



Illinois State Board of Education

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Chair of the Board

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Starting a Charter School in Illinois

The list below outlines the steps an organization or person needs to take to start a charter school in Illinois. Additional resources are included at the end of the document.

1.) Read Illinois' Charter School Law

The [Charter School Law](#) is a part of the Illinois School Code.

2.) Register as a 501 c (3)

A charter school must be organized and operated as a not-for-profit corporation, also known as a 501 c (3), "or other discrete, legal, nonprofit entity authorized under the laws of the State of Illinois." **105 ILCS 5/27A-5(a)**

3.) Community support

Reach out to community organizations and local politicians to ensure that the program you would like to implement is needed and wanted in the community in which you hope to operate.

4.) Submit your charter proposal

Submit a proposal to the school district(s) from which you plan to enroll students. The State Board of Education does not have a required format that must be followed in drafting a charter school application. However, a charter shall include 15 requirements per Illinois [Charter School Law](#).

If the school district has a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) process, you must complete it before your application will be considered. [105 ILCS 5/27A-8\(c\)](#) If the school district does not have a formal RFP process for accepting and reviewing applications, you may submit your charter proposal at any time. As it stands, Chicago Public Schools is the only school district in Illinois that has a formal RFP process.

By statute, the local school board will have 45 days from the date of receipt of your proposal to hold a public meeting to gather more information about the proposal, and an additional 30 days from that meeting to vote whether to approve or deny the application. **105 ILCS 5/27A-8(c) through (e)**

Please note: No charter shall be granted under this Article that would convert any existing private, parochial, or nonpublic school to a charter school. [105 ILCS 5/27A-4\(c\)](#)

5.) Charter application approved

Each applicant that has a charter school application approved will establish a binding contract between the charter school and the local school board in which:

- i. The school board authorizes the charter school to operate on the terms agreed in the contract [105 ILCS 5/27A-6 \(a\)](#),
- ii. Both parties include provisions on how they will address contract violations **105 ILCS 5/27A-6 (c-5)**, and
- iii. The charter school will negotiate funding from the district, which will consist of a percentage of between 97% and 103% of the district's per capita tuition charge multiplied by the number of students residing in the school district who are enrolled in the charter school. [105 ILCS 5/27A-11 \(b\)](#)

The proposed contract and supporting documentation between the charter school and local school board must be submitted to and certified by the State Board before it can take effect. **105 ILCS 5/27A-6 (d)**

The contract must also include all items as outlined in [105 ILCS 5/27A-7](#).

6.) Charter application denied

If a local school board denies a new charter application or fails to consider and vote on it within the timeframe required by **105 ILCS 5/27A-8 (c)**, the final decision of the local school board is subject to judicial review under the Administrative Review Law.

For additional information, please contact David Turovetz, director for Charter Schools, at (312) 814-2220 or charter@isbe.net.

Additional Resources

- Chicago Public School District 299 [Office of Innovation and Incubation](#).

- [Illinois Network of Charter Schools](#) (INCS). INCS is a membership organization of charter schools in Illinois.