

## **2015 CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY GRANT COMPETITION CALL FOR PEER REVIEWERS**

**CONTEXT:** The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII), is seeking individuals to serve as peer reviewers for the FY 2015 Charter Schools Program (CSP) State educational agency (SEA) grant competition. The purpose of the CSP is to increase national understanding of the charter school model and to expand the number of high quality charter schools available to students across the nation. The CSP SEA program is a competitive grant program that enables SEAs to provide financial assistance, through subgrants to eligible applicants, for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools and for the dissemination of information about successful charter schools. For FY15, Congress appropriated \$253 million to support the continued development of high quality charter schools and dissemination of charter school best practices throughout the nation. Approximately \$100 million of these funds are dedicated to this grant competition. We invite qualified individuals to apply to serve as grant application peer reviewers by completing the [Peer Reviewer Application Form](#).

**NOTE:** Even if you applied to be a peer reviewer in the past, please complete the [Peer Reviewer Application Form](#) as directed below by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22, 2015** to be considered for this new competition in 2015.

**WHO:** We are seeking peer reviewers from various professions and backgrounds, including:

- State or district education officials
- Charter school funders
- Charter school and charter management organization leaders
- K-12, special education and English learner researchers and evaluators
- Experts in program evaluation
- Practitioners from the social innovation and venture philanthropy fields
- Social and education entrepreneurs
- Strategy practitioners with experience in the charter sector
- Education and public policy professionals
- Grant makers or managers with experience in the charter sector
- Professionals with knowledge of, and experience with, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), education reform, and education policy

Peer reviewers may have expertise in various geographies, including urban, suburban, rural, and tribal communities. The selected reviewers should have a solid understanding of the national charter school movement and expertise in at least one of the following areas: Education Strategy and Education Policy; Research and Evaluation; Charter School Development & Implementation; or Charter School Grant Administration.

### ***Education Strategy and Education Policy***

- Breadth of knowledge about current policies and practices around charter school accountability at the national or state level, including a keen understanding of issues regarding reviewing charter school performance, charter school accountability; equity, and admission and lottery practices.
- Knowledge of effective organizational/management and operational infrastructures (e.g. governance, people, processes, accountability structures, technology systems, program and grant management).
- Knowledge of how to create and implement an effective and strategic business plan.
- Knowledge of the role of SEAs and charter school authorizers.
- Familiarity with education equity.
- Knowledge of federal education reform initiatives.
- Experience developing policy based on educational research related to the charter school sector.
- Experience designing, evaluating, or implementing effective charter school policy at the state or local level focused on autonomy and accountability.
- Familiarity with charter school closure and turnaround initiatives.

### ***Research and Evaluation***

- Knowledge regarding charter schools and charter management organizations (CMOs) and their performance throughout the sector.
- Experience with what constitutes high-quality charter school start-up, replication and/or expansion.
- Knowledge around charter school assessment and program evaluation.
- Understanding and experience around charter school leadership, professional development, technical assistance and resources.
- Familiarity with using logic models and assessing performance.

### ***Charter School Development & Implementation:***

- Experience in increasing student achievement, in particular for educationally disadvantaged students.
- Experience designing, evaluating, or implementing effective charter school models that focus on increased student achievement and innovation.
- Breadth of knowledge about current comprehensive school improvement strategies and research findings, including how to apply those strategies and research findings in a variety of settings.

### ***Charter School Grant Administration***

- Experience reviewing grant applications of a similar size and scope.
- Experience conducting state site visits or other grant monitoring activities related to charter schools.

**WHAT:** Peer reviewers will independently read, score, and provide timely, well written comments for SEA grant applications submitted to the U.S. Department of Education under the CSP.

**REQUIREMENTS:** In addition to the skills, attributes and expertise highlighted above, peer reviewers must also meet the following requirements:

- **Availability:** Reviewers for the CSP SEA competition will need to dedicate approximately 80 hours for the review process (40 hours will be needed to review all assigned applications, and another 40 hours will be needed to participate in the on-site application review). This time estimate includes participation in an orientation session by conference call prior to evaluating the applications, time for reading, scoring, developing comments, and discussing assigned applications. While exact dates for the review have not yet been finalized, we expect it will be around the end of June through July, 2015.
- **Where:** Reviewers will read, score and develop comments from their location prior to traveling to Washington, DC, to participate in one week of in-person panel discussions.
- **Tools:** Each reviewer must have access to the Internet, a phone, a computer, a printer and have the ability to interact within the web environment.
- **Quality of review:** Each reviewer must provide detailed, objective, constructive, and timely, well written reviews for each assigned application. These reviews will be used to recommend applications for funding. They will also be shared with each applicant and the comments regarding winning applicants will be made available to the general public following the reviews.

**HONORARIUM:** Reviewers will receive an honorarium of \$200 per application for the satisfactory completion of the above requirements during the grant review schedule. A satisfactory review requires that each application is read, scored, and discussed. The final, high-quality comments and corresponding scores will be reviewed and approved by a panel moderator prior to their final submission in the G5 system.

**IF INTERESTED:** If you would like to be considered as a peer reviewer, please click [here](#) and complete the Peer Reviewer Application Form, after completing the form you will be prompted to send your resume and contact information via email with the subject heading “FY2015 CSP SEA PEER REVIEWER” to the email address provided in the Peer Reviewer Application Form. You must complete both steps by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22, 2015** to be considered as an FY 2015 CSP SEA peer reviewer. **Please do not exceed the five-page limit for resumes.**

**G5 REGISTRATION:** To serve as a reviewer you will need to register in G5. If you would like take care of this process prior to being selected, you will find an instructional video on how to register [here](#). \*Please note that registering in G5 at this time does not guarantee that you will be selected as a reviewer.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Please remember that if your organization intends to apply for a grant under any CSP competitions, you may not be eligible to serve as a reviewer. As a reviewer, you will have a conflict of interest if:

- You helped prepare an application, regardless of financial interest in the success or failure of that application.
- You have agreed to serve, or you have been offered a position, as an employee, advisor, or consultant on the project.
- Your personal financial interest will be affected by the outcome of the competition, which would include any family members, employees or associates of the project applying for funding.

If you have any questions about the peer review process, please contact us by email: [CharterSchools@ed.gov](mailto:CharterSchools@ed.gov).

**NON-DISCRIMINATION:** The Department solicits reviewers without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability. The Department will provide reasonable accommodations for a qualified individual with a disability so that individual might participate in the peer reviewer application process. If you require a reasonable accommodation to apply to participate in this review, please contact Kathryn Meeley by phone, (202)453-6818 or email at [kathryn.meeley@ed.gov](mailto:kathryn.meeley@ed.gov) no later than **5:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 20, 2015** to ensure we can facilitate the application process.

**PROGRAM INFORMATION:** For more information about the Charter Schools Program State Educational Agency Grant Program, click [here](#).