should include only costs that are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary. In the budget narrative attachment, provide an itemized

budget narrative by project year for each budget category in addition to a justification for the costs involved. There are some important funding restrictions to be aware of as you prepare your application. First, this is a pass-through grant program. CSP SE grantees must award subgrants to eligible applicants to enable eligible applicants to open and prepare for the operation of new charter schools, open and prepare for the operation of replicated high-quality charter schools, or expand high-quality charter schools. Second, grant projects must provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies in carrying out the activities I just noted, as well as work with authorized public chartering agencies in the state to improve authorizing quality. This includes developing capacity for and conducting fiscal oversight and auditing of charter schools. Will host a live webinar using technical assistance set-aside funds on high-impact activities on Friday, May 10, at 2:00 p.m. You can find details of this and register for the webinar on our SE competition webpage.

In addition to what I've noted on the previous slide, a state entity receiving a grant under this program must use no less than 90 percent of grant funds to award subgrants to eligible applicants for activities related to opening and preparing for the operation of new charter schools or to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools. They must reserve not less than \_\_\_\_\_ percent of funds to provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies. And lastly, reserve not more than \_\_\_\_\_ percent of funds for administrative costs. A state entity may use a grant received under this program to carry out technical assistance activities authorized under this program directly through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements. Any grants for technical assistance will be part of the technical assistance funds.

Let's take a closer look at these funding set-asides. No more than \_\_\_\_\_ percent of your funds can be used for administrative costs. This may include SE personnel costs as well as costs related to subgrantee monitoring, peer review of subgrant applications, attending the required annual CSP project directors meeting, required technical assistance events, or reviewing reports. All indirect costs will fall under administrative costs as well and should be part of the total \_\_\_\_\_ percent of administrative funds. All costs including administrative costs must be reasonable and necessary in light of the goals and objectives of your proposed project. Your narrative as a whole should align, meaning that any information in your budget narrative should be directly related to the objectives of your grant. Again, be sure to make these connections clear within your application.

Applicants approved for funding under this competition will be required to participate in all SE technical assistance offerings to include the project directors meeting and other on-site gatherings sponsored by the department and its contracted technical assistance providers and partners throughout the life of the grant. Applicants are encouraged to include the cost of attending these meetings in their proposed budgets. Attendance at TA meetings is an administrative cost and should be clearly identified in the calculations of your budget narrative. As noted previously, providing technical assistance is a key component of this grant program. Consider your relationship with authorizing agencies as you prepare your application. That seven percent set-aside of grant funds should be used to provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies. And again, the opening and preparing the operation for new charter schools and to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools and then to also improving authorizer quality, including developing capacity for and conducting fiscal oversight and auditing of charter schools. One more plug again for our pre-award technical assistance offerings. Again, we have that high-impact TA webinar I mentioned earlier this Friday, May 10, and we will reiterate our full pre-application webinar series at the end of today's presentation.

As applicants plan the budgets for their grant projects, a couple of common questions arise around budgeting for technical assistance. The first is, what if the seven percent set-aside is not enough to cover our technical assistance plan for subgrantee applicants and authorizers throughout the state? One

flexibility that grantees have is to use administrative funds to support technical assistance activities. The department interprets Section 4303(c)(1) of the ESEA to mean that grantees must use at least seven percent of their technical assistance and the three percent of funds reserved for administrative costs [which] may also be used for technical assistance if additional technical assistance funds are desired.

Another common question is, what if we initially calculate the seven percent set-aside based on the total amount of our initial grants award, but years later it's clear that we will not be able to expend all of the funds initially obligated. CSP understands that the context in which grantees operate may change. State laws change, charter moratoriums happen, etc. Gathering data and having a strong understanding of the charter school landscape in your state is foundational to being able to appropriately plan the budget. It's very helpful to begin with an understanding of the number of subgrants you plan to award and build out the technical assistance budget and activities from there. With this in mind, grantees may calculate the technical assistance costs based on the total grant award amount obligated by the department at the beginning of the grant period. As long as the grantee can demonstrate that the technical assistance costs claimed are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the grant in accordance with the cost principles and Uniform Guidance 2 CFR part 200. If things change, and they sometimes do, grantees can provide a justification to the department on why the set-aside percentages were off and it will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Grantees have asked about spending more in technical assistance in earlier years than in later years. With this guidance in mind around the flexibility on how a grantee budgets for technical assistance activities, a grantee may spend more or less than the seven percent in any given project year. But at the end of the grant's performance period, grantees must be able to clearly demonstrate that the technical assistance costs claimed are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the grant.

As applicants prepare their budgets keep in mind that subgrants should support activities related to opening and preparing for the operation of new charter schools or replicating or expanding high-quality charter schools. This can include costs and activities noted on this slide and in Section 4303 H of the ESEA. Costs can include costs associated with preparing teachers, school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel (professional development, and hiring compensation during planning period—teachers, school leaders, and or specialized instructional personnel). Acquiring supplies, training, and equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials). Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations and minor facility repairs (excluding construction). Providing one-time startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school. Carrying out community engagement activities which may include paying the cost of student and staff recruitment. Providing for other appropriate non-sustained costs relating to the activities in opening and preparing for the operation of charter schools.

Once you determine that your state entity is eligible to apply, you will need to discuss your pipeline. It is important to think about who was eligible for a subgrant. An eligible applicant is a developer that applied to an authorized public chartering authority to operate a charter school and provide an adequate and timely notice to that authority. A developer is an individual or group of individuals including a public or private nonprofit organization which may include teachers, administrators, and other school staff, parents, or other members of the local community in which the charter school project will be carried out.

In the technical assistance seven percent set-aside discussion earlier in this webinar, we noted that it's a requirement of the CSP SE grant program that grantees reserve at least seven percent of their grant funds to provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies. In light of this conversation, please keep in mind that the overall goal is to provide high-quality TA to eligible



applicants and subgrantees. Based on new FY 2024 appropriations language, CSP encourages you to ensure that subgrantees have access to high-quality TA to carry out the activities we just described. In order to do this, you may choose to include in your proposal a requirement that eligible applicants participate in the technical assistance offerings provided by you or an organization with whom you have contracted. You may also choose to require that subgrantees devote a specific percentage of their subgrant funds to acquiring outside technical assistance individually or in consortia with other subgrantees.

There are a few additional items of note as applicants plan their budget. A few additional notes here. So, the subgrantee maximum award amount is \$2 million. An eligible subgrant applicant may use not more than 18 months for planning and program design. Planning funds can be used, as an example, for hiring and compensating teachers, school leaders, and other specialized instruction support personnel, as well as providing training and professional development to staff or other critical activities that need to occur prior to opening. In your budget narrative, you should clearly delineate not only the costs under each cost category, but whether they are related to administrative costs and technical assistance costs or if they are subgrants and also please clearly identify the number and types of subgrants you are budgeting, for example, new replication, or expansion by year. Set realistic goals based on your state context.

And finally, as an important tip, please double check your numbers and percentage maximums. You do not want to be reduced because of a calculation error. An eligible applicant may not receive more than one subgrant under this program for each individual charter school for a five-year period unless the eligible applicant demonstrates to the state entity that such individual charter school has at least three years of improved educational results for students enrolled in such charter school with respect to the elements described in the definition of a high-quality charter school. A charter school that previously received CSP funds for planning or implementation in the CSP developer grant program or for the replication or expansion of a high-quality charter school under the CSP CMO grant program is not eligible to receive funds from the state entity under this program for the same or substantially similar purpose. However, a charter school may be eligible to receive funds to expand if the school is a high-quality charter school. This speaks to that question Anna addressed earlier. Similarly, a charter school that receives funds from a state entity subgrant is ineligible to receive funds for the same or substantially similar purpose under the developer or CMO grant programs.

We will discuss waiver requests in your application in more detail a little later in this webinar, but as you consider your budget, it may be applicable in your state to consider supporting existing subgrantees under a current SE grantee in your state that is ending. If there are existing CSP SE grantees in your state that will not complete their subgrant projects by the end of the grant performance period of the current SE grantee in your state, new SE applicants can include waivers to continue supporting those existing subgrantees under a new SE grant, if awarded. You should also include funding to support any subgrantees in this position. Any eligible state entity applying for a new SE grant may include a waiver request in their grant application to continue supporting existing subgrantees. This includes both existing SE grantees and new SEs in a state. If you include a waiver request in a new SE grant application to continue support for existing subgrantees, it is also important to understand what activities and funds remain on their current subgrant projects so that you can properly budget for those subgrantees in the new SE grant proposal.

As noted previously, subgrantees cannot be funded for the same or substantially similar activities that were completed under a previous subgrant. CSP encourages all applicants requesting waivers to provide detailed information on the proposed process to award the second subgrant to those existing subgrantees and ensure that they are meeting all requirements under the new NIA.

Okay, I have a couple of questions coming in here, so Nicoisa could you go back to the map slide for just a moment? It looks like there's a question about Ohio being mentioned. I think it could have been a misspoken aloud, but Ohio is an eligible state in this year's competition. It is not highlighted on the map and it is not included in our ineligible states. So, Ohio is an eligible entity in this year's competition. Okay. I see one. "If a school received an expansion grant in a previous SE grant, are they eligible for a new expansion grant?" So, the answer is "it depends," but the key idea here is that it needs to be a high-quality school in accordance with the definition of high quality that you can find in the NIA as well as in the statute, and the activities cannot be the same or substantially similar. So, obviously we don't know all the circumstances, but there's a possibility that a school could receive a second subgrant award if it meets the criteria. It also depends on the amount of time that has passed since its award, what it would need to meet in order to qualify for a second subgrant. So, you'll want to take a look at the NIA as well as the statute to guide you with that.

I see a question about the waivers. "Could I speak to how a state applies for a waiver to continue subgrants that were begun under a previous CSP grant that is ending?" Okay. So, I see here it says, "If subgrantees were not able to finish their subgrant funded project because the SE's grant ended, can a waiver be submitted to allow all those schools to apply to finish their projects under a new CSP grant?" So, the short answer is "yes." You can include a waiver to support those activities and that's really what you see on this slide that we have up right now. So, you can submit a waiver to include those—a key thing to think about—you need to understand what those activities are because you cannot fund the same or substantially similar activities in that waiver request. You can request for those subgrantees to come over and you should detail a process for how you would award that second subgrant in your application.

So, a question here. "Can a subgrantee use subgrant funds to pay the awarding SE organization for TA services?" So, I think this depends. So subgrantees can use—and that was some of the new language in the appropriations this year—subgrantees can use their funds to access high-quality TA. SE grantees can require that if so choose in their subgrant processes for subgrantees to use that. And they may use that to contract with outside organizations. Are they asking can they pay the SE for TA? Certainly, we wouldn't want the subgrantee to use their funds to pay the SE for activities that the SE is using CSP funds for already. So, I think it may depend. But in general, we would not want the subgrantees to pay their grantor for TA. So, I hope that addresses the question. Part of the SE grant is that SE grantees provide TA to eligible applicants and subgrantees, so that is a requirement of the program and so subgrantees wouldn't have to pay for that TA that SE grantees are required to conduct. That hopefully clarified that. All right, I think we can move forward. I will pass it to my colleague, Sam.

Thank you, Sareeta. Next, we will get into the nuts and bolts of the CSP State Entity Grant NIA and talk about the various components of your application. The project narrative. The project narrative is where applicants address the competitive preference priorities, selection criteria, and application requirements. To facilitate the review of the application, please organize your project narrative in the order presented in the application package and this webinar. Make sure to include an accurate table of contents. The project narrative should be limited to 60 pages. This page limit does not include any attachments or supporting documents. Hyperlinks to information outside of your application will not be assessed in the peer review of your application.

The priorities for fiscal year 2024. Applicants must be clear on which priority they are addressing. The fiscal year 2024 CSP state entity grant competition includes one absolute priority, five competitive preference priorities, and one invitational priority. We request that applicants include a strong focus on what they will accomplish under the proposed project rather than what they have accomplished in the past. I want to take an opportunity to again plug for our pre-application webinar series as applicants consider the competition priorities like the absolute priority best practices for charter school authorizers. You can learn

more about high-impact TA to promote quality authorizing in our upcoming high-impact TA webinar. Absolute priority. The absolute priority for 2024 is best practices for charter school authorizers. To meet this priority, the state entity must demonstrate that it has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this absolute priority.

Competitive preference priorities. There are five competitive preference priorities which come from statute. CSP has decided to operationalize them as competitive preference priorities. I will spend some time reviewing each one. Competitive preference priority one is as follows. At least one authorized public chartering agency other than a local educational agency or an appeals process, and that's zero or one points. To meet this priority and applicant must demonstrate that it is located in a state that (a) allows at least one entity that is not a local educational agency, LEA, to be an authorized public chartering agency for developers seeking to open a charter school in the state or (b) in the case of a state in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies. The state has an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Competitive preference priority two is as follows. Equitable financing, up to two points. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the state in which the state entity is located ensures equitable financing as compared to traditional public schools for charter schools and students in a prompt manner. If you elect to include competitive this preference priority, be prepared to report on it if awarded an SE grant.

Competitive preference priority three is as follows. Best practices to improve struggling schools and LEAs, up to two points. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the state entity is located in a state that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

Competitive preference priority four is as follows. Charter school facilities, up to two points. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the state in which the state entity is located provides charter schools with one or more of the following, (a) funding for facilities, (b) assistance with facilities acquisition, (c) access to public facilities, (d) the ability to share in bond or mill levies, (e), the right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings, and (f) low or no-cost leasing privileges.

Competitive preference priority five is as follows. Serving at-risk students, up to three points. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the state entity supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

Now, we'll review the invitational priority. The invitational priority is a collaboration between charter schools and traditional public schools or districts that benefit students and families across schools. Not going to read the full priority at this time, but you can find it here, and on the next couple slides, and of course in the NIA. The invitational priority is aligned with the CMO and developer priority around collaboration between charter schools and traditional public schools or districts in the notice of final priorities published on July 6, 2022. For an invitational priority, no additional points are awarded. The priority is proposed to learn more from the field about a topic that the secretary and the department are interested in learning. It sheds light on the potential for use in future competitions.

In last year's CSP state entity competition, at least half of applicants addressed this invitational priority and most discussed replicating and/or building on collaborations between charter schools and traditional public schools that were already occurring in the state. CSP looks forward to seeing how this work materializes.

There are many examples of charter schools and traditional school collaborations. I'm not going to read them to you, but you can find them on the following two slides and in the NIA. If you elect to include the invitational priority, your application should include plans for implementation of one or more of these activities.

Now, we'll move into how applications are scored. The selection criteria are what peer reviewers will use to score. This is how your application will be evaluated. For each criterion, we used factors from statute and EDGAR, and one factor under project design from the NFP. In the criteria you will see the application requirements criteria are addressed. The selection criteria are as follows. Quality of the project design, quality of eligible applicants receiving subgrants, state plan, and the quality of the management plan. The application package also contains the FY 2024 state entity competition rubric. Please refer to the application package instructions to review the scoring rubric that will be provided to peer reviewers. It describes what a fully developed answer would look like as well as well-developed, adequately developed, and poorly developed responses would look like. It can be found beginning on page 54.

Application requirements. Please refer to the application package instructions for the application requirements crosswalk. We have directed applicants to respond to some requirements in the responses to the criteria. For requirements not listed to be included in the project narrative, please include a standalone attachment responding to the requirements, noting which requirement is being responded to directly at the end of the project narrative. The application requirements include a description of the program, the assurances, and request information about any waivers that are proposed. An example of past waivers that applicants have included is a waiver to allow subgrantees to apply for a second sub award under a new SE grant to continue activities begun under a previous SE grantee in a state. Please note that requesting a waiver in an application does not mean that the waiver will be approved.

Subgrantee waiver requests. In its application, the state entity that is applying for the new award may request a waiver under Section 4301(d)(5) of the ESEA to enable it to award a second subgrant within a five-year period to eligible applicants that previously received a subgrant from the current state entity grantee, but will be unable to complete their subgrant activities before the current state entity grant expires without requiring the eligible applicant to demonstrate three years of improved educational results as required under Section 4303(e)(2) of the ESEA. This type of subgrant waiver request is a common application waiver request. There is specific language in the NIA that you should reference. The budget webinar will also have further guidance on how to budget for a waiver request. Make sure to provide detailed information on the process you design for awarding waiver subgrants.

There is some specific terms used throughout the NIA and the application package. Some of the key terms are noted here. Please see the NIA for a full list of terms and their definitions. GPRA performance measures. Throughout the grant project, CSP state entity grantees will report on their performance measures. All grantees will also report on the Government Performance and Results Act, GPRA, performance measures established by the secretary. They are (1) the number of charter schools in operation around the nation and (2) the percentage of fourth- and eighth-grader charter school students who are achieving at or above the proficient level on state assessments in mathematics and reading or language arts. The secretary has also established a third measure for CSP. The federal cost per student in implementing a successful school defined as a school in operation for three or more consecutive years. In addition to the GPRA measures, applicants must propose project-specific performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project.

And under 34 CFR 75.110 (b) and (c), the applications must provide performance measures, baseline data, performance targets, and data collection. A separate webinar will provide guidance on performance measures. I will now cover some important additional notes and resources. Throughout the grant project,

CSP state entity grantees must report on their performance measures in their annual performance report. If you will be unable to report on a measure annually, it should not be identified as a project-specific performance measure. For additional support in developing effective performance measures, applicants are encouraged to review information provided by the department's regional educational laboratories, RELs, and the pre-application webinar on logic models and SMART performance measures that will be posted to our website.

Other attachments. In this section, I will delve into the other attachments in the application package. The other attachments section is for all appendices materials. All attachments must be in PDF or Microsoft Word format. Each file should be labeled with the appendix name and then uploaded to the other attachment forms. Make sure to identify your attachments in your table of contents. The other attachments form can support up to 10 attachments. You can merge appendices into one document as needed. A special tip: avoid characters in the file names because they are not properly processed by Grants.gov when an application is uploaded. Do not use colons or backslashes when naming documents. For more information on each of these requirements, see the application package instructions for additional guidance.

Other attachments. Please note that substantive project-related details should be included in the project narrative and budget narrative forms of this section. The other attachment sections are listed on this slide. The assurances, appendix A, can be found as a sheet to be signed in the application package instructions. They include assurances from statute and the NIA that were discussed earlier. Not all appendices may be relevant for each applicant.

Next, I'll discuss some additional notes to consider for the application package. Open licensing. Under an open license, the public is given permission to access, reproduce, publicly perform, publicly display, and distribute the copyrightable work; to prepare derivative works, as defined in the Copyright Act 17 U.S.C. 101, and to reproduce, publicly perform, publicly display, and distribute those derivative works; and to otherwise use the copyrightable work created in whole or in part with competitive grant funds provided by the department, provided that in all such instances attribution is given to the copyright holder. Note: grantees may use any open licenses that comply with the rule (see additional conditions in the actual rule), including a license that limits use to noncommercial purposes.

Copyrightable grant deliverables, or deliverables, are final versions of a work developed to carry out the purpose of the grant as specified in the grant announcement (for example, the notice inviting applications or application package). The open licensing requirement will apply both to the deliverables themselves and to any final version of the program support materials necessary to use the deliverables. The rule does not apply to pre-existing works. When pre-existing works are modified under the grant funding, the rule only applies to the modification. A grantee or subgrantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate the openly licensed copyrightable works. In some limited cases, exceptions to the rule may be granted by the department. However, such exceptions will not be considered until after the grant awards are made and applicants must not assume that an exception would be granted.

Applicable regulations and statute. There are the applicable regulations and statutes that provide the authority for actions. You will see these citations throughout the NIA and they are compiled here for ease of reference.

Award notices. If your application is successful, we will notify your U.S. representative and U.S. senator and send you a grant award notification, GAN. We may also notify you informally as well. If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we will notify you via USPS mail.

While additional questions may be coming in, I do want to go back to a question. There was a follow-up from our previous pause for Q&A. So, there was a question around the FY 2024 appropriations language speaking to subgrantees using their subgrant funds for technical assistance. And so, I wanted to just clarify that response and I think I better understand the question that was asked. So, we would expect subgrantees to use subgrant funds in a manner that does not duplicate what the state entity is doing. We would not want the subgrantee to pay the SE for support that the SE is already providing or should provide in accordance with the SE's TA plan in their grant application. So, it's not the case that a subgrantee cannot pay an SE for support, but that we don't want them to pay for services that they would otherwise receive. And, so of course, the department can review such cases on a case-by-case basis if should they arise. I just want to make that clarification.

Another question that came in earlier in the budget portion that I want to just quickly address was someone asked about examples of renovations that aren't considered construction but would be potentially allowable. Of course, every situation is unique, but an example that comes to mind of this would be a school, for example, that needs to add a fire system or sprinkler system to the building in order to meet state required building occupancy requirements. So that might be an example of a construction-like cost that is required by the state in order for the school to be able to open to get its occupancy certificate. That would likely be an allowable expense.

All right. Another question came in around, "Do peer reviewers have access to the appendices and materials and the appendices?" So, yes, they do. They do have access to all documents that are uploaded as a part of the grant application, assuming the files can be opened and read. But, peer reviewers are not able to follow any hyperlinks that are included in applications or otherwise access any information that's not included in the application itself. I see a question here around, "Can a charter support organization have a login for its website where CSP materials are housed?" So, any materials that are not included in the application itself that's uploaded to Grants.gov will not be accessed by peer reviewers.

Thanks, Sareeta. I will now transition to Nora Kern.

Thank you, Sam. In this section, we'll talk about the various components to submitting your application. All applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement. I will now walk you through some instructions about using Grants.gov for your electronic submission. The deadline to submit your application is June 13, 2024. This deadline is enforced via the electronic Grants.gov system. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to submit early. As a tip: the Grants.gov help desk is not available on weekends should you need help, so please plan accordingly. You can resubmit your application prior to the deadline if you need to update your application. Please ensure that only U.S. Department of Education approved file types are attached in your application submission. See the NIA and the application package instructions for a detailed description of these files—namely, read only non-modifiable PDF files. Also, do not upload any password-protected files to your application. Lengthy file names could result in difficulties with opening and processing your application. We recommend file names be 50 characters or less.

Grants.gov is an external application system used throughout the federal government. Here is a screenshot of what the home page looks like. There is a registration process that you must undertake to be able to submit your application on Grants.gov. First, you will register with SAM.gov to obtain a unique entity, identifier, or UEI. Next, you will set up an authorized organization representative, AOR, profile. Then you will need to be authorized as an AOR by your organization's e-Biz point of contact. Then, you can track your AOR status. The registration process for Grants.gov as outlined on the previous slide can take up to four weeks to complete, so start the process now. You must be registered on Grants.gov to submit an

application. However, you can search for grant opportunities or download the application package instructions without registration.

Here are some other tips to help you use Grants.gov. For detailed instructions, review the Grants.gov submission procedures and tips for applicants section of the application package. An applicant must download the correct version of Adobe in order to read any Grants.gov application packages. In Adobe, applicants must move all mandatory forms from left to right in order to open each form. Once the form is on the right side, an applicant can complete and save each form. While in process, the application package is saved offline. Once you download the application, multiple people can work on it and you can work offline. Make sure to save often. Include both forms and attachments in your application. Submit all documents as PDF files. Once the application is complete, the save and submit button becomes active. Press the final save and submit button before the final submission of the application.

Here are ways to tell if your application submission in Grants.gov was successful or unsuccessful. With a successful application, the applicant should receive a confirmation email with a time and date stamp and an assigned tracking number from Grants.gov; a validation email from Grants.gov—this means the application is ready for department retrieval; an email with your assigned PR award number—this will be in the format of S282A23 and then four additional digits. The signs that a submission was not successful include not receiving a confirmation email with a time and date stamp and an assigned tracking number from Grants.gov; if the application is received after the deadline of 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern on June 13, 2024; or validation is not successful—the applicant should receive an error email. The email may list the error or the applicant can use their tracking number to find the submission error.

This slide will give instructions on how to track your application submission or check a submission error. The screenshot shows the navigation on Grants.gov where to track your application in the “track my application” link. Once you’ve navigated there, step one is to verify that your submission was on time and validated successfully. The date and time stamp received should be earlier than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 13, 2024. The application status should be validated. Do not rely solely on an email to confirm whether your application has been received on time and validated successfully. Take the steps here to track your application and confirm on Grants.gov. Here are some additional tips for application submission. Save a copy of your application. Original signatures on forms may be requested by the department at a later time. Applications cannot be in unsubmitted status. Applicants may resubmit an application at any point before the closing deadline. The department will review the most recent submission before the closing date and time.

If you experience problems submitting your application via Grants.gov, reach out to the support desk at the number provided on this slide. Make sure to keep a record of the case support number. If these documented technical issues cause you to submit an application after 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 13, contact the person listed in the notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov along with the Grants.gov support desk case number. We will accept your explanation and grant a one-day extension if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that problem affected your ability to submit your application by the deadline. The department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted. An extension may be granted only due to the unavailability of or technical problems with the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application on Grants.gov before the deadline or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system. We recommend you take a few minutes today to make sure your organization has an active Grants.gov account.

In this section, we will talk about what happens in the application review process after the application has been submitted. The application review process follows four stages. First, the eligibility review. Before making awards, the department will screen applications submitted in accordance with the requirements and the notice to determine whether applications have met eligibility and other requirements. This screening process may additionally occur at various stages in the review process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive a grant regardless of their peer reviewer's scores or comments.

The next stage is the peer review. During this stage, applications are evaluated by a three-person, non-federal panel. Each reviewer individually reads, evaluates, and scores their assigned applications based on the selection criteria listed in the notice. The panel is given time to discuss the applications as well as their respective scores and comments. The three reviewer scores are then averaged to create an overall application score. After the peer review, the rank order is created. The rank order list is prepared based on the overall application scores. The department uses this list to estimate how many applications will be funded based on rank order scores.

Finally, prior to making final awards, the department's office of elementary and secondary education in consultation with the office of general counsel and other departmental offices as appropriate will work together to develop funding recommendations and identify any special terms or conditions on the grant that may be needed. Following the vetting of the highest rated applications, the competition manager will prepare and submit a funding slate for the secretary to review and approve.

The federal government has transitioned away from the DUNS number to registering for unique entity identifier, UEI, via SAM.gov. There is no cost associated with applying for or maintaining a UEI. The process for receiving a UEI is intended to be completed by the entity itself and does not require an outside vendor for this process. Again, June 13, 2024, is the application submission deadline.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to this webinar, there will be three additional live webinars addressing organizational readiness, high-impact TA activities, and developing the grant project budget. There will also be three other recorded pre-application webinars that can support you in writing a high-quality application. One focuses on developing a budget that aligns with your application. Another focuses on creating logic models and SMART performance measures, and the final discusses expectations for the needs analysis. All these webinars will be available on the department's competition website.

As a reminder, although the SE grant is the largest CSP program, CSP has other funding opportunities. Currently, NIAs for three other CSP programs—the charter management organizations, developer grants, and state charter school facilities incentives grants—are open. Some SE applicants may also be eligible for the state charter school facilities incentive grant program to support charter schools in their state securing funding for facilities. We encourage applicants to explore all CSP funding opportunities.

So, there was a question about the application package instructions and how to address the application requirements. So, the application package includes a crosswalk that outlines where in the project narrative specific application requirements may be addressed. There are a few additional application requirements that are outside of that crosswalk that may be addressed as you see fit within the project narrative. I see one question here that speaks to when they're attempting to apply for the grant, they receive an error message on Grants.gov, so you should reach out to the Grants.gov help desk. You'll be able to find that—I think it's at the bottom of the Grants.gov homepage for technical assistance with Grants.gov. We are unable to provide technical assistance there. You also have on this screen here the support email for Grants.gov and phone number, so if you need help with Grants.gov specifically.



Great. Thanks so much, Sareeta. This is Anna Hinton, again. I'd like to thank everyone for attending today's webinar. I'd also like to remind you that the application deadline, once again, is June 13, 2024, and we strongly encourage you to submit your application before the deadline. Again, if we were unable to answer your question or if you have additional questions following this webinar, please do not hesitate to email them to us at the SE competition email box. That is [sc\\_competition@ed.gov](mailto:sc_competition@ed.gov).