Request For Proposals

CONTEXT:

Recently, bi-partisan legislation introduced by Governor Lombardo, passed during the 2023 Legislative Session has expanded existing law (NRS 388A) to include cities and counties as an eligible authorizer of charter schools in Nevada. The existing law (NRS 388A.220) also requires any eligible authorizer such as a college or university within the Nevada System of Higher Education to submit an application to the Nevada Department of Education to be approved to begin serving as an authorizer. Current Department regulations (NAC 388A.120) outline the core elements of what an application must include.

The Department has not received an application from an eligible entity to become a charter authorizer since the inception of the State Public Charter School Authority was created through legislative action in 2011.

In 2020, Opportunity 180 was approved by the US Department of Education to serve as the Nevada State administrator for the State Entity Charter School Program Grant (CSP). Great Schools for Nevada is designed to lead the launch and expansion of high-quality public charter schools as well as expand and maintain quality charter school authorizing practices across the state. We’re inspired by schools that are proving every child can succeed, and we’re committed to ensuring that more kids have access to these great schools. Under the CSP grant Opportunity 180 will provide technical assistance to:

- To improve state charter school authorizing practices including developing capacity for, and conducting, evaluations of diverse community-centered school models, fiscal oversight, and auditing of charter schools
- Establish Nevada’s charter sector as a leader in authorizing quality and academic performance
- Evaluate and support the success of state charter school authorizer and single-site charter school board members to enhance their board governance practices

Opportunity 180 will work in partnership with the State Board of Education and the Nevada Department of Education to provide technical assistance to support the development of a charter school authorizer review protocol, the development of an eligible sponsor application,
and the application review process. Opportunity 180 will cover the cost of soliciting a third-party subject matter expert via this Request for Proposals.

Opportunity 180 requests proposals from organizations with demonstrated effectiveness and experience in supporting and evaluating state charter school authorizer practices and establishing standards and protocols for launching new authorizers.

Application to Sponsor Charter Schools & Review of Authorizing Practices

Opportunity 180 is working to ensure more kids that live in poverty and kids of color have access to schools that are closing the opportunity gap. To date, our work has focused on the expansion of high-performing schools, school turnaround, new school support, and technical assistance for promising schools, to help them improve. To accelerate the number of high-performing public charter schools in Nevada, we seek a partner to support the Nevada Department of Education to do the following:

- Establish and implement a charter school authorizer review process to evaluate the current effectiveness of practicing sponsors (per NRS 388A.230)
- Writing an application for the sponsor of a charter school (per NRS 388A.220)
- Developing an application process for a sponsor of a charter school

An optional supplement to the submission may include:

- An approach to implementing the application process and building the capacity of the Nevada Department of Education to execute an application cycle for proposed new sponsors of charter schools.

Note: the optional portion will not be formally considered in the selection of the required elements and will be funded through a separate source of funding. It will not be required.

SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED:

1) Design criteria for and execute State Authorizer Quality Review of state charter school authorizers, to evaluate current charter school authorizing practices and provide clear support on strengthening charter school authorizer’s practices in evaluating school models, including developing capacity for, and conducting, fiscal oversight and auditing of charter schools.
Deliverables:

- Selection of nationally normed standards to build an authorizer review framework
- Development of an actionable evaluation rubric informed by the standards and pilot of rubric to determine realistic corrective action protocol
- Self-review tool and process for authorizers to establish a baseline of performance
- Conduct Third-party validation of authorizer self-review and analysis
- Detailed report of findings from each state-wide authorizer which outlines best practices to scale and recommendations/opportunities for improvement
- Articulate process for future review process timeline, approach, and tools (evaluation guide, evaluation training protocol, authorizer technical assistance guide).

2) In partnership with the Superintendent of Public Instruction and/or her designees design, develop, and codify an application process, including formal application, to solicit and evaluate eligible charter school sponsors in Nevada, in accordance with applicable State laws and regulations.

Deliverables:

- Selection of nationally normed standards to build an authorizer review framework
- Plan for active engagement of the Nevada Department of Education throughout the work time
- A documented, deployable application process to solicit and evaluate eligible charter school sponsors in Nevada
- A corresponding written application, with all necessary supplements that articulates the required components and expectations for eligible charter school sponsors

3) OPTIONAL (will be considered on a separate timeline): Based on the documented application process, a proposed implementation plan that executes the first application cycle for the Nevada Department of Education, while simultaneously building the internal capacity of a Department designee to run future application cycles:

Deliverables:

- Detailed approach, including roles and responsibilities to execute the proposed application evaluation process (note: application evaluation process is required under #2 of this request)
● Includes cycle one implementation debrief and continuous improvement evaluation
● Detailed approach for providing training and hand-off of application evaluation process to Department designee
● Includes option for a shoulder-to-shoulder implementation for future application cycles (as requested by Nevada Department of Education)

PROPOSAL MUST INCLUDE:

● Detailed description of your organization’s mission, background, and experience
● Detailed description of the proposed support (for each component) based on articulated goals and service needs
● Implementation plan for each required component should build out the detailed initiatives, timeline, budget, and communication approach to execute on each deliverable
● Rationale for selection and approach to identifying nationally normed authorizing standards for review and application
● Demonstration of how NRS and NAC will be used as the framework for each deliverable as required
● Ability to consider the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of Nevada families in the context of developing the process
● Proposed process for working in partnership with the Nevada Department of Education team through course of project
● Proposed process for engaging with O180 team through course of project, including progress check-ins and metrics of engagement success
● Total budget for the proposed services with specific line items for each component; include OPTIONAL component if interested in continuation of services
● Articulation of how existing approaches from other states with successful processes were considered, including but not limited to TN, OH, MN
● References and examples of prior work, including by not limited to demonstration of experience in authorizing or advising on strong authorizing practices

Note: If your organization envisions has additional deliverables to support the goals articulated, we encourage you to submit a proposal that articulates your proposed process. Please include the proposal elements articulated above.
TIMELINE FOR REQUIRED COMPONENTS:

- August 4, 2023: RFP released
- August 4 – September 5, 2023: RFP Submission & Opportunity for Q&A
- September 5, 2023: Final day for RFP Submission (5pm PST)
- September 15, 2023: Partner Selection Announced
- September 15 - November 17, 2023:
  - Authorizer Review Process Implemented
  - Application & Process design and development engagement (requires participation by designees of both the State Board of Education and the Nevada Department of Education)
- December 6, 2023 (or scheduled Board Meeting date):
  - Authorizer Review Report Discussed at Regular State Board of Education Meeting
  - Application & Process Approved at Regular State Board of Education Meeting

TIMELINE FOR OPTIONAL CYCLE 1 IMPLEMENTATION:

- December 7, 2023: Eligible Sponsor Application Released
- March 1, 2024: Eligible Sponsor Applications Due
- March 1 – April 8, 2024: Eligible Sponsor Applications Reviewed (per process and 30-day regulatory requirement)
- April 9, 2024: Eligible Sponsor Application Determinations Released
- May 20, 2024: Denied Eligible Sponsor Application Resubmittals Due (per regulatory requirements)
- July 1, 2024: Secondary Eligible Sponsor Application Determinations Released

All proposals must be received no later than September 5, 2023 by 5pm PST. For questions and submission of final proposal, contact rfp@opportunity180.org.

BACKGROUND:

Launched in 2015, Opportunity 180 works to transform the lives and futures of Nevada kids by providing them with equitable access to the best possible public educational opportunities. Opportunity 180 strives to bring together all community stakeholders—families, educators, and community leaders—to ensure students have access to a high-quality education. Through its efforts, Opportunity 180 has the vision to ensure 100,000 more kids can access a great school by 2030.