



## **Mississippi First (MSF)**

### **Charter School Program (CSP) Application Proposal FAQ**

**1. What if my school has a delayed launch after I submit my application?**

If your school's launch is delayed after you receive an award letter from MSF, you must notify MCSAB and MSF at that time. If you have not yet begun to draw down and would like MSF to consider shifting the timing of your CSP subgrant to accommodate a later start date, please inform MSF as part of that notification. Remember that you may only receive CSP funding for a maximum of 60 months, and planning funding may only last 18 months, so if you have begun to draw down, your CSP funding will conclude no later than 60 months from your start date, regardless of delays in your launch. If you do not make progress after your delayed launch, MSF reserves the right to discontinue your CSP subgrant.

**2. Do I have to decide to delay the launch before submitting the CSP grant application?**

All questions regarding delaying the launch of your charter school should be directed first to the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board (MCSAB). The start date of your CSP subgrant will align with your authorization date and launch plans, if at all possible.

**3. What if I do not attend the CSP kickoff webinar?**

The recording and PowerPoint of the kickoff webinar will be posted on MSF website.

**4. Will I have an opportunity to revise my budget once I submit my CSP application?**

Yes, MSF provides two types of opportunities post award for budget revisions. First, MSF works with subgrantees to finalize their budgets post award; this process may include changes to the original budget. Budget finalization may occur before or after the post-award training session, but both must be complete before a subgrantee may make its first drawdown request. Although MSF will approve full-term budgets (and obligate all funds) at this time, subgrantees will also have the opportunity to make budget amendments as needed throughout the grant term by submitting a budget amendment request, as long as the amended budget does not exceed their approved grant award and maintains fidelity to the purposes of CSP.

**5. Who determines if an application is funded?**

Per MSF's approved application to the US Department of Education, independent peer reviewers review and select applicants for subgrants. Peer reviewers apply through an open call and are assessed by MSF based on the following qualifications: 1) charter school start-up experience, 2) financial or school operational expertise, 3) CSP or other federal grant experience, and 4) belief in the goals and purposes of CSP, including the use of charter schools to enhance educational opportunity and equity for Mississippi children.

**6. What determines my risk category?**

Peer reviewers will assess applicants for risk as part of the initial application review. Applicants deemed too risky due to a history of academic, financial, or operational problems or as the result of a poorly conceived school plan will not be funded. All applicants who are recommended for funding will undergo a secondary risk assessment post award by Mississippi First to ensure we apply the correct monitoring schedule to each subgrantee.

**7. How do I know the allowable costs when preparing my budget?**

MSF will provide you with a copy of the [MSF Allowable Cost Guide](#) when you receive the Request for Application. It is also linked on our website.

**8. When can I begin to make drawdowns?**

You may begin drawdowns after you have a signed subgrant agreement, an approved budget, and have attended post-award training.

**9. Do I have to host another public hearing if I've already held one?**

No, if you can provide MSF with all the required documents, such as an agenda, sign-in sheet, summary of comments, evidence that the hearing (and notice thereof) was accessible to individuals with disabilities and limited English proficient individuals, and evidence applicant made good faith efforts to accommodate as many people as possible (e.g., hold the hearing at a convenient time for families or provide virtual participation options), you can use that hearing to qualify. If you have not already held a public hearing, you must do so as soon as possible and ensure you adhere to the above requirements.

**10. What if I cannot expend all funds during the grant fiscal year?**

You will need to notify MSF before the end of the grant fiscal year for approval to carry over your remaining balance to the next grant fiscal year.

**11. When does the 18-month period begin for using planning funds?**

Planning funds may be spent for no more than 18 months of the subgrantee's grant term which will be outlined in the award letter. The planning period begins on a subgrant's start date. Regardless of the time elapse between the start date and the start of school, please note that the planning period ends after the first 30 days of a school beginning to serve students. At that point, schools are not allowed to use CSP funds for hiring and compensating staff as these would be considered ongoing operational costs. Some subgrantees may not receive a full 18 months of planning as a result. The implementation period can run concurrently with the planning period and last until the conclusion of the grant term. Implementation begins once a school has an authorized charter and once a school has a facilities agreement in place. Please refer to the Application Information document for more information about planning and implementation funds.

**12. Do I need to submit the same attachments with the CSP application I submitted with the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board (MCSAB) application?**

Yes, submit all attachments.

**13. What if I fail to submit all the required CSP documents with my application?**

Applicants will have 48 hours to submit completed documents after the submitted application is flagged for being incomplete, or they must wait until the next cycle to re-apply.

**14. What if some of the attachment numbers requested in the CSP application/proposal do not match the attachment numbers in my submitted MCSAB Proposal?**

Submit it as it has been submitted to the MCSAB; thus, if it is Attachment 11 in the MCSAB submission, submit it as Attachment 11 for CSP subgrant application submission. The same applies to all other attachment nomenclature requests within the CSP subgrant application. On your CSP subgrant application, just indicate the appropriate MCSAB charter school application's page numbers for reviewers to refer to for the information.

**15. What if my CSP application is not approved the first time I submit it?**

You will receive a denial letter from MSF informing you that you may re-apply during the next annual cycle.

**16. Do we need to provide MCASB with “adequate and timely” notice of our intent to apply for the CSP grant?**

Yes, this can be done by simply sending them an email and including proof of the email with your CSP proposal.