



Illinois State Board of Education

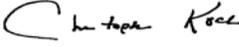
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Jesse H. Ruiz
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

December 13, 2010

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D. 
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):** FY 2011 Federal Public Charter Schools Program: Planning, Design, and Implementation Grants

General Information

Purpose of the RFP: The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) seeks to provide funding via federal Public Charter Schools Program (CSP) grants to eligible applicants to increase the number of high-quality charter schools in Illinois. For purposes of this RFP, a charter school is defined as, among other things, a public school that is created by a developer as a public school, or adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and operated under public supervision and direction (§ 5210(1)(B) of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)).

Eligible Applicants by Grant Category: Not-for-profit entities with a strong educational background are eligible to apply provided they meet the additional criteria below pursuant to the different grant types available under this RFP. Applicants are limited to one grant proposal per proposed charter school. Grant awards to multiple charter schools established under a single charter where the charter schools are merely extensions of each other (i.e., one charter school with multiple campuses) are not available under this RFP.

1. *Planning and Program Design Grants*

- A. *Pre-Charter Planning Grants:* Not-for-profit entities with a strong educational background that have submitted a charter proposal to a public school district for consideration to operate a charter school and are awaiting authorization are eligible to apply for Pre-Charter Planning Grants.
- B. *Program Design Grants:* Charter schools that are operated by not-for-profit entities, have an executed charter agreement with a local school board or ISBE, and have not yet opened for student attendance are eligible to apply for Program Design Grants.

2. *Initial Implementation Grants:* Charter schools that are operated by not-for-profit entities, have an executed charter agreement with a local school board or ISBE, and have opened for student attendance are eligible to apply for Implementation Grants.

Grant Award: The amount of funding available in fiscal year (FY) 2011 for grants under this program is \$3.98 million. The final number of grants to be awarded in each grant category will be determined by the quality of the proposal and the proposed or authorized charter school agreement and the available funding received for the federal Public Charter Schools Program. The available funding amount is broken down by grant category below.

1. **Planning and Program Design Grants**

- A. *Pre-Charter Planning Grants* will range from \$10,000 to \$12,000 per fiscal year, and an estimated 25 grants may be awarded.
- B. *Program Design Grants* will range from \$50,000 to \$75,000 per fiscal year, and an estimated 7 grants may be awarded.

2. **Initial Implementation Grants** will range from \$150,000 to \$225,000 per fiscal year, and up to 14 grants may be awarded.

Any proposal submitted requesting funds in excess of the ranges noted above respectively will be treated as a request for the maximum award amount in the applicable category of grants.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than December 17, 2010 and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2011. Extension of the grant period to July 31, 2011 may be requested on an as-needed basis as a part of the proposal.

It is the intention of ISBE to fund grantees for a period of not more than three years contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress of the grantee in the preceding grant period. Of the total three years of funding available to selected grantees, not more than 18 months may be used to fund planning and program design activities, and not more than 24 months may be used to fund initial implementation activities of a charter school. Generally, a grantee making satisfactory progress will receive a Pre-Charter Planning and/or a Program Design Grant and two Implementation Grants. Funding for the second year of an Implementation Grant will be made available to selected grantees via a continuation application. Applicants are advised to plan the activities of each grant according to the time limits established for each grant category such that activities will collectively span not more than 36 months from the execution of an initial grant agreement to the final completion date.

Application Deadlines:

1. **Planning and Program Design Grants**

- A. *Pre-Charter Planning Grants:* Three competitions will be held for FY 2011 Pre-Charter Planning Grants. Proposals must be received by **January 18, 2011** to be included in the first competition; **March 15, 2011** to be included in the second competition; and **May 16, 2011** to be included in the third and final competition.
- B. *Program Design Grants:* An ongoing competition will be held for FY 2011 Program Design Grants. Proposals can be submitted at any time between the release of this RFP and **March 15, 2011**. Early submission is preferred.

2. **Initial Implementation Grants:** An ongoing competition will be held for FY 2011 Initial Implementation Grants. Proposals can be submitted at any time between the release of this RFP and **March 15, 2011**. Early submission is preferred.

Submission Instructions: Proposals may be submitted by mail, in person, or electronically using the [Send ISBE a file](#) link found near the top of the ISBE website at <http://www.isbe.net>.

To submit by mail, send the original and one copy to Jennifer Saba, Legal Advisor, Illinois State Board of Education, James R. Thompson Center, 100 West Randolph Street, Suite 14-300, Chicago, Illinois 60601.

To submit in person, proposals may be hand-delivered to the following locations:

Springfield Office
Information Center
1st Floor - South

Chicago Office
Reception Area
Suite 14-300

To submit electronically, using either Internet Explorer® or Firefox, click on the [Send ISBE a file](#) link located at the top of the ISBE main webpage at <http://www.isbe.net>. The *Attachment Manager* screen will appear. There are four sections on the *Attachment Manager* web page. Complete the first section (*Sender Information*) by entering contact information. In the second section (*Receiver Information*) select “Charter Schools Program Proposals” from the dropdown box as the “ISBE eMail Name.” Failure to select the correct email name as “Charter School Program Proposals” could result in missing the proposal submission deadline. In the third section (*Attachment(s)*), click on the *Browse* button(s) to upload proposal files. While various file formats are acceptable, ISBE recommends a single file in Adobe PDF format. Finally, complete the fourth section (*Message*) by entering the phrase “Charter School Program Proposal” in the *Subject* line and include the name of the applicant in the *Message* line. Press the *Submit* button when completed. Applicants are advised to review the entries and attachments prior to submitting as all submissions are final, and proposals will not be returned to the sender for further revisions. The system will generate an automated delivery confirmation response once the proposal has been successfully submitted and will notify appropriate ISBE staff of the submission.

If, during the submission process, you require technical assistance, please call ISBE’s helpdesk at 217-558-3600 or email the helpdesk at help@isbe.net.

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Jennifer Saba at jsaba@isbe.net or 312-814-2236.

Background and Program Specifications

Article 27A of the Illinois School Code, known as the Charter Schools Law, creates opportunities within the public school system of Illinois for the development of innovative and accountable teaching techniques and educational programs. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) currently makes funding available under Title V, Part B of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 for the Charter Schools Program. This funding provides support for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools. The purpose of charter schools is to:

- ♦ improve pupil learning by creating schools with high, rigorous standards for pupil performance;
- ♦ increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for at-risk pupils, consistent, however, with an equal commitment to increase learning opportunities for all other groups of pupils in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, or need for special education services;
- ♦ encourage the use of teaching methods that may be different in some respects than others regularly used in the public school system;
- ♦ allow the development of new, different, or alternative forms of measuring pupil learning and achievement;
- ♦ create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;
- ♦ provide parents and pupils with expanded choices within the public school system;
- ♦ encourage parental and community involvement with public schools; and
- ♦ hold charter schools accountable for meeting rigorous school content standards and provide those schools with the opportunity to improve accountability.

Charter schools operate largely free from the requirements imposed by the School Code, ISBE’s administrative rules, and local board policies. In return for this degree of flexibility, charter schools are directly accountable for their performance, both to the families who choose them and to the public in general through their charters, which will specify the schools’ contractual obligations. Charter schools funded with money from the federal Public Charter Schools Program are required to demonstrate over time that their students are achieving at the promised levels of performance. If a school fails to deliver on its promises, then families can decide to send their students elsewhere, thus removing

financial support for the charter school. The entity issuing the charter can also elect not to renew the charter when the agreement expires.

The Charter Schools Law permits the creation of up to 120 charter schools statewide: 70 in the city of Chicago, 45 in the balance of the state. In addition to these charter schools, up to but no more than five charter schools devoted exclusively to re-enrolled high school dropouts may operate in the city of Chicago. Each of these “dropout charters” may operate up to 15 campuses within the city. Any of these dropout charters may have a maximum of 1,875 enrollment seats, with any single attendance center that is part of the charter having a maximum of 165 enrollment seats. Each attendance center of the dropout charter must be operated by the same legal entity as that for which the charter is approved and certified. With the exception of “dropout charters” where the charter school developer may open more than one campus under the same charter agreement, funding under this RFP is restricted to one school per charter school agreement.

To be eligible for funding under this RFP, charter proposals must be sponsored by not-for-profit organizations or by school districts. Charter school agreements must be authorized by local boards of education or by the State Board of Education upon appeal.

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit from charter school developers working with a school district, or from charter schools already in operation, proposals that meet the purposes of the federal Public Charter Schools Program, which are listed below.

1. Provide financial assistance for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools;
2. Expand the number of high-quality and educationally diverse charter schools throughout the State by supporting the efforts of charter school developers and organizers; and
3. Evaluate the effects of charter schools, including their effects on students (in particular, on student academic achievement), staff, and parents.

ISBE’s specific objectives for the federal Public Charter Schools Program are listed below.

1. Support the development of charter schools, especially in communities outside of Chicago;
2. Encourage the development of public charter schools designed to assist at-risk and other educationally disadvantaged students, especially these students at the secondary level, to meet the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core, and to assist these students to remain in school through graduation; and
3. Conduct broad outreach activities to make grant opportunities available to current and potential charter school developers.

In order to encourage the formation of charter schools that accomplish these objectives, ISBE will give priority consideration to those proposals designed to achieve related results (see *Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals*). For instance, a rapidly growing school district might consider a charter school as a way to address infrastructure inadequacies for its expanding student population. Likewise, a school district with a school that is failing to meet state standards could convert that school into a charter school, thus providing students and their families with a high-quality educational choice.

Applicants for any of the grant types are advised to familiarize themselves with the Charter Schools Law as outlined by Article 27A of the Illinois School Code, federal regulations, and administrative rules prior to submitting their proposals. Further information about charter schools is available at the following websites:

- ♦ Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5), Article 27A, “Charter Schools,” <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?DocName=010500050HArt%2E+27A&ActID=1005&ChapAct=105%26nbsp%3BILCS%26nbsp%3B5%2F&ChapterID=17&ChapterName=SCHOOLS&SectionID=17524&SeqStart=15480000&SeqEnd=156500000&ActName=School+Code%2E>
- ♦ Illinois Administrative Rules, Part 650, “Charter Schools,” <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/650ARK.pdf>

- ♦ Illinois State Board of Education, <http://www.isbe.net/default.htm>, “Charter Schools,” <http://www.isbe.net/charter/Default.htm>
- ♦ U.S. Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>, “Charter Schools Program,” <http://www.ed.gov/programs/charter/index.html>
- ♦ [Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title V, Part B, Subpart 1 — Public Charter Schools](http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg62.html), <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg62.html>
- ♦ US Department of Education, “Charter Schools Program, Title V, Part B, Non-Regulatory Guidance,” <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/cspguidance03.pdf>

Program Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

Pursuant to Section 27A-12 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/27A-12], ISBE must compile annual evaluations of charter schools received from local school boards and prepare an annual report to the General Assembly and the Governor. To that end, ISBE has contracted with the University of Memphis to conduct evaluation activities. As part of the evaluation, each grantee will be required to submit at a minimum the following information:

- ♦ Demographic information about the community that the charter school serves or intends to serve;
- ♦ Student achievement data, particularly results on state assessments for reading and mathematics, from the surrounding schools and once the charter school is open, from the charter school;
- ♦ Rates of attendance, graduation, transfers, and other similar information;
- ♦ Information about prospective students on waiting lists for the newly opened school;
- ♦ Information about parent and community participation;
- ♦ Summary evaluation information for all events administered with grant funds; and
- ♦ A description of all activities completed with grant funds and an analysis of their impact on the design and/or operation of the charter school.

Fiscal Information

The total amount of available funding in FY 2011 for grants under this RFP is \$3.98 million. Of this amount, it is anticipated that up to \$3.15 million will be available to fund Implementation Grants with the remaining amount being available to fund Pre-Charter Planning and Program Design Grants.

Eligible applicants may receive up to three years of funding under the federal Public Charter Schools Program. The program includes three different types of grants for which applicants must submit separate proposals. Overall, not more than 18 months may be devoted to the planning and design of the charter school and not more than 24 months to its implementation. Typically grantees receive an initial Pre-Charter Planning and/or Program Design Grant and an Implementation Grant with a two year grant period. Funding for the second year of an Implementation Grant will be made available to selected grantees via a continuation application. Funding in subsequent years will be contingent upon satisfactory progress on activities funded with the preceding grant award and upon available federal funding.

Historically, sufficient funds have been available under the Charter School Program to award grants to each applicant submitting a complete and compliant proposal. Until such circumstances change that would require a single competition for available funds, ISBE will submit each proposal to a peer review group to undergo a peer evaluation against the criteria set forth in the *Criteria for Review and Approval* section of this RFP. ISBE anticipates that funding decisions will be made within approximately 45 days from the receipt of each proposal.

Charter schools in Illinois draw their funding from the school districts in which their students reside, receiving between 75 percent and 125 percent of the respective district's average per-capita tuition for each student enrolled, plus a proportionate share of any state and federal categorical resources for which their students may be eligible. They have no taxing authority similar to that exercised by school districts, and the relatively short term of an initial charter (five to ten years) may make borrowing substantial amounts of money difficult. The experience of charter school developers in other states has shown that the absence of a funding source for planning and initial implementation makes it extraordinarily difficult to bring the development of a charter school to fruition.

The federal Public Charter Schools Program has been structured to address this problem by providing a source of initial funding. Grant funds are available for pre-charter planning, program design, and/or initial implementation to assist with expenses that a charter school cannot meet from other state or local sources. The following conditions apply:

- ♦ Funds may only be used for costs associated with the planning, program design, and implementation of a charter school;
- ♦ Grantees may not use grant funds for normal operating costs unless written approval from ISBE staff is given. Expenditures of this nature may be claimed for one year only (e.g., unexpected services due to influx of numerous special education or ESL students);
- ♦ Grant funds may not be used for the administrative fees or expenses of the school district with which the applicant is working unless the applicant voluntarily enters into a mutually agreed upon arrangement with the school district for the provision of administrative services;
- ♦ Grant funds may not be used for building construction or renovation or for related salaries and benefits; and
- ♦ In all cases, normal operating expenses including, but not limited to, salaries, benefits, postage, and utilities, are not allowable grant expenditures. The Implementation Grant, however, does contain a short-term provision for salaries and benefits as detailed below.

Allowable Expenditures

Allowable activities for each grant category are listed below:

1. *Planning and Program Design Grants*

A. **Pre-Charter Planning Grants:** Applicants who have submitted a charter school proposal to a school district and are awaiting authorization of the charter agreement may use the funds for activities associated with post-grant award planning of the educational program, including the following:

- i. Refinement of the desired educational results and of the methods for measuring progress toward achieving those results; and
- ii. Professional development for teachers and other staff who will work in the charter school.

B. **Program Design Grants:** Applicants who have an authorized charter agreement and have schools that are not yet ready to open for operation may use the funds for activities associated with post-grant award design of the educational program, including the following:

- i. Refinement of the desired educational results and of the methods for measuring progress toward achieving those results;
- ii. Development and refinement of the curriculum; and
- iii. Professional development for teachers and other staff who will work in the charter school.

2. **Implementation Grants:** Applicants who have an authorized charter agreement and have schools that are open for student attendance may use funds for activities and expenses during the initial start-up of a charter school. In general, the expenditures should be one-time costs that help the charter school achieve the goals outlined in its original application. These costs may include the following:

- A. Informing the community about the school;
- B. Acquiring necessary equipment and educational materials and supplies;
- C. Acquiring or developing curriculum materials; and

- D. Other initial operational costs that are necessary to meet the goals of the charter school, such as establishing a media center, computer lab, or cafeteria, including chief administrator's salary and benefits for up to two months prior to the charter school's opening.

To assist with the accurate completion of a proposed budget, applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the ISBE *State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures* handbook located at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf.

For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of PL 101-166 (the "Stevens Amendment"), applicants are advised that 100 percent of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources.

Proposal Narrative Requirements by Grant Category

1. **Pre-Charter Planning Grants:** Applicants submitting Pre-Charter Planning Grant proposals to receive funding for the first time must provide the following information in the proposal narrative.
 - A. Provide the charter school's mission statement as it relates to student achievement.
 - B. List the members of the planning team, including a discussion of their expertise in and knowledge about areas such as project management, curriculum, instruction, assessment, community relations, marketing, finance and fund-raising, governance and management, law, and real estate.
 - C. Describe the process that was used or will be used to determine the needs of the community to be served. If a needs assessment has already been conducted, indicate how the proposed charter school will meet the needs identified.
 - D. Discuss how the proposed charter school intends to improve student achievement for the students anticipated to attend. Response should be consistent with the proposed charter agreement submitted to the school district.
 - E. Include, as applicable, any other information or materials that further support the charter school's mission and/or its capacity to establish and run a successful school.

2. **Program Design and Initial Implementation Grants:** Applicants submitting Program Design and/or Implementation Grant proposals to receive funding from these grant types for the first time must provide the following information in the proposal narrative.
 - A. **For Program Design Grant proposals only:** Proof of the applicant's approved charter from a local school board or ISBE along with a copy of the authorized charter school agreement.
 - B. **For Implementation Grant proposals only:** Proof of the applicant's charter school being open for student attendance along with a copy of the authorized charter school agreement.
 - C. Describe the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including the following information.
 - ♦ The grade levels or ages of the children to be served and the expected student enrollment;
 - ♦ How the program will enable all students to meet the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core (see <http://www.isbe.net/ils/Default.htm>);
 - ♦ A one-page summary of the curriculum and instructional practices to be used, including any special approaches or strategies for meeting the particular needs of the school's students;
 - ♦ The objectives of the charter school in terms of student performance;

- ♦ The methods by which the charter school will determine its progress toward achieving those objectives; and
 - ♦ The plan to be used to determine the school's accountability.
- D. Identify the charter school's developer(s) and describe how the charter school will be managed.
- E. **For Implementation Grant proposals only:** Describe the facility to be used and outline the plans for transportation of the school's students.
- F. Describe the planned administrative relationship between the charter school and the local school board(s) issuing the charter.
- G. Describe the involvement of parents and other members of the community in the planning, design, and implementation of the charter school.
- H. Describe the composition of the members of the planning group. Describe how this group composition compares to that of the community to be served. This is a requirement of any initial grant proposal, whether for Program Design or Implementation.
- I. Describe how the charter school governing board will provide for the continued operation of the school once the federal grant has expired.
- J. Indicate the number of months that will be used for planning (limit to no more than 18 months) and implementation activities (limit to no more than 24 months).
- K. Specify any waivers of federal statutory or regulatory provisions that apply beyond the exemptions already provided under Article 27A of the School Code and provide a justification for them. Federal waivers are limited to matters under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Secretary of Education.
- L. Describe how students in the community will be informed about the charter school and the steps that will be taken to ensure that students from diverse groups will have equitable access to it, with emphasis on students who may be at risk or underserved in more traditional educational environments.
- M. Describe the charter school's financial situation and the applicant's specific need for federal assistance. Relate this information to the proposed uses of the grant funds. Demonstrate that the proposed expenses cannot be met from state and local sources of revenue (i.e., the per-pupil amount to be received plus other special funds). If you are requesting funds for both planning and implementation expenses in the same year, please clearly distinguish between the two phases.
- N. **For Implementation Grant proposals only:** Provide a copy of a five year overall charter school budget developed pursuant to Section 27A-7(a)(9) of the School Code.
- O. Describe how these funds will be used in conjunction with funds provided under other federal programs, if applicable.
- P. **For Implementation Grant proposals only:** Describe the school's mechanism(s) for assessing student performance over and above the required state assessment and provide a rationale supporting the(se) assessment approach(es). Outline the school's methods of responding to the information gathered through these student assessments on an ongoing basis.
- Q. Describe how the applicant will comply with Sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act regarding local education agency eligibility. (See <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cstatute%2C> to review the provisions.)
- R. Describe the data to be collected and the methods to be used to determine whether progress is being made in meeting the objectives enumerated in the proposal and how the results of the evaluation will be used to improve the program.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

All grant forms must be completed electronically, preferably by utilizing the PDF format that ISBE utilizes to create the grant forms. Handwritten grant forms will not be accepted. Approval by ISBE of a federal Public Charter Schools Grant does not have bearing on the local school board's decision to approve or deny a charter school proposal.

1. ___ **Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Must be signed by authorized representative of the charter school developer and for Program Design and Implementation applications, the charter school principal or director of the charter school.
2. ___ **Proposal Narrative:** Follow the specifications outlined in the *Proposal Narrative Requirements by Grant Category* section of this RFP.
3. ___ **Activities and Budget Information (Attachment 2):** Duplicate as needed and use to describe the activities and related expenses for which you are requesting funds.
4. ___ **Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 3A):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the authorized representative of the charter school (i.e., charter school developer, principal, director). Expenditures should be limited to those categories identified in the *Allowable Expenditures* section of this RFP.
5. ___ **Budget Breakdown (Attachment 3B):** Must include descriptions of all anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. (**Attachment 3C** is provided for future use by selected grantees to submit amendments to the approved program and/or budget.)

Further explanation of the expenditure accounts can be found in ISBE's *State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures* handbook located at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf.

6. ___ **Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 4, 5, and 6):** Each applicant is required to submit the certification forms listed below. These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and bind the applicant to its contents.
 - ◆ Certification and Assurances and Standard Terms of the Grant
 - ◆ Charter Schools Program-Specific Terms
 - ◆ Certification Regarding Debarment
7. ___ **Certification Regarding Lobbying (Attachments 7, 7A, 7B, and 7C):** Each applicant proposing a grant in the amount of **\$100,000** or more must submit the "Certification Regarding Lobbying" forms. These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and bind the applicant to its contents.
8. ___ **General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (Attachment 8):** Complete the attachment.
9. ___ **Evidence of Charter Application Submission:** (Pre-Charter Planning Grant applicants only) Provide evidence (i.e., memo or email from district, certified mail receipt, or other proof of delivery) that a charter application was submitted to the school district, that the school district was notified in a timely manner about the applicant's intent to submit a grant application under the federal Public Charter Schools Program, and that the district has received a copy of the grant application prior to its submission to ISBE.

10. ___ **Proposed or Authorized Charter School Agreement:** Provide a copy of the proposed or authorized charter agreement submitted to the school district.
11. ___ **Taxpayer Identification and Not-for-Profit Status:** If the not-for-profit entity or charter school is not a registered vendor with ISBE, then it must complete a Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service form W-9, "Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification" and submit the form with its proposal, along with its not-for-profit registration papers from the Illinois Secretary of State's Office.

Submission of these documents will enable ISBE to establish a vendor code to ensure that grant payments will be made. For W-9 purposes, the not-for-profit entity's name has to match exactly the name used on the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) form. Not-for-profit entities should not use "charter school" in the organization's title. If a not-for-profit entity submitting a Pre-Charter Planning proposal has a charter school approved, then it must establish a new vendor code for the proposed charter school by resubmission of a W-9 for that charter school.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Each narrative description of all the proposals received under this RFP will be reviewed and evaluated according to the criteria listed below for each grant category. Final selections for grant awards will be made by the State Superintendent of Education and will be based upon recommendations resulting from the peer evaluation/review process used to determine the extent to which each proposal meets the following criteria. The peer review team will consist of successful charter school operators and staff of Illinois charter school organizations.

Applicants proposing at least one of the following priority activities will receive **10 bonus points** in addition to those received under each criterion below.

- ♦ Operate a charter school outside of the city of Chicago;
- ♦ Serve at-risk and other educationally disadvantaged students at the secondary education level to meet the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core and to assist such students to remain in or, in the case of drop outs, to return to school through grade 12; and/or
- ♦ Serve educationally disadvantaged students.

Pre-Charter Planning Proposals

1. The diversity of the planning team and its members' expertise in and the extent of their knowledge about areas such as project management, curriculum, instruction, assessment, community relations, marketing, finance and fund-raising, governance and management, law, and real estate. (20 points)
2. The quality of the needs assessment and the likelihood that it will identify unmet educational needs in the community that could be addressed by the proposed charter school. (20 points)
3. The degree to which the mission statement is clearly presented and tied directly to the improvement of student performance. (20 points)
4. The quality of the proposed charter school's curriculum in assisting students to achieve state standards and the possibility that it may be disseminated to other schools. (20 points)
5. The extent to which the proposed budget is consistent with the proposal's activities and appears to be cost-effective. (20 points)

Program Design Proposals

1. The quality of the charter school's proposed educational program, including accountability mechanisms and the number of students to be served. (25 points)

2. The extent to which the proposed budget is consistent with the proposal's activities and appears to be cost-effective. (25 points)
3. The thoroughness of the applicant's approach to attracting at-risk and other educationally disadvantaged students and the plans for meeting the needs of those who may be underserved in more traditional educational environments. (25 points)
4. The level of diversity and the degree to which the members of the planning partnership represent the community to be served and the scope and thoroughness of its approach to involving parents and community members in the proposed charter school. (15 points)
5. The strength of the proposed governance system and the financial model to ensure that charter school resources are used effectively. (10 points)

Implementation Proposals

1. The quality of the charter school's educational program, the applicant's approach to attracting and serving students who may be at risk or underserved in more traditional educational environments, and the number of students to be served. (30 points)
2. The legitimacy of the school's mechanisms for assessing student performance over and above the required state assessment and its planned methods of ongoing response to the information gathered through student assessment. (25 points)
3. The coherence and cost-effectiveness of the proposed implementation activities in the context of the charter school's overall financial circumstance. (30 points)
4. The adequacy of the charter school's planned financial and operational set-up, exclusive of federal financial support, as evidenced by its funding arrangements with the local school district; any private or community-based resources it will have at its disposal; and its facilities and transportation arrangements. (15 points)