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WASHINGTON'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT

Washington State Charter Schools Expansion/Replication Project Request for Proposals – Due 7/16/21

BACKGROUND

When the Washington state charter law was passed, it placed a five-year authorizing window, or forty school cap, on authorizing in the state. The cap has not been reached but the five-year window has expired and legislative efforts to extend the window did not pass in the 2021 legislative session. Charter school advocates will continue advocating for the window to be extended in the upcoming session.

Since authorizing new charter schools is not possible at this time, stakeholders across the state are interested in other mechanisms that might be possible to expand the number of high-quality charter school seats including expansion of high-quality charters, either in number or seats in existing grades or grade expansion, or replication of high-quality charter schools.

PROPOSAL

The Washington State Charter Schools Association (WA Charters), in partnership with Washington authorizers and charter school leaders, seeks assistance with taking the existing policy/procedures used for charter school replication or expansion and developing further iterations after conducting research and considering stakeholder feedback. This project will be funded using the Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant. There are two project phases related to this work as outlined below. Bids should be in relation to completing just one or both phases.

PHASE I SCOPE OF WORK - *There are two sub-projects related to this work as outlined below.*

First, the contractor will codify the current Expansion/Replication process used by the Commission. The work will be to examine the current procedure, survey the one charter school leaders who have participated in this process, or those interested in expansion/replications, and provide recommendations for improvements. Taking what has been developed thus far, and codifying the policy/procedure, is the first work product needed.

PROPOSED PHASE I PROJECT DELIVERABLES

- Feedback on the Commission's 2020-21 expansion/replication process.
- An expansion/replication process protocol designed for adoption by the Commission, Spokane Public Schools, and future district authorizers including:
 - Guidance on best practices aligned to NACSA's Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing and Washington State's charter school law.
 - Expansion/replication procedures addressing the stages of the process from the performance report and expansion/replication application through the expansion/replication decision.
- Identify and codify areas to streamline the process so it is not duplicative of other process (e.g. new school app, renewal app) or overly burdensome to operators.
- Considerations for and a guidance to schools on when to seek expansion/replication and how to prepare
- Expansion/replication process orientation (PPT) (for authorizer staff and schools).



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- Summary of process revisions based on 2020-21 experience and feedback.

PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- The development process will include the following components:
- Review current expansion/replication materials (law, Commission policies, etc.).
- Receive and assess feedback regarding the current renewal process including from
 - School leaders
 - Commissioners on the WA Commission
 - Commission staff
 - Spokane Public Schools charter school staff
 - WA Charters
 - Charter School Growth Fund
- Align the 2020-21 process with NACSA guidance and leading practices to develop recommendations for revisions;
- Draft expansion/replication protocol;
- Solicit feedback on draft protocol;
- Revise and finalize protocol; and
- Draft summary of revisions.

TIMELINE

The completed project should be finished by August 31, 2021.

BUDGET

Not to exceed \$10,000

Note: There is no expectation of travel associated with this contract. It is assumed that the work can be completed virtually.

PHASE II SCOPE OF WORK

Secondly, the next part of the project is researching how other states and communities have implemented charter school replication/expansion through a lens of equity and community-based engagement and aligning it to Washington state context and within the current law.

Research questions could include:

- Defining the type of expansion and replication allowable under the current law.
- Understanding how states with similar authorizing laws have supported community driven authorizing.



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- Understanding how states, that have had a window closure, have increased the number of high-quality charter seats.

PHASE II PROPOSED PROJECT DELIVERABLES

- Dissemination of national research on the topic and review of Washington state charter law for expansion/replication of charter schools with an anti-racist/equity lens, as well as community-based authorizing and engagement.
- Identification of ideal authorizers for Washington charter stakeholders to visit, along with facilitation of such visits. The contractor may travel with the team to several places where high-leverage best practices may be observed.
- Recommendations for improving the current Expansion/Replication policy and process in Washington state based on research and learning tours.
- Policy/Procedure development of a new expansion/replication process for Washington state.

PHASE II DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Review current policy, Washington state charter law, and other legal and institutional documents related to Washington charter schools.
- Collaborate with NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) to identify high-quality authorizers where expansion/replication is done well and in innovative ways.
- Research authorizers and conduct research on policies and procedures related to topic.
- Facilitate (by either also attending or through organization) a learning tour for Washington authorizers and charter leaders to visit and meet with nationwide experts in this area.
- Publish a report on the research findings, learning tour, and policy recommendations.

TIMELINE

The completed project should be finished by August 31, 2021 unless conditions are such that the learning tour is not possible within this timeframe.

BUDGET

No to exceed \$30,000 which includes contractor travel costs for the learning tour.