

Wisconsin Charter Schools Program Grant Overview

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent

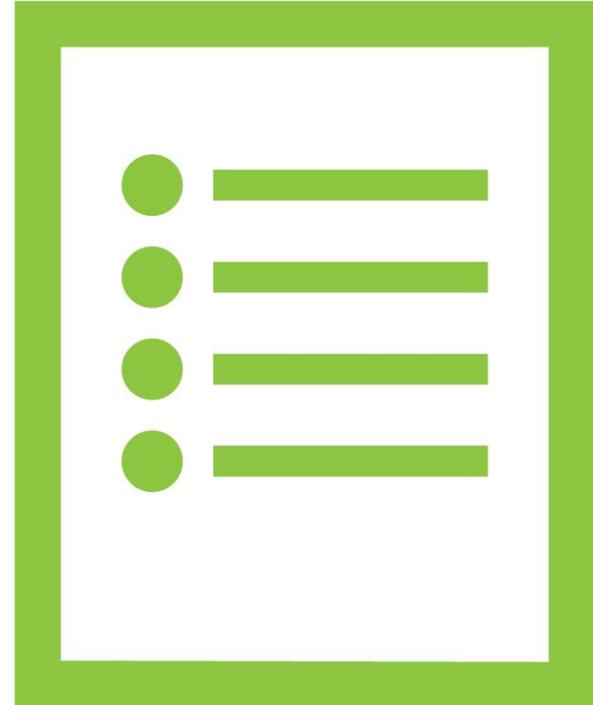
Wisconsin Charter Schools Program

The Wisconsin Charter Schools Program (WCSP) is fully financed by a \$95 million dollar federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education.



Agenda

- Charter Schools Overview
- Overview of Federal Grant
- Grant Requirements & Allowable Costs
- Application Form Overview
- Grant Review Process
- Technical Assistance Requirements
- Accessing Funds and Funding



Charter Schools

- Established by contract between an authorizer and charter school operator/governing board
- Public
- Publicly-funded
- Tuition-free
- Open to all; voluntary attendance
- Non-sectarian
- Subject to/participate in major federal programs (e.g. IDEA, Title I, etc.)



Charter Schools

- Flexible/Innovative
- Exempt from many state laws
- Environments of creativity
- Experimental approaches
- Laboratories that influence larger public school system
- Accountable
- Held to performance standards included in contract
- Part of the state accountability system



Authorizer

- Legally designated entity with authority to charter/contract
- Directly responsible for oversight
- Makes decisions about renewal/revocation
- National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)



Charter Schools in WI

2019-20 School Year

- 236 Charter Schools in WI (In 92 Districts and Every CESA)
- District-Authorized Charter Schools (211)
- Independently Authorized Charter Schools (2r and 2x) (25)
- See [WI Charter Schools Quick Facts](#)

Wis. Stat. §118.40



Table of Independent Authorizers

| Independent Charter School (ICS) Authorizers | School Location | Pupil Residency | Number of Charter Schools |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|

Legacy ICS Authorizers:

| | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| City of Milwaukee (2r) | Statewide | Statewide | Unlimited |
| UW-Milwaukee (2r) | Statewide | Statewide | Unlimited |
| UW-Parkside (2r) | Statewide | Statewide | Unlimited |
| Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) (2r) | Statewide | Statewide | Unlimited |

New ICS Authorizers (2015 Wis. Act 55 and 2017 Wis. Act 59):

| | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------|--|
| Waukesha County Executive (2r) | Waukesha County | Statewide | Unlimited |
| College of Menominee Nation (2r) | Statewide | Statewide | No more than six schools between these two authorizers |
| Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (2r) | Statewide | Statewide | |
| Office of Educational Opportunity (OEO UW System) (2x) | Statewide | Statewide | Unlimited |
| Recovery Charter School* | Statewide | Statewide | One school with no more than 15 students |
| Any UW Chancellor (other than UW-Milwaukee and UW-Parkside) (2r)* | Statewide | Statewide | Unlimited |
| Any Technical College District Board (except MATC) (2r)* (Gateway Technical College District Board added in 2015 Wis. Act 55) | Statewide | Statewide | Unlimited |



Charter Schools in WI

- Exempt from §§ 115-121, unless explicitly stated otherwise
- Licensing flexibility
- State assessments required
- Governed by independent board
- Random admissions
- Statutory contract requirements



Authorizer Responsibilities in WI

- Solicit and evaluate applications
- Consider NACSA principles & standards
- Give preference to schools that serve at-risk students
- Approve only charter school applications that serve an identified educational need
- Monitor performance/compliance
- Submit Annual Authorizer Report



Virtual Charter Schools

- Status required for students open-enrolled in a virtual school and attending remotely
- Additional requirements (e.g. teacher licensure, days/hours of instruction, parent advisory council, etc.)
- Not homeschooling
- 48 VCS in WI as of 2019-20 school year
- Over 6,000 enrolled in VCS



Charter Contract

- **Two parties—authorizer and governing board/operator of the charter school (separate legal entity)**
- **Cannot exceed 5 years**
- **Statutory contract requirements**
- **Renewal/revocation**



Financial Considerations

- Contract for district authorized charter school specifies amount to be paid to the school each year of the contract
- Contract specifies financial and programmatic audits
- Federal Funding (Formula and Discretionary) - charters must receive fair share, and DPI helps ensure this



Funding

- **District Authorized:** pupils included in membership
- **Legacy Independent Authorizers**
- **New Independent Authorizers**



Funding for ICS

| Program | 2019-20 FTE Payment Amounts | State/Local Funding Sources | Counted in Resident District's State Aid | Counted in Resident District's Revenue Limit | Nonrecurring Revenue Limit Exemption | Increase Levy to Backfill Deduction | Other |
|------------|-----------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Legacy ICS | \$8,911 K-12 | Proportional state general aid reduction from all districts | No | No | No | Yes | |
| New ICS | \$8,911 K-12 | Aid transfer equal to ICS payment from resident school districts. | Yes | Yes | No | No | One year delay for state aids membership and three year phase in for revenue limits. |

Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP)

- Authorized under Title IV, Part *C-Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools*, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Sections 4301 – 4311.
- Purpose: To support charter schools that serve early childhood, elementary school, or secondary school students



Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP)

- **WI one of nine States to receive an award under the FY 2017 State Entities Grant Program**
- **WI received the largest award \$95 million**
 - 90% Subgrants
 - 7% Technical Assistance
 - 3% Administrative



Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP)

State Entities can award subgrants to eligible applicants to:

- open and prepare for the operation of new schools.
- open and prepare for the operation of replicated high-quality schools
- expand high-quality schools.



Wisconsin Charter Schools Program

Objectives:

1. Support the growth of high-quality charter schools in Wisconsin, especially those focused on improving academic outcomes for educationally disadvantaged secondary charter school students.
2. Strengthen and improve authorizing quality and promote the adoption of best practices for all authorizers in Wisconsin.
3. Promote and support collaboration and sharing of best practices between high-quality charter schools and other schools in the state, especially those that experience difficulty in adequately serving educationally disadvantaged students.



Eligible Applicants

Must meet the federal definition of charter school as set forth in Section 4310 of the ESEA as amended by the ESSA.



Eligible Applicants

A Charter School is a public school that--

- (A) In accordance with specific state statute (Wisconsin State Statute s. 118.40) , is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the other requirements of this paragraph;
- (B) Is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;
- (C) Operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school's developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;



Eligible Applicants

- (D)** Provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
- (E)** Is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
- (F)** Does not charge tuition;
- (G)** Complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, section 444 of GEPA, and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;



Eligible Applicants

- (H)** Is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that admits students on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated or in the case of a school that has an affiliated charter school, automatically enrolls students of the affiliated charter school and admits any additional students on the basis of a lottery.
- (I)** Agrees to comply with the same federal and state audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the state as specifically defined in Wisconsin Statute 118.40;
- (J)** Meets all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety requirements;



Eligible Applicants

- (K)** Operates in accordance with state law;
- (L)** Has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured in charter schools pursuant to state assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school; and
- (M)** May serve students in early childhood education programs or postsecondary students.



Important Definitions

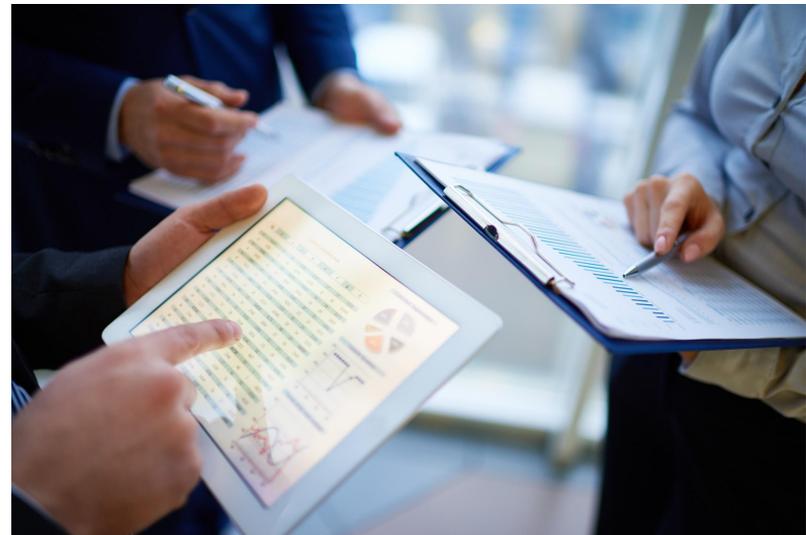
- **Developer**: The term “developer” means an individual or group of individuals (including a public or private nonprofit organization), which may include school staff, parents, and other members of the local community who are working collaboratively to create a charter school.
- **Educationally disadvantaged students**: The term “educationally disadvantaged students” means economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, migrant students, limited English proficient students (also referred to as English learners or English language learners), neglected or delinquent students, or homeless students.



Eligible Applicants

An eligible applicant is a developer that-

- (1) has applied to an authorizer to operate a charter school; and
- (2) has provided adequate and timely notice to the authorizer that an application for federal charter school funds will be submitted.



Eligible Applicants

Charter schools that have an approved application through other federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant competitions such as the Grants for Planning, Implementation, Replication and Expansion of High Quality Charter Schools or other CSP programs through a CMO are not eligible for funding under this grant competition.



Eligible Applicants

An eligible applicant may not receive more than one subgrant under the CSP for each individual charter school for a 5-year period **UNLESS** they have demonstrated to the State entity that they have at least 3 years of improved educational results for students enrolled in such charter school with respect to the elements described in the high-quality charter school definition.



Required Autonomy

The United States Department of Education requires each charter school receiving funds under this grant program to have a high degree of autonomy over budget and operations, including autonomy over personnel decisions. Wisconsin charter school applicants must demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in the application and must meet the requirements related to board powers and structure specified in Wis. Stats., 118.40.



Required Autonomy

Wis. Stats. 118.40(4) specifies that:

- A majority of governing board members must not be employees of the school or employees/officers of the school district.

Under federal CSP policy:

- No governing board members can be employees or officers of the authorizer.



Required Autonomy

Governing board has the power to:

- Receive and disburse funds
- Secure insurance
- Enter into contracts
- Incur debt
- Pledge, assign, encumber assets for loans
- Solicit and accept gifts or grants for school purposes
- Acquire real property
- Sue and be sued in its own name



Required Autonomy

To be eligible for grant funds,
governing boards must provide
evidence of Wisconsin non-stock
corporation/non-profit status.



Planning/Implementation

Funds are available to open and prepare for the operation of new charter schools.



Planning/Implementation

A newly established charter school may apply for an Implementation subgrant during the CSP application period, provided that the school is within the 3-year implementation window and the school has never received a CSP Planning/Implementation subgrant award.



Planning/Implementation

Length of Subgrant Award and Maximum Funding Level

The subgrant period is broken down into two phases, the planning phase, not to exceed 12 months, and the implementation phase, not to exceed 48 months. The duration of the subgrant period cannot exceed 60 months in total.



Planning/Implementation

If the subgrant recipient's school is operational when the subgrant is awarded, then the subgrant immediately enters its implementation phase and no planning phase is available. The school will be awarded an implementation subgrant for no more than the first five years of operation.



Replication/Expansion

Funds are available for the replication or expansion of high-quality charter schools.



Replication/Expansion

High-quality charter school means a charter school that—

- a. Shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth;
- b. Has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance; and
- c. Has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates for all students and for each of the subgroups of students, served by the charter school. (e.g. low-income, minority, SPED, ELL)



Replication/Expansion

The term “replicate” means to open a new charter school, or a new campus of a high-quality charter school, based on the educational model of an existing high-quality charter school, under an existing charter contract or an additional charter contract.



Replication/Expansion

The term “expand” means to significantly increase enrollment or add one or more grades to a high-quality charter school. The term “significantly increase” means to add at least 20 students or increase enrollment by at least 20 percent, whichever is greater.

In a “slow-growth” expansion (i.e. expanding 9th grade in year one, 10th grade in year two, etc.), the school must meet the criteria at each grade level for each year of expansion. For example, the 9th grade expansion must be an increase of 20 students or 20 percent of 9th graders, whichever is greater. The following year the 10th grade expansion must be 20 students or 20 percent of 10th graders, whichever is greater. If a school would like to propose a slow-growth expansion, please contact DPI.



Replication/Expansion

Length of Subgrant Award and Maximum Funding Level: The duration of the subgrant period cannot exceed 60 months. If an subgrantee proposes a planning period prior to expansion/replication, that planning period cannot exceed 12 months, and the total award period still cannot exceed 60 months.



Single Grant Provision

Single grant provision: 60 months of allowable funding means 60 consecutive months with no breaks or interruptions. Interruptions in the grant period will result in termination of the subgrant award. For example, if a school is unable to open due to the inability to secure facilities by the close of its planning phase, the subgrant for the school will be terminated.



Allowable Costs

- In addition to the requirements applicable to all federal funds, subgrantees under the WCSP must limit use of WCSP funds to the specified uses set forth in [Section 4303 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#), as amended by the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#). The use of funds must also tie to the subgrantee's grant type, either implementation, expansion, or replication.
- Please review the [Wisconsin Charter Schools Program Allowable Cost Guide](#).



Allowable Costs

- **Costs associated with preparing teachers, schools leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel**
- **Professional development**
- **Hiring and compensating during planning – teachers, schools leaders, and/or specialized instructional support personnel**



Allowable Costs

- **Acquiring necessary supplies, training, equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials)**
- **Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction)**



Allowable Costs

- Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school
- Carrying out community engagement activities, which may include paying the cost of student and staff recruitment
- Providing for other appropriate, non-sustained costs related to activities in opening and preparing for the operation of charter schools



Allowable Costs - Additional Considerations

- **Planning-Year Considerations**
- **Slow-Growth Considerations**
- **Expansion Considerations**
- **Co-located Schools or Other Schools with Shared Costs**



Costs Not Allowed

- School year salary and fringe benefits
- Student instruction or online tuition costs
- Honorariums to governance board members
- Remodeling or construction
- Applicants are urged to contact DPI to ask about questionable items prior to submitting a proposal.



Application Requirements

- **DPI's Charter Schools Subgrant Application Form (PI-9600) must be used as the cover of your application.**
- **Do not use covers; do not add title pages; do not add enclosures; do not submit related materials, unless specified.**
- **The Application Narrative must not exceed 25 typed pages. Number the pages you submit. This limit does not include the pages of the application form itself or the other appendices.**
- **If additional information is needed, DPI will contact the applicant.**



Application Requirements

- **Font and Type:** A minimum of an (11) eleven-point font must be used for the body of your application. Arial, Helvetica, or Times New Roman font should be used when preparing your application.
- **Paper Copies:** The original and one copy of the proposal must be submitted to the DPI. Failure to include any of the required parts of the proposal may result in the proposal not being funded.
- **Digital Copy:** Please email the components of the application as separate files in one email and a single document containing all the components in another email and send both to charterschools@dpi.wi.gov. See the General Application Information section of the instructions for more information.



Completing the Application Form

General Information:

- Charter School Name and Address
- Authorizer Name and Contact Information
- Planning Committee Representative Name and Contact Information
- Governance Board President Name and Contact Information
- Grant Type
- School's Relationship to District (Instrumentality Status)
- Grade Span (All Applicants) and Enrollment Projections (Expansion Applicants Only)
- Other School Information



Completing the Application Form

Requested Funding:

Please note an applicant may request to carry over unspent funds from the planning phase to the operational phase, but all subgrant funds must be expended by the end of the grant period which cannot exceed 60 months total.

| Grant Funding | |
|---|------------------------|
| Implementation Grant Funding | |
| Base Funding | Up to \$550,000 |
| Schools Serving 150 or more Students (if applicable) | Up to \$100,000 |
| Schools Serving Secondary Students* (if applicable) | Up to \$100,625 |
| 12-Month Planning Period (if applicable) | Up to \$150,000 |
| Maximum Total Funding <i>Cannot exceed \$900,000</i> | Up to \$900,000 |
| Replication and Expansion Grant Funding | |
| Base Funding | Up to \$550,000 |
| Schools Serving 150 or more Students (if applicable) | Up to \$100,000 |
| Schools Serving Secondary Students* (if applicable) | Up to \$100,625 |
| Maximum Total Funding <i>Cannot exceed \$750,000</i> | Up to \$750,000 |
| Amount of Maximum Total Funding requested for 12-Month Planning Period (if applicable) | Up to \$150,000 |



Completing the Application Form

Assurances:

- For authorizers and grant recipients
- Assuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations
- Assuring participation in required monitoring, technical assistance, etc.

Signatures:

- Application must be signed by an authorizer representative AND the charter school governing board president or planning committee representative.

Certification Covering Debarment:

- Tied to federal regulations and certification regarding debarment, suspension, ineligibility, and voluntary exclusion
- Must be signed by an authorized representative for the prospective participant



Highlighted Assurance

Each school must have an annual independent audit of its financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, reviewed by the charter school's authorizer, and publicly recorded.



Appendices A- F

- **Appendix A - Application Narrative**
- **Appendix B - Letters of Support**
- **Appendix C - Evidence of Charter School Approval**
- **Appendix D - Performance Measures**
- **Appendix E - 5-Year Budget Summary (PI-9600-BS)**
- **Appendix F - Expense and Revenue Worksheet**



Appendices G- I

These appendices are only required for expansion and replication applications.

- **Appendix G - Evidence of High Quality**
- **Appendix H - Authorizer Report**
- **Appendix I - Governing Board Minutes**



Evaluation: Technical Review

Technical Review: Applications first undergo a technical review by WCSP staff to ensure compliance with eligibility requirements – Applicants unable to meet eligibility requirements will not be considered for funding.



Evaluation: Peer Review

- Eligible applications will then be evaluated and rated by an experienced external peer review panel whose members have no vested interest in the applications under consideration.
- A minimum score of 35 out of 50 is required on the peer reviewer benchmarks to be considered for funding. An application that receives less than 35 points will not be considered for funding. Replication/Expansion grant applicants must also score at least 7 points in Section VII of the Application Narrative.



Evaluation: Recommendations

- The peer review score is the single most determining factor in funding recommendations.
- DPI may also consider other factors such as geographic distribution and grade level distribution and may provide a preference to schools serving secondary grades (6-12) and rural communities.



Grant Review Process

- Schools that submit a proposal that is not selected for funding may, in subsequent application periods, resubmit their proposal in a revised form or submit a new proposal, if they continue to meet eligibility requirements.
- Appeals and reconsiderations of award decisions are not considered.
- The grant process is competitive so only the best applications will be approved.
- Applicants should review the reviewer benchmarks to ensure all required questions have been answered appropriately.



Grant Review Process

The DPI will only consider awarding funds to those applicants who submit a comprehensive and viable application likely to improve student academic achievement.



Grant Review Process

- **Consistent with federal regulations, the DPI evaluates each subrecipient's risk of noncompliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward.**
- **Before awarding grants under this competition the DPI conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants and determines appropriate subrecipient monitoring.**



Grant Review Process

Under federal regulations, the department may impose special conditions and, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet federal standards; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.



Grant Logistics

- For a district authorized subgrantee, the chartering authority typically serves as the fiscal agent for the grant. The school's governing board must make this decision.
- Subgrant expenditures will be reimbursed by the DPI according to established procedures.
- Recipients must account for funds using codes from the Wisconsin Uniform Financial Accounting Requirements (WUFAR).



Grant Logistics

- The DPI is responsible for monitoring all CSP subgrants. To fulfill its monitoring responsibilities, the DPI will require funded applicants to submit appropriate fiscal and program documentation.
- In addition, DPI WCSP staff will conduct on-site visits of funded applicants. The purpose of these visits is to review information submitted by applicants and gather additional information from interviews and observations for technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation purposes.
- The CSP program will utilize WISEgrants for budgeting and claiming.
- As a condition of their award, subgrantees and authorizers will be required to participate in technical assistance activities.



Technical Assistance

Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools

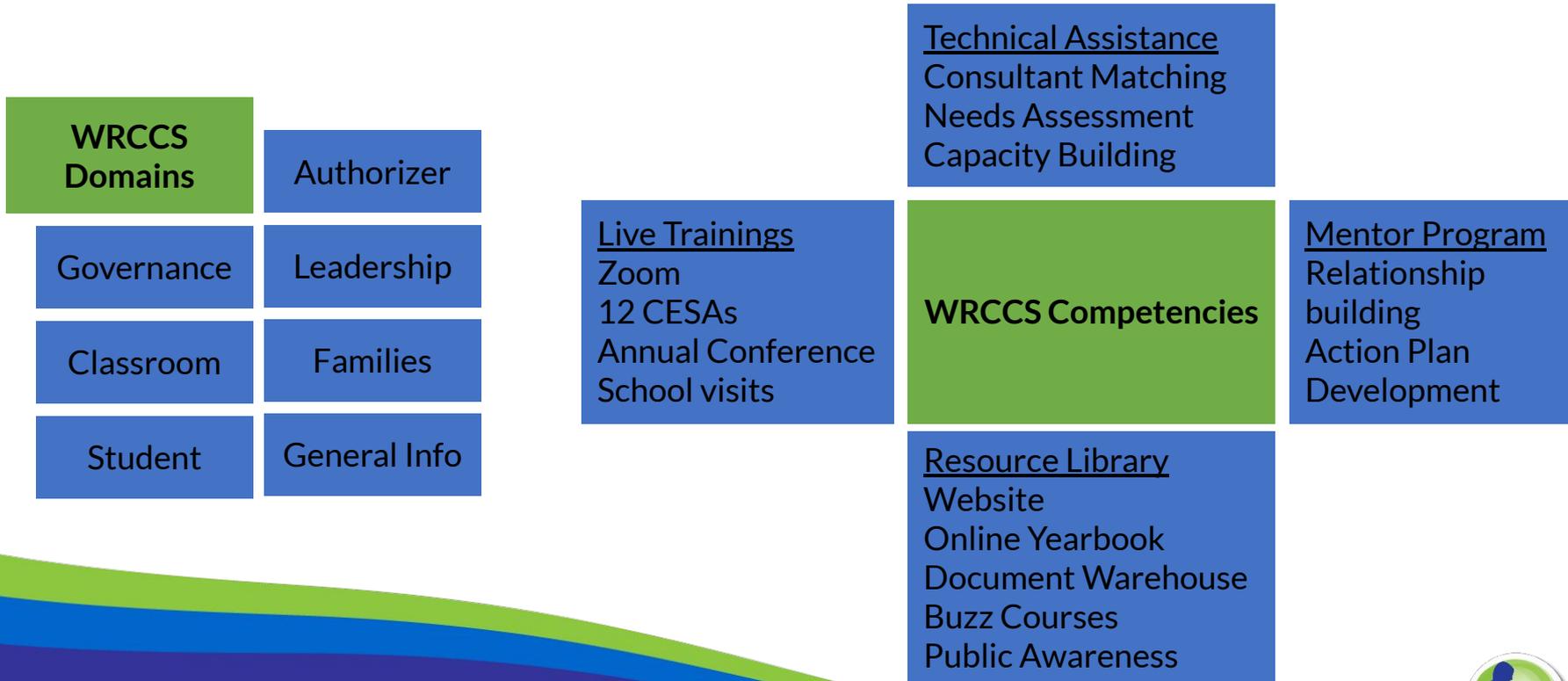
- Technical assistance [requirements](#) with [competencies](#) focus
- WRCCS Annual [Conference](#)
- Participation in WRCCS Mentor Schools [Program](#)

Related Requirements

- [Promoting Excellence for All eCourse](#) Completion
- Participation in monthly calls with DPI



TA and Trainings



Subgrantee TA Requirements

Subgrantees are responsible for the following experiences annually each August:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Authorizer | • 1 representative – 1 competency |
| Governance Board | • 2 representatives – 4 competencies total |
| Leader | • 1 leader – 2 competencies |
| Teacher | • 1 teacher – 2 competencies |
| <i>District-authorized school</i> | • <i>1 non-charter representative – 1 competency</i> |



Access to Funds

Funds will not be released unless:

- (1) the DPI has received, reviewed, and approved a fully executed contract that meets all state and federal contract requirements and has reviewed and approved the school's lottery and admission procedures.
- (2) all items on the Assurances of Readiness form are complete and the completed form with appropriate signatures has been submitted to the DPI.
- (3) the school has submitted its governance board roster, proof of non-stock/non-profit status, and has an approved budget and performance measures.

Some requirements are slightly different for the release of planning funds for schools that are not in operation during their planning year.



Award Reductions

Awards may be reduced if:

- the school's 3rd Friday in September pupil count is considerably less than projected in the grant proposal.
- for expansion grantees—if the number of students added is considerably less than projected.
- if the school is experiencing difficulty expending the funds.
- if, for some unforeseen reason, the DPI's grant is significantly reduced by the USDE.



Thank You

Please reach out with questions.

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