



NOLA Charter Excellence Fund Grant Application
Experienced Operator Application for 2016 School Openings

I. Overview

In 2013, the NOLA Charter Excellence Fund was established through partnership between the Charter School Growth Fund and New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) to help transform New Orleans into the first city in the United States where every public school student is able to attend an excellent school. Over the five year grant period, the NOLA Charter Excellence Fund will invest in the creation of 15,000 new high-quality school “seats” in New Orleans.

NSNO will be executing application processes that award charter operators funds to replicate and expand high-quality schools that will serve public school students in New Orleans. Experienced operators currently running schools in Louisiana can apply for available funding to open an additional school in the 2016-2017 school year.

Application Requirements:

| Eligibility requirements | Application requirements | Funding |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing operators (single-site or multiple-site charter operators) ▪ Must have a charter or have applied for a charter to open a school in the 2016-2017 academic year ▪ Operator must meet the criteria outlined in section II, below | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader must be identified at the time of the application and must be available for observation and interviews during the grant process ▪ School leader/principal must have a demonstrated track record of exceptional student achievement with a high poverty population AND must have at least two years in a leadership role managing adults | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operators can propose budget for the number of seats served at full enrollment ▪ Award amounts will be determined based on the scope of work required, seat capacity, and proposed needs of the new school ▪ Awards can be used for activities, personnel, or supplies that will drive student achievement at the new school |

II. Eligibility Criteria

Charter school operators running *only one school* must achieve a statistically significant effect size of 0.10 or higher in reading or math (with neither reading nor math being statistically significant and negative) to be eligible to apply for an award.

Charter school organizations operating *more than one school* must meet **all** the following criteria:

- Overall CMO effect size must meet minimum criteria (math or reading effect size of 0.10 or higher, non-negative effect size for both reading and math);
- No school in the CMO’s portfolio may have an effect size that is statistically significant and negative; and
- At least 25% of the schools in the portfolio must have an overall effect size of 0.15 or higher.

Operators who meet the effect size criteria outlined above will not need to submit any additional student achievement data along with their application. Operators who do not meet the effect size criteria, as outlined above, must provide the following student achievement data in an excel file:

- For each school run by the operator, please provide a spreadsheet with anonymous raw, matched student testing data from the last two years of statewide exams along with a brief narrative discussing the performance of current students enrolled at the operator’s existing school(s). Please also provide any internal assessment data used for all grades served. Please provide this information in an excel file and submit to alyse@nsno.org.

III. Application Process

NSNO seeks to invest in operators who will run high-quality public schools in New Orleans. These operators will be assessed based on their current academic performance, organizational structure, school leadership team, and instructional model and school design.

For operators who currently run schools, evaluations will be based on assessment of student achievement results (as evidenced by effect size or internal analysis), and the CMO Readiness to Expand. Specifically, we seek to ensure that the operator has a leadership team in place to open a new school of sound design, as well as the requisite central office support to manage multiple schools. For full description of the Expansion Readiness criteria, see **APPENDIX IV**.

Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis beginning with the initial submission of a non-binding letter of intent to alyse@nsno.org. There are four components to the 2016 NOLA Charter Excellence Fund Grant Application:

- Candidate presentation to NSNO selection team and student achievement data submission
- Written application submission
- Site visits and observations
- Final interviews

More information on each of these components is below. Please also see **APPENDIX I** for more information about the selection process and timeline.

1. *Candidate Presentation to NSNO Selection Team*

NSNO invites all interested operators to submit a non-binding letter of intent to apply to alyse@nsno.org. Once submitted, NSNO will schedule candidates to present for one hour to members of the NSNO selection team. Operators who do not meet effect size will be asked to submit student achievement data to NSNO. During the presentation, candidates will provide an overview of the following:

- An overview of the organization's academic data and model
- Organization's structure and capacity to expand and open a new high-quality school
- School leadership background experience (including record of results with student achievement and qualifications)
- Instructional model and design of the new school

Candidates will be asked to provide any materials to alyse@nsno.org no less than 48 hours in advance of the presentation (PPT, handouts, etc.). Selection team members will review the information prior to the presentation; candidates will be expected to present this information and answer questions from the selection team.

NSNO will provide candidates with feedback on their presentation and overall school design. Based on the feedback, selected applicants will continue in the process by completing a written application, site visits, and interviews.

2. *Written Application Submission*

NSNO will work with candidates to determine the information needed for the written application submission. See **APPENDIX II** for a sample application. The final written application will be provided to selected candidates after their presentation to NSNO.

3. *Site Visits and Observations*

Site visits will be scheduled with operators and may consist of any of the following activities:

- Observation of the proposed leader teaching a class
- Observation of the proposed leader leading any meetings
- Observation of the proposed leader observing and giving feedback to a teacher
- Classroom observations at existing schools

- Staff interviews at existing schools

NSNO will work with operators to determine exact requirements of site visit and observations.

4. *Final Interviews*

NSNO will hold interviews with the organization's leadership team, specifically centering on the organization's structures, school leadership team, and instructional model and school design. Final funding decisions will be made at the discretion of NSNO's co-CEOs and Board.

IV. Grantee Requirements

Operators who are awarded a grant during this application cycle must agree to all of the following requirements as specified:

- Selected operators must participate in NSNO School Reviews of the new school for the life of the grant (until the end of 2017).
- Selected operators must agree to cooperate with all aspects of any program evaluation that may be implemented during the life of the grant

APPENDIX I
Application Process Components

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| <p>Letter of Intent to Apply submitted to alyse@nsno.org.</p> | <p>NSNO invites all interested operators to submit a non-binding letter of intent to apply for funding. Once submitted, operators will be asked to schedule a one hour presentation with the selection team at the NSNO office. NSNO will work with operators to set date and time of presentation.</p> |
| <p>Student Achievement Data submitted to alyse@nsno.org</p> | <p>Operators who do not meet the effect size requirements must submit additional data outlined in section II, above</p> |
| <p>Applicant Presentation</p> | <p>Candidates will be asked to schedule and present for one hour to the NSNO selection team. The following components must be addressed by candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organization’s structure and capacity to open a high-quality school ▪ School leadership background experience (including record of results with student achievement and qualifications) ▪ Instructional model and design of the school |
| <p>Presentation Feedback</p> | <p>Candidates will receive feedback from the NSNO selection committee after the presentation. Based on feedback, selected candidates will be given guidelines for submitting their written application.</p> |
| <p>Written Application submitted to alyse@nsno.org</p> | <p>Applications will be due via e-mail on the agreed-upon deadline (set by NSNO and candidate).</p> |
| <p>Finalist Notification</p> | <p>The NSNO selection team will review all written applications. Selected operators will be considered finalists and invited to the final stages of the process, consisting of interviews and site visits/observations of the proposed school leader (and any existing schools outside Louisiana, if applicable)</p> |
| <p>Site Visit and Observations</p> | <p>Depending on the applicant, a site visit may center solely on the proposed school leader or may include visits to any existing schools outside of Louisiana. Activities may include any combination of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observation of the proposed leader teaching a class ▪ Observation of the proposed leader leading any meetings ▪ Observation of the proposed leader observing and giving feedback to a teacher ▪ Classroom observations at existing schools (if applicable) |
| <p>Interviews</p> | <p>Operator’s leadership team will conduct final interviews with the NSNO selection team, centering on the organization’s structures, school leadership team, and the instructional model and school design.</p> <p><i>Please note: If an operator’s application moves to the interview stage in the application process, the operator’s executive team, designated school leader, and board chair are all expected to attend the interview day.</i></p> |
| <p>Award Notification</p> | <p>Final funding decisions will be made at the discretion of NSNO’s co-CEOs and Board.</p> |

APPENDIX II

Sample Written Application

Please note: the information below is provided as a sample of what applicants may be asked to submit. NSNO will work with individual candidates to determine what information will be required for the candidate's written application.

When preparing submissions, applicants should use Arial 10 font. See below for further detail on the submission requirements for each section of the application. Incomplete applications or applications that do not meet the requirements listed below will not be reviewed.

Completed applications require the following four components:

1. Written Materials – Parts I and II submitted in one PDF document (Applicant Information and Project Narrative) – not to exceed 30 pages. Applicants must answer each section of the application in the order listed below and should include the bolded headings listed in the application.
2. Part III submitted in Excel format.
3. Appendix PDF – all appendices submitted in one PDF document.
4. Appendix Table of Contents – should be created once the Appendix PDF has been bundled. The Appendix Table of Contents lists the required documentation specified in the application and has room for supplementary materials within each section. Applicants must list the page number in the Appendix PDF of any document referenced in Parts I, II, and III. If you do not put the page number in the Appendix Table of Contents, the material will not be reviewed. Any appendix document referenced in the narrative must include the correct appendix page number; otherwise the material will not be reviewed.

PART I: APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Name of charter operator/school
2. For each school currently operated: name, year of opening, state site code
3. Start date of most senior official of operator (CEO, Executive Director, Principal, etc.)
4. If a new operator, provide the name and years of any school that the leadership team of the new operator previously led or served on the leadership team
5. Identify an Application Contact, the primary person to receive updates and notifications, and include name, title, phone number, mailing address and email address
6. Specify the kind of school opening (K-8, high school, etc), and the grades that will be served by the new school.

PART II: PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. Structure and Leadership for Expansion:

Describe the charter operator/management organization model (if operating a single school site, describe structure of school leadership team and if a new operator, describe the proposed model); include the following information:

- a. Organizational chart
- b. Job descriptions for each leadership role (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative).
- c. Resumes of all current leadership and bios and resumes for the leadership team that will operate the new School. Please include previous student achievement data for the designated principal (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative). *Note: School leaders/principals must be identified for all applicants. For new operators, information on the organization's director of finance*

and operations and board of governors should be provided if available.

Note: For all applicants, school leader must have a demonstrated track record of exceptional student achievement with a high poverty open-enrollment population. School leader must have at least two years in a leadership role managing adults. (See Sample School Leader Profiles attached as APPENDIX III).

- d. Provide a narrative that explains the delineation of roles and responsibilities between the network and the schools and the decision rights of principals/school leaders. Please include any network non-negotiables in terms of school design.
- e. **Financial Capacity:** Describe how the network ensures financial accountability and compliance. Who are the key staff members? What financial management tools and technology support internal control systems and financial accounting? What internal financial metrics are employed to measure financial accountability and sustainability? For CMOs, please include an explanation of how the roles and responsibilities differ between the network and the individual schools. Please include board- approved financial control policies if available (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative). *Note: For new operators, information on the organization's director of finance should be provided if available.*
- f. **Governance:** Please provide board member information in the provided Board Member template (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative). Please provide a brief narrative explaining how the board monitors or evaluates itself, the school, and the CMO (if applicable).
- g. **Leadership Development:** Describe how the charter management organization (or school leadership team if single site operator) will recruit, develop, train, and retain leaders to support existing school leader retirement or future operator growth. Explain who is responsible for school leader coaching, training and evaluation and what those processes look like in action. Please include any existing school leader competencies used for school leader selection and evaluation if available (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative).
- h. **Selection.** Please describe how the school leader or principal of the school was selected. Describe the recruitment and selection processes, and the criteria used to assess leader qualifications (may not be applicable for all new operators).
- i. **Incubation training / development.** Please describe the plans for leadership training and development of selected leader during the incubation year prior to school opening. If partnering with an organization, please briefly describe the main components of the training program.

Note: All applicants must have an identified school leader in order to be considered for 2016-2017 School Opening awards.

2. School Environment

- a. **Operations:** Describe how the charter management organization (or school leadership team if single site operator) will support operational execution. Please provide narrative or evidence that illustrates, the staffing model, performance metrics, and the school's plan for supporting all operational needs of the school such as technology, transportation, human resources etc. (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative). For CMOs, describe which services the CMO plans to provide to individual schools, explain the delineation of responsibilities between the network and the schools, and explain how those services are evaluated by the CMO (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative).
- b. **Mission, Strategy, and Values:** What is the school's mission? What is the successful school model that the applicant hopes to replicate? Please also describe the network's strategic non-negotiables –those common programmatic elements we would see across the networks' schools – and which programmatic elements will be unique to the new school. What are the organization's core values? How will these values be operationalized across the organization?

- c. *School Culture*: Describe how the school plans to align staff and students around high expectations for student learning and behavior. Please describe specific strategies for investment as well as systems the school plans to establish and use to maintain its desired culture for students.

3. Instructional Effectiveness and Student Performance

Note: All answers below should be based on the proposed new school. Operators who currently run schools in New Orleans may reference strategies in place at those schools as part of their responses to the questions below.

- a. *Drive for Results*: The purpose of this funding is to create high-quality seats for students in New Orleans. Please describe how the operator plans to accelerate learning for a diverse student population. Include an overview of the school's curricular program, intervention model and plans for instructional differentiation. . Please provide any supplemental materials such as RTI plans, scope and sequence, etc. (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative).
- b. *Special Education*: Answer should address the following four topics:
 - i. For Existing Operators: Please describe your track record of academic success for students with disabilities. On average, what percent of your student population is identified as special education (entire network, if multiple schools)? What is the percent range of your student population identified as special education across your school network? How does this percent compare with the local district's average?
 - ii. Identification: How will the operator identify any student who is enrolled in its schools who is presenting academic or behavioral problems to determine whether that child should be referred for a special education evaluation?
 - iii. Staffing & Administration: How will special education and related service personnel collaborate with general education teachers (e.g. team teach, team planning, etc.)?
 - iv. Curriculum & Instruction: What is the operator's plan to modify delivery of curriculum (e.g. integration of assistive technology) to ensure that all students can access the general education curriculum? How does the school plan to train teachers to modify the curriculum and instruction to address the unique needs of students with disabilities? How will curriculum and instruction decisions be tracked and monitored by IEP teams and school personnel?
- c. *Instructional Delivery*: Please describe how the operator plans to ensure instructional excellence from lesson-planning to classroom delivery from teaching staff. Please provide any supplemental materials used to support or evaluate instructional delivery and attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative.
- d. *Data-Driven Instruction*: What is the school's process for setting ambitious student achievement goals? How will student academic progress be monitored?
- e. *Recruitment and Selection of Staff*: Describe how the charter management organization will support the hiring, evaluation, and development of all staff. Please include an overview of the hiring process and an explanation of how and at what step the school leader will be involved in site-based hiring decisions. Please provide internal selection criteria and any existing performance evaluation rubrics for any CMO-level staff if available (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative).
- f. *Non-Classroom Staff*: Please explain how the school will staff to ensure high-quality teacher support, family and student support, smooth school operations, and compliance with all applicable district policies and procedures.
- g. *Performance Management*: Please describe how the school's performance management system and process. Provide performance rubrics or appropriate supporting documentation if available. Provide any internal dashboards or like monitoring tools if available (attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative).

- h. *Professional Development*: Describe the school's plan for ongoing professional development of staff.
- i. *Family Outreach and Engagement*: Please describe the school's strategy for recruiting and enrolling students. How does the school plan to invest and retain students and families prior to the school's opening and on an ongoing basis throughout the school year? Please list any relevant partnerships with community or faith-based organizations that would support a process to recruit students. Please include student attrition data for each school, assumptions underlying the data, and the length of the waitlist at any or all campuses.
- j. *Monitoring School Quality*: Explain how the operator intends to monitor performance of each school. What are the student achievement and organizational goals? How is data captured, discussed, and used for action planning? Who leads that effort at the network and school level? (Attach in Appendix PDF and reference page number in narrative).

PART III: FINANCIAL PLAN¹

The Financial Plan should provide an understanding of how the charter operator intends to manage the school's finances, and how the operator intends to use funds. It should present a clear picture of both the proposed schools' and the operator's financial viability including the soundness of revenue and expenditure projections; operating reserves; expected fundraising needs (expressed as cost/student); and how well the school's budget aligns with and supports effective implementation of the educational program.

1. **Financial Model**: Provide in Excel format. Please note all assumptions that drive your budget model (i.e. per pupil MFP, student enrollment, staffing FTEs, daily bus cost, etc.) should be clearly shown and labeled in your budget model so that a reviewer unfamiliar with your organization/school's finances can easily see what drives your model. If you have specific questions related to your budget model during application process, please email alyse@nsno.org.

At this time, operators may apply for funding that supports their plan to create a high-quality school for students – this can cover costs associated with personnel, startup supplies, or activities. Operators will be asked during their interviews to justify the costs for which they seek funding and demonstrate how these funds will drive student achievement at the school.

- a. *School budget with use of funds* (Required for all applicants)
 - i. Budget covering the term of the charter ((include income statement and balance sheet projections)
 - ii. Start-up year plan with assessment of and plan for costs
 - iii. Monthly cash flow projections for start-up and the first 24 months of school operations
 - iv. Most current internal financial statements (statement of financial position, statement of activities, and statement of cash flow) for existing schools
- b. *Budget narrative* detailing use of funds, including:
 - i. Allocation of funds by role to be funded by award for personnel costs
 - ii. Allocation of funds for additional non-personnel start-up costs
 - ii. Allocation of funds by year (grants can be distributed over 36 months)
- c. *Model without funds*. Please provide an explanation of how your financial plan changes should you not receive an award, i.e. what positions are only filled with inflow of funding.

¹ Borrowed from Louisiana Department of Education's Evaluation Rubric for new charter applicants

Please be advised that at this time, Louisiana's Public Charter School Program (PCSP) funds have been exhausted. Applicants should not anticipate charter school start-up funds when submitting their financial plan. Including uncommitted funding sources or grant awards in your budget may impact the evaluation of your application.

2. A copy of your 501(c)(3) status letter, or a copy of your fiscal agent's 501(c)(3) status letter. If tax-exempt status not yet available, please provide date of submission to IRS for tax-exempt status (attach in Appendix PDF and reference Appendix page number in narrative).
3. A copy of your organization's most recent audited financial statements from the previous three years. Please include a copy of a single audit opinion (if applicable) and the most recent SEFA (schedule of expenditures of federal awards). Please also include the independent auditors' management letter for all years if applicable. If no audited financial statement is yet available, please provide most recent packet provided to your Board finance committee and the organization's internal financial statements as of December 31, 2014(statement of financial position, statement of activities, and statement of cash flow). (Attach in Appendix PDF and reference Appendix page number in narrative).
4. Your organization's most recent tax return if available. If the organization has not yet submitted a tax return, please offer a brief explanation (attach in Appendix PDF and reference Appendix page number in narrative).

APPENDIX III

Sample School Leader Profiles

Please note: All operators (new operators, organizations operating outside of Louisiana, or those not currently operating schools in Louisiana) must have a leader with a demonstrated track record of exceptional student achievement with a high poverty population, and must have at least two years in a leadership role managing adults.

The following profiles reflect previous school leaders who met the school leader requirement.

1. Leader A was a founding member and assistant principal of a high-performing open-enrollment college prep charter school serving a high-poverty population. As an AP, she directly supervised teachers, developed curriculum, and organized all tutoring and Saturday school programs. Under her supervision, the teaching staff made significant gains with students (83% of 5th graders, 91% of 6th graders, 94% of 7th graders, and 77% of 8th graders were proficient in math – well above the state average for that year). In her fourth year at the school, she served as a 7th grade math teacher and math department chair, during which time 98% of her students received 3s and 4s on the state math test (4 being the highest possible score).
2. Leader B served as a founding English teacher at a high school representing the lowest income congressional district in the country. She became a grade team leader at the school and mentored 15 teachers by providing support and critical feedback aimed at improving teacher practice and student achievement. The school consistently outperformed district standards and was named in the top 10% of high schools in the city. After 5 years, she was selected as a KIPP Miles Family Fellow where she was placed in a KIPP high school and served as the 9th grade team leader – during her time in the fellowship she participated in ongoing instructional leadership development and individual leadership development from the KIPP national foundation.
3. Leader C had experience in school turnaround as a high school assistant principal and the principal of elementary schools in high poverty areas. As the principal of an elementary school, Leader D was a finalist for the National School Change Award because of the dramatic gains in student achievement reached under his leadership. He was also Superintendent of a school district where he closed the NCLB achievement gap in all AYP subgroups and increased the number of fully accredited schools from 23 to 29.

APPENDIX IV
Selection Rubric

Please note: Operators will be granted awards based on their written application, school site visits, and interviews. The selection committee will recommend operators for award based on the data collected through the selection process. Final award decisions will be made at the discretion of the co-CEOs and the Board of New Schools for New Orleans.

Experienced Operator/CMO Selection Rubric

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| Expansion Readiness | Structure and Leadership for Expansion | School Administration and Operations – description of how the new school will ensure adequate levels of teacher and student support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staffing ▪ Financial Capacity ▪ Governance ▪ Leadership Development ▪ School Leader Selection ▪ School Leader Incubation Training/Development |
| | School Environment | Extent to which applicant proposes a bold yet achievable school environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operations ▪ Mission, Strategy, and Values ▪ School Culture |
| | Instructional Effectiveness and Student Performance | Extent to which applicant proposes a bold yet achievable plan for ensuring student achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drive for Results ▪ Special Education ▪ Instructional Delivery ▪ Data-Driven Instruction ▪ Recruitment and Selection of Staff ▪ Non-Classroom Staff ▪ Performance Management ▪ Professional Development ▪ Family Outreach and Engagement ▪ Monitoring School Quality |
| Absolute Requirement | Financial Viability | Applicant presents a financially viable business model for school operations |
| Absolute Requirement | School Leadership | Applicant schools must have identified a school leader and he/she must be available during school visits and interviews. School leader must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have 2+ years of experience as a leader with management responsibility (Assistant Principal or above strongly preferred) at a high-performing school ▪ Have been responsible for significant student achievement gains teaching a high-poverty population |
| Absolute Requirement | Demographic Served | Applicant schools must agree to serve a student population that is no less than 40% free and reduced lunch |
| Absolute Requirement | Enrollment | Applicant must agree to participate in state-funded centralized enrollment process known as One App within one year of award |