



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT *of*
EDUCATION

Quality Counts II: Indiana Charter School Program Grant

Request for Proposal 84.282A
2024-2025

Indiana Department of Education

100 N. Senate Ave.

Indianapolis, IN 46204



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Overview

Federal Program Title	Expanding Opportunities through Quality Charter Schools Program (CSP) to State Entities
Federal Agency	U.S. Department of Education
State Agency	Indiana Department of Education
CFDA Number	84.282A
Award Name	CSP Quality Counts II
Award Number	S282A230012

Final Due Date: Sunday, September 29, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. ET

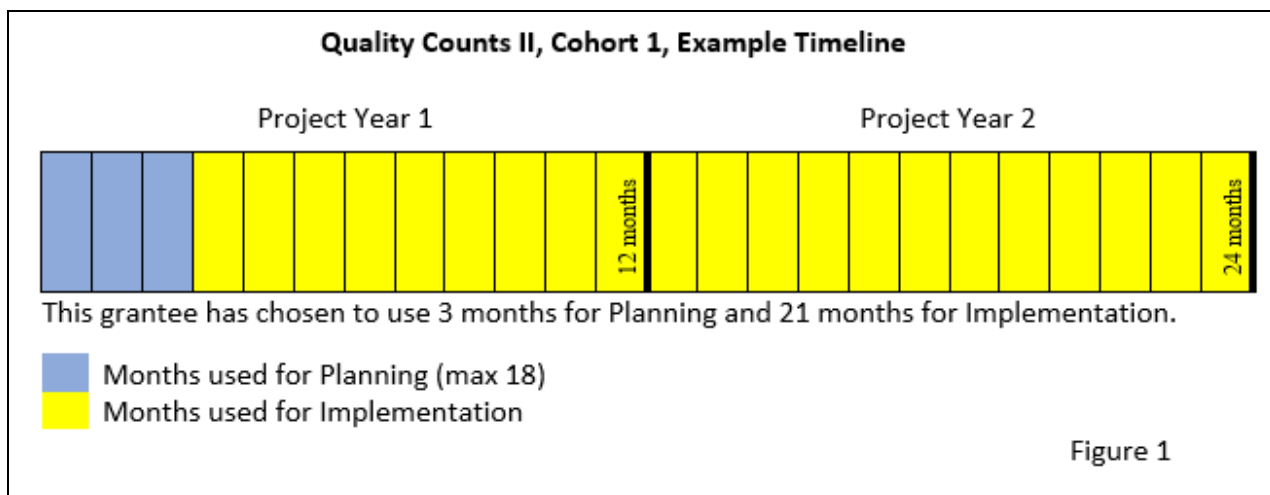
Submit the finalized application and budget at:
https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/11btb81380be7

Purpose of Grant

In 2023, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) was awarded over \$109 million to support a five-year project period for the second iteration of Quality Counts Charter School Program, also known as Quality Counts II (QC II). Quality Counts is a competitive line of funding that emphasizes the opening, expansion, or replication ([Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 \[ESEA\] § 4303\(b\)\(1\)](#)) of high-quality charter schools ([ESEA § 4310\(2\)](#)) to ensure all students, particularly those from underserved populations, have the opportunity to meet Indiana's challenging academic standards. IDOE will award QC II funding through five cohorts, four of which being 24 months in length. The final and fifth cohort will be shortened to 12 months to maintain the five-year project period. IDOE will support these efforts through extensive technical assistance opportunities, including the strengthening of the charter school authorizing process and emphasizing innovative charters.

Structure of the Grant

Grants will be awarded in 24-month cohorts, broken down into two 12-month budgets on the budget worksheet. Grantees will be able to use their choice of 0-18 months for planning purposes, and the remaining time may be used for implementation purposes. The number of months used for each phase must be documented in the budget narrative and worksheet. Figure 1 is an example of how a grantee may choose to organize the timeline of their award.



Important Dates

Date	Activity
Wednesday, July 31, 2024	Application Release Date
Wednesday, August 14, 2024	Grantee Readiness Series 1: Eligibility
Wednesday, August 21, 2024	Grantee Readiness Series 2: Preference Points
Wednesday, August 28, 2024	Grantee Readiness Series 3: Budget
Wednesday, September 4, 2024	Grantee Readiness Series 4: eCivis Application
Friday, September 13 - Sunday, October 13, 2024	Pre-Award Cost Period
Sunday, September 29, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. ET	Application Due
Friday, October 18, 2024	Reviews Complete
Monday, October 21, 2024	Awards Announced
Thursday, July 30, 2026	Final Day to Amend Funds
Wednesday, October 21, 2026	Final Day to Encumber Funds
Monday, December 21, 2026	Final Day to Liquidate Funds
Monday, October 21, 2024- Wednesday, October 21, 2026	Cohort 2 Grant Period

Application Information

Grant Types

New Schools Seeking to Open

Local educational agencies (LEAs) that apply under this eligibility must open within 13 months of receiving notification of their award. Failing to do so could result in repayment of funds, additional monitoring, or methods of providing accountability as deemed appropriate by the State. Applicants that are opening a school in the 2025-2026 school year are encouraged to apply for the full 18 months of planning funding, utilizing the remaining six months for implementation.

A developer [\[ESEA § 4310 \(5\)\]](#) for a new charter school must have submitted a complete charter application and show evidence of plans to open within 13 months. The completed charter application must be under review by an approved Indiana authorizer with adequate time provided for review completion [\[ESEA § 4310 \(6\)\]](#). Evidence of plans to open should be in the form of authorizer meeting minutes documenting receipt, approval of a charter, or a school corporation number issued by IDOE. If a submitted charter is in the approval process, funding will be limited until the charter school has submitted official evidence of approval to IDOE. Other evidence of a developing charter school may be accepted per the discretion of IDOE.

Existing Schools Seeking to Expand or Replicate

QC II applicants wishing to expand or replicate must have a school that is open and operational in the 2024-2025 school year and meet the federal definition of high quality [\[ESEA § 4310 \(8\)\]](#) in order to qualify.

- **Replicate** [\[ESEA § 4310 \(9\)\]](#) means to open a new campus of a high-quality charter school, based on the educational model of an existing high-quality charter school under an additional charter.
- **Expand** [\[ESEA § 4310 \(7\)\]](#) means the applying school has experienced a significant increase in enrollment (20% or more student population growth) or has added one or more grades to a high-quality charter school beyond the original charter in the **previous school year**. The school must also continue to experience student population growth during each year of the grant. Anticipated or planned growth does not qualify as an expansion application. The 20% significant increase in enrollment must have taken place in the previous academic year.

Eligibility

Funding History

Per ESEA regulations, “An eligible applicant may not receive more than one subgrant under this

section for each individual charter school for a five-year period, unless the eligible applicant demonstrates to the State entity that such individual charter school has at least three years of improved educational results for students enrolled in such charter school with respect to the elements described in subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section.” In accordance with this, **LEAs who participated in QC I cohorts 3-6 will be generally ineligible for QCII, unless a waiver was approved.**

Performance Contract

Participating charter schools shall agree to comply with the same federal and state audit requirements as other elementary and secondary schools in the state. Schools shall meet all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety requirements while operating in accordance with Indiana state law. **Each school shall have a written performance contract with the charter school authorizer that includes a description of how student performance will be measured on state assessments.**

Authorizer History

The authorizer must have no significant outstanding issues and a history of supporting successful and timely openings of charter schools [[ESEA § 4310 \(6\)](#)] as well as timely submission of required annual reports as defined by Indiana Code (IC) 20-24-9.

High Quality

The high quality [[ESEA § 4310 \(8\)](#)] status will be assessed based on the required elements defined in the application, such as the vision for the charter school, the transportation plan for students, access to funding, financial capacity and sustainability [[ESEA § 4303 \(f\)\(1\)\(C\)\(i\)\(V\)](#)], a diversified governing board to support student success, and use of high-quality, evidence-based academic and behavioral approaches that target underserved student populations.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

Beginning on April 4, 2022, the federal government replaced the Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with a new non-proprietary identifier, a UEI (generated by [SAM.gov](#)). For applicants who have already registered at [SAM.gov](#), you can find their UEI by following [these steps](#). New entities can obtain their UEI at [SAM.gov](#) and, if required, complete an entity registration. Additional information regarding the transition to UEI can be found [here](#).

Use of Funds

IDOE expects to award approximately 10 subgrantees each year. For QC II, the grant project period is 24 months for all eligible applicants, and all grantees will include planning and implementation timelines in their application. Grantees may not receive more than one subgrant under this federal grant award program.

Program Period Timeline

CSP funds will be released in 24 month cohorts. Grantees participating in a cohort will not be eligible to apply for a following cohort, as grantees may not receive more than one subgrant under this federal program.

Applicants will submit an overall budget for the entirety of the 24 month cohort along with their application that includes planned expenses for project years 1 and 2.

Applicants will indicate the time needed for the planning and the implementation portions from the 24-month period within their application. The maximum amount of planning time allowed is 18 months [[ESEA § 4303 \(d\)\(1\)\(B\)](#)]. Expenses allowable for the planning time may not be allowable for the implementation time and vice versa.

Reasonable and Necessary

The use of funds must be provided within a proposed budget and be considered reasonable and necessary in alignment with the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Any activities not considered reasonable and necessary will be removed from the final approved budget, and IDOE will work with the grantee to modify the budget or reduce the total award accordingly. Spending is done at the applicant's own risk until the budget is formally approved by IDOE, and an executed contract between the grantee and IDOE is complete.

Award Amounts

Actual award amounts are contingent upon the receipt of federal funding, availability of current funding levels, the quality of the submitted grant, and the costs that are budgeted being reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

Funding will be broken down by program year and reimbursement contingent upon the submission of an approved budget. Funds will be approved following confirmation of the initial budget (e.g., approved for QC II, Cohort 2, Program Year 1). Program Year 2 funds that were included in the initial budget will be revisited and resubmitted no less than four months prior to the beginning of Program Year 2. Funding for Program Year 2 will become available after the submission and approval of the resubmitted budget and full execution in IDOE's contract management system.

Allowable Activities

The [QC II Allowable Cost Guidance](#) details allowable costs for planning funds or implementation funds. Allowable activities are generally as follows:

- Preparing teachers, school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel, including through paying costs associated with professional development and hiring and compensating during the planning period [[ESEA §4303 \(h\)\(1\)\(B\)](#)].
- Acquiring supplies, training equipment including technology, and educational materials (including development of materials).

- Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction). Minor repairs and renovations must not increase the value of the property and may only qualify if they help the building meet structure codes and regulations as dictated by state or federal law. Renovations must be approved in writing by IDOE and can only date back to the approval date of the application.
- Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school

In accordance with [CFR 200.458](#), all requested pre-award cost funds must be provided within a proposed budget and be considered reasonable and necessary in light of the goals and objectives of the proposed project. If an applicant wishes to be approved for pre-award cost budget items, they must clearly indicate these items in their budget. Pre-Award costs are subject to IDOE review and are NOT guaranteed to be approved for reimbursement. Pre-award cost expenditures are at the grant applicant's risk.

Further guidance regarding the use of funds can be found in the [CSP Non Regulatory Guidance](#), specifically in sections D-2 through D-5 and the [U.S. Department of Education's ESSA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) from December 2017](#).

Required Elements

There is a 30 page limit for required element responses. All points below will align to the required elements narrative portion of the application. The page limit does not include appendices or the budget.

Needs Assessment

- Describe local needs and community support, interest in and the need for the charter school, how it will benefit the community, diversity of stakeholders, family engagement plan, projected student enrollment, projected student demographics, and how the charter school will affect the community. Access the [Needs Assessment Requirements](#) for a complete description.
- Describe how the charter intends to continue engaging ongoing conversations with a diversity of key stakeholders (parents, key community partners, etc.) to continuously inform the charter of the students and community's needs.

Project Overview - Vision, Goals, and Expertise and Impact

- Provide an overview of the project, including the vision, planned activities, expand upon the need of the charter school, and expected outcomes aided by CSP funds [[ESEA § 4303 \(f\)\(1\)\(C\)\(i\)\(V\)](#)].
- Describe how the autonomy and flexibility granted to a charter school is consistent with the definition of a charter school in [[ESEA § 4310 \(2\)](#)].
- Describe how the charter school will foster a collaborative culture for families of all students, including underserved students, in ensuring their ongoing input in school

decision-making.

- Describe how the charter school has engaged or will engage families and the community to develop an instructional model to best serve the targeted student population and their families, including students with disabilities and English learners.

Focus of Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- Provide a focused plan to significantly increase student academic achievement for each of the subgroups of students defined by section 1111(c)(2) of ESEA (economically disadvantaged, major racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency).

Student Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrollment Policy

- Provide information on projected student enrollment and evidence to support the projected number based on the needs assessment and other relevant data.
- Describe the school's recruitment plan and compliance with [IC 20-24-5](#).
- Describe how the recruitment, admissions, enrollment, and retention policies will engage and accommodate families from various backgrounds including English learners, students with disabilities, and students of color.
- Participating schools shall admit students on the basis of a random lottery if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated. Schools may also satisfy this requirement by participating in [Enroll Indy](#).
- Preference may be applied toward who are enrolled in a public school at the time it is converted into a public charter school, siblings of students already admitted to or attending the same charter school, or children of a charter school's founders, teachers, and staff. In order to receive QC II funds, the preference in weighted criteria given to children of founders or employees must be limited to 10% of the charter school's total student population.

School Governance Plan

Provide an overview of the charter school governance plan and administrative relationships, including the process to select board members, governance training procedures, timely reporting plans, and the roles of any partnerships made to manage the LEA.

Fiscal Management Plan

Describe the internal controls over expenditures and how records will be maintained including managing this particular grant and description of how other state and federal funds will be utilized.

Community Outreach Activities

- Describe how parents and the community are involved in the planning and design of the charter school for a newly opening school.
- Describe how meaningful engagement with families and the community will occur to create

strong partnerships.

- Describe how disadvantaged students and guardians will be supported with specific community outreach activities.
- For a school that is expanding or replicating, provide an overview and evidence of community outreach activities.

School Safety Plan and Discipline Policy

- Schools must attach their school safety plan and discipline policy.
- During the 2023 legislative session, the Indiana General Assembly passed the House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1492. Within HEA 1492, there is a requirement for charter schools to have a certified school safety specialist beginning in the 2024-2025 school year. The bill also requires each charter school to establish a safe school committee to develop and maintain a school safety plan. Charter school organizers will be responsible for evaluating the school safety specialist and the school safety plan. Full information about HEA 1492 can be found [here](#). These requirements must be met in the school safety plan.

Facilities and Transportation Plan

- Describe the school's facility plan, including how the student enrollment and other available funding will meet the facility needs.
- Describe how the charter school has considered the transportation needs of the school's students and provide an overview of the transportation plan.

Charter with Authorizer

Describe the quality controls agreed to with the authorized public chartering agency involved, such as a contract or performance agreement, how a school's performance in the State's accountability system and impact on student achievement (which may include student academic growth) will be one of the most important factors for renewal or revocation of the school's charter, and how the State and the authorized public chartering agency involved will reserve the right to revoke or not renew a school's charter based on financial, structural, or operational factors involving the management of the school.

Contract with Management Organization

For any existing or proposed contract between a charter and a for-profit management organization (including a nonprofit management organization operated by or on behalf of a for-profit entity), without regard to whether the management organization or its related entities exercises full or substantial administrative control over the charter school or the subgrant project, please follow the [Contract with Management Organization Guidance](#) to meet the description requirements.

Optional Preference Points

Attachments detailing option preference points must not exceed one page per preference point.

Early Childhood Programs

According to the CSP Guidance on the Use of Funds to Support Preschool Education, QC II funds may only be used to support Indiana preschools in charter schools that also provide at least one elementary or secondary grade during the grant period. Charter schools that serve only preschool students may not be supported by CSP funds, as preschool is not part of elementary education under Indiana law. Preschool programs are not required to be included in the charter school's approved charter with their authorizer, unless it is required by the authorizer. In order to qualify for use of CSP funds, preschool programs must meet the definition of "high quality" [as depicted here](#).

Postsecondary

Refers to secondary charter schools (e.g., high schools) that promote a focus on college and career readiness programs for their secondary students, such as dual credit, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, or Career and Technical Education, Pathways, and certifications and credentials of value. Post-secondary education is considered to be grades nine through 12.

Rural

The charter school must be located in a rural local code, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. New charter schools that do not yet have a rural designation by the U.S Department of Education or IDOE will use the LEA in which the charter school is located.

Innovative Partnerships with Traditional Boundary LEAs

The charter school may levy for preference points by displaying a working partnership or a plan for a partnership with a local traditional boundary LEA that builds innovative programming for the students. This can be shown as a narrative with signatures from both the charter LEA representative and the traditional LEA representative.

Evidence of Exceptional Need

The charter school may levy for preference points if exceptional community needs can be statistically proven from reliable data sources, such as stats.indiana.edu. A thorough, data-driven narrative with citations is required. This narrative's purpose is to describe how the charter school's programming is uniquely poised to target specific community needs based on statistical data.

Submission Process

Submission of the full application, including budget and attachments, are due by Sunday September 29, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. ET to eCivis.

Peer Review Process

Each submitted application is reviewed by two to three separate external reviewers specially

selected to avoid bias or conflict of interest.

Post-Award Requirements for Awarded Grantees

Post-Award Process

Following receipt of award notification the subgrantee will receive steps on registering for their state vendor bidder profile and work to fully approve their budget. With budget approval and established bidder profile complete, the assigned charter school specialist will enter the approved budget and application into IDOE's contract management system (CMS). Once the contract has been fully executed, subgrantees will receive their amendment and reimbursement forms and are able to reimburse for expenses occurring during the program period. IDOE will announce Project Year 2 budget due dates after the award of the cohort. It is critical to emphasize, access to Program Year 2 funds are contingent upon the submission of an approvable budget to IDOE on or prior to the established due date.

During the cohort, grantees are expected to complete three onboarding webinar sessions as well as attend IDOE's monthly Charter Coffee Chats.

Reporting Expectations

At the conclusion of the grant period, the subgrantee shall submit all required documentation, including the annual performance report and financial expenditure report. Satisfactory progress toward meeting the goals and objectives stipulated within the grant will be required in order to remain in good standing and compliance with grant guidelines and requirements.

Monitoring

IDOE will utilize a risk assessment tool to determine the depth and breadth of monitoring required for QC II recipients. Recipients are expected to participate in all technical assistance, monitoring, and reporting elements as a condition of receiving the funds. All awarded applicants will be monitored either with desktop or onsite monitoring within 12 months of award notification. Subgrantees that do not receive satisfactory reports and fail to address corrective actions shall be considered for non-renewal of further awards and may be subject to further sanctions including re-payment of QC II funds.

Desktop Monitoring

Subgrantees shall submit documentation of progress toward meeting specific goals and objectives listed within the grant through the annual performance report. Additionally, personnel reports of staff funded through the grant and an annual financial expenditure report shall be submitted.

Onsite Monitoring

IDOE staff shall conduct an onsite visit to identify progress toward meeting specific goals and objectives listed within the grant and the annual performance report. IDOE staff will review educational programming through classroom observations, interviews with staff, and a review of policies and procedures. Additionally, IDOE staff shall audit financial records to ensure appropriate evidence of expenditures and record keeping.

Technical Assistance

Moodle

IDOE utilizes Moodle to share information regarding each federal grant. IDOE's [Charter School Moodle course](#) offers information for QC II and can provide guidance to frequently asked questions.

Charter Weekly Newsletter

The Charter Weekly Newsletter is a publication posted on the last day of each business week summarizing important dates, updates, and announcements that can be further explored on Moodle.

Onboarding

A Grantee Readiness Series will be offered for onboarding training to QC II. This will be an opportunity to meet with IDOE's Charter School team to ask questions, clarify information, share ideas, and communicate expectations.

Charter Coffee Chats

IDOE's Charter School team will host monthly coffee chats for charter schools that cover a specific topic each month. All QC II recipients are encouraged to attend.

TitleCon

Title Con 2024 brought together Indiana educators and school personnel from across the state to learn and build stronger federal programs for student growth and achievement. Learn more about the conference [here](#).

Components of the Application	File Name	Check
Application Information Page	On eCivis	☐
Required Elements (Narrative) ☐ Needs Assessment ☐ Project Overview- Vision, Goals, Expertise, and Impact ☐ Focus on Educationally Disadvantaged Students ☐ Student Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrollment Policy ☐ School Governance Plan ☐ Fiscal Management Plan ☐ Community Outreach Activities ☐ School Safety Plan and Discipline Policy ☐ Facilities and Transportation Plan	Corp#_Narrative If no corporation number is available, please use the school name.	☐
Charter Application to Authorizer (New, Replication) or Amendment to Existing Charter (Expansion) - Any approved amendments to the charter application with the Authorizer - Signed charter contract between school and authorizer (if available)	Corp#_Authorizer	☐
Budget Worksheet	Corp#_Budget	☐
2022-2023 Annual Performance Report (If applicable)	Corp#_APR	☐
Federal Nonprofit Designation of 501c(3) Proof of non-profit status of the governing board of the charter school or proof that the application for such status has been made.	Corp#_Nonprofit	☐
Enrollment or Student Admissions Policy	Corp#_Enrollment	☐
Agreement or contract between the charter school governing body and the management organization (if applicable)	Corp#_Management	☐
School's Discipline Policy Statute requires discipline policies that promote retention and reduce the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom.	Corp#_Discipline	☐
School Safety Plan - Schools must attach their school safety plan. - Evidence of submission to the State Board of Education must also be submitted in the form of the email confirmation receipt upon submission.	Corp#_Safety	☐
Active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	On eCivis	☐