



Funding the Development Process for a Charter School

There are many ways to fund the development process for a charter school. Consider applying for planning and implementation grants, as you are eligible. Two possible sources of grant funding in Michigan are the Department of Education and the Walton Family Foundation (for proposed schools located in Detroit or serving a minimum of 50% of Detroit student residents).

Michigan Department of Education

MDE offers a planning and implementation grant application process for groups who wish to develop charter schools in the state. The pre-charter planning grant is used for "planning" the proposed charter school. The application process is competitive, with individual applications being reviewed by a committee and rated based on a rubric (located in the application). There is a deadline for submitting the application each year. To apply, you must have an established MEGS account that is established with a non-profit group (not a school non-profit). Read more at http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_30334_40088---,00.html and about the MEGS account at <http://megs.mde.state.mi.us/megsweb/default.asp>.

The content of the MDE planning grant application is similar to a phase one authorizer application, but not identical. This application will require sections on community need for a school, mission and vision, the educational programs with goals and assessment methods, a pre-operational budget, a management plan and more. Only non-profit corporations are eligible to apply for this grant. This grant, valued at \$110,000 total, is broken down and received in stages. You must revise your application to the expected scores in each stage, before you are eligible to move onto the next stage and receive the corresponding money.

Walton Family Foundation

The WFF offers planning and implementation grants for groups in Detroit who meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Demonstrate strong potential for delivering excellent academic results for K-12 students, as measured by standardized achievement tests
- ✓ Serve significant low-income student populations
- ✓ Not represent a for-profit entity
- ✓ Have an endorsement from a Foundation member or one of their state-based grant partners (MAPSA and/or Walton)
- ✓ Draw a majority of its students from the City of Detroit



If you meet all of the above criteria, visit:

<http://waltonfamilyfoundation.org/forgrantseekers/types.asp> for details on various grant opportunities. After reviewing information on each grant and choosing the one you are eligible to apply for, submit the appropriate completed application to MAPSA at founders@charterschools.org. If you have reviewed all of the online material and still have questions about this grant program, contact Heather Gardner at (734) 341-9336.

Application deadlines are: March 1st and September 1st of each year

Other Foundations/Community Organizations

Look around the community where the proposed school will be located and determine if there are other foundations or community organizations that would support you through grants, loans, donations, or verbal support. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce suggests that building partnerships with local businesses can help founder groups resolve a number of issues, through their expertise and experience. Read more in Corporations, Chambers, and Charters: How Businesses Can Support High Quality Public Charter Schools at <http://icw.uschamber.com/publication/corporations-chambers-and-charters-how-businesses-can-support-high-quality-public-charte>.

Financing/Loans

It can be difficult to obtain financing as a new charter school. Visit MAPSA's online vendor gallery to see the various types of organizations who work with Michigan's charters (including banks, finance companies, CDC's, construction companies, etc.). Check with your local banks in the proposed school community as well.

Filing for Non-Profit Status

Planning and implementation grants are only awarded to non-profit organizations (from MDE and WFF). Apply early on, giving yourself plenty of time for the non-profit status request to be processed and returned to you. When applying, be certain you are NOT applying for a school non-profit. You cannot be a school non-profit until an authorizer grants a charter to you. Full details on the process and the forms are available in MAPSA's online store. If you need assistance with the application process, seek legal counsel.