

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

RFA # GDO—SAF—25

District of Columbia

Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)



FY 2025 Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act Facilities Grant

Request For Applications (RFA) Release Date

Friday, March 28, 2025

Pre-Application Webinars

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Notice of Intent to Apply Deadline

Friday, May 9, 2025

Application Submission Deadline

Friday, May 23, 2025

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Application Checklist
FY 2025 SOAR Act Facilities Grants

- Submit a Notice of Intent to Apply form on or before **Friday, May 9, 2025**. The Notice of Intent to Apply form can be found in Appendix A and on the Office of the State Superintendent of Education ([OSSE website](#)). While applicants do not need to submit this to be eligible for the competition, those that submit an Intent to Apply form will receive direct email updates.

- Attend one of the two pre-application webinars. These webinars are optional but strongly encouraged. Webinars will be held:
 - Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 10 a.m. Register [here](#)
 - Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 1 p.m. Register [here](#)

The same information will be shared in both webinars.

- Submit a complete application, through OSSE’s Enterprise Grants Management System ([EGMS](#)), that contains all the required information and attachments and adheres to all the directions and criteria for each section as detailed in this RFA. Please see [RFA Section 3](#) for an overview of the application components.

Please note: All required application elements must be submitted by entering information directly into the required sections in EGMS. Unless otherwise stated in the application, information submitted via attachment will be considered as supplemental materials only.

- Submit the application **by 3 p.m. on Friday, May 23, 2025**, through [EGMS](#).

PLEASE NOTE

Applications are due by **3 p.m.** on Friday, May 23, 2025.

The application deadline will be strictly enforced. Applications submitted after 3 p.m. EST on Friday, May 23, 2025 will not be reviewed.

All applications must be submitted through the EGMS. For more information about EGMS, please visit grants.osse.dc.gov.

This application will be open for at least 30 business days. OSSE strongly recommends submitting your application at least one day early to ensure that avoidable technical issues do not cause you to miss the submission deadline.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) # GDO-SAF-25

Section 1: General Information

1.1 Introduction

Overview of the SOAR Act

As a part of a three-sector federal funding approach, the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act, Pub. L. 112-10, 125 Stat. 199 (as amended), is a federal law that authorizes funding for District of Columbia (DC) public charter schools or District of Columbia-based nonprofit organizations “to improve and expand quality public charter schools in the District of Columbia.” § 3004(b)(2). SOAR Act funds for DC charter schools are provided to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) through the US Department of Education (USED) as a grant. The SOAR Act also provides funding for District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) for DC students to attend private schools.

1.2 Purpose of Funds

Through this RFA, the Office of Federal Programs and Strategic Funding is soliciting proposals from eligible DC public charter schools for the following grant program:

- **Facilities Grants**
 - The purpose of this funding program is to provide high-quality public charter schools with funds to renovate facilities occupied by public charter schools.
 - Proposed projects must 1) increase the total number of seats available at a high-quality charter school, and/or 2) increase the quality of existing seats at a high-quality public charter school.

1.3 Source of Funding

USED, through the District of Columbia School Choice Incentive Program, CFDA/ALN: 84.370C, Public Law 108-199, III, District of Columbia School Incentive Act of 2003; Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act, effective April 15, 2011 (Pub. L. 112-10; 125 Stat. 201), as amended.

1.4 Requirements of Funding

In addition to the requirements of this RFA, the assurances made in the submitted application, and the terms of the Grant Award Notice (GAN) issued by OSSE to the grantee, a key condition for receiving these funds is compliance with activities necessary to carry out a mandated evaluation of the OSP, as specified in Section 3011(a)(1) of the SOAR Act. Pursuant to this section, USED’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is required to evaluate annually the performance of students who applied to the OSP (Sec. 3009). Because some OSP applicants will

be enrolled in public charter schools, it will be necessary for IES and its evaluation contractor to collect data on and from public charter school campuses once each school year during the applicable grant period. Please be advised that noncompliance of the charter school with the terms and conditions stated in the SOAR Act GAN may result in the withholding of SOAR Act funds administered by OSSE. All awardees must also comply with the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (40 U.S.C. 3141 *et seq.*), as applicable.

1.5 Funds Available and Funding Period

At least \$3,500,000 is available for awards through this RFA. OSSE will provide up to \$750,000 per award. Awards are limited to one per charter local education agency (LEA). The total award period for this grant is two years. The initial award period begins on the date of the award and ends on Sept. 30, 2025. Grantees will be required to complete a continuation application within EGMS each fiscal year. Continuation of awards in the second year is contingent upon:

- Availability of funds;
- Grantee’s implementation and/or operation of the program as submitted in the application;
- Grantee’s demonstration that substantial progress has been made toward meeting the objectives set forth in the approved application, based on ongoing monitoring and review of the grantee’s reports;
- Compliance with District and federal laws, regulations and guidance; and
- Appropriate expenditure of funds throughout each grant award period.

1.6 Eligibility

An eligible applicant meets all the following criteria:

- Must be a DC public charter school.
- May not use funds under this program for a facility project at a school that has been designated in 2024 by OSSE for any of the school improvement categories*:
 - Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI);
 - Comprehensive Support and Improvement: Low Graduation Rate (CSI-Grad);
 - Comprehensive Support and Improvement: Student Group (CSI-SG);
 - Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI); or
 - Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI).
- Must own the facility being supported by the proposed project or have a lease of at least 50 years.
 - Awarded applicants will be required to provide site control evidence of the facility within 180 days of award. Funds may only be used for the site described in the original application. If site control evidence is not provided,

the grant award will be terminated in full, and the LEA must return any expended funds. Site control evidence may include executed lease agreements, purchase agreements, building permits, and mortgage deeds of trust.

*For a complete list of schools under each designation in 2024, please visit: [School Improvement Plans under Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#)

1.7 Permissible Use of Funds

The funds associated with this RFA are available strictly on a reimbursement basis and may only be used for allowable grant project expenditures during the grant period as follows:

- All costs must:
 - Meet requirements of permissible use of federal funds within EDGAR 34 CFR Part 75, 2 CFR Part 200 as adopted in 2 CFR Part 3474, 2 CFR Part 180 as adopted in 2 CFR 3485;
 - Align with and support the project described in the charter LEA’s application; and
 - Support construction, and/or minor remodeling, which may include:
 - Preparation of drawings and specifications for school facilities;
 - Erecting, building, altering, remodeling, repairing, or extending school facilities;
 - Inspecting and supervising the construction of school facilities;
 - Minor remodeling (e.g., knocking down/erecting a wall, re-wiring of outlets, extending utility lines); and
 - Adding trailers, modular units or portable structures.

All grant project budgets will be reviewed by a review panel, as well as OSSE staff, to ensure that planned expenditures are allowable and are appropriate, reasonable and necessary to support the grant objectives.

Section 2: Schedule

2.1 RFA Release

The release date of the RFA is Friday, March 28, 2025. The RFA is available online at Serve DC Grants [Clearinghouse](#) and on the [OSSE website](#).

2.2 Pre-Application Webinar

The pre-application webinars will be held on the following dates and times:

- Tuesday, April 8, 2025, from 10-11 a.m. [Register here](#).

- Thursday, April 10, 2025, from 1-2 p.m. [Register here.](#)

2.3 Intent to Apply

All eligible charter LEAs seeking to receive funding under this RFA are encouraged to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply (Appendix A), signed by an authorized official of the LEA, via email to opcsfs.funding@dc.gov by **Friday, May 9, 2025**. While applicants do not need to submit this to be eligible for the competition, those that submit an Intent to Apply will receive direct email updates.

2.4 Contact Person(s)

Applicants are advised that the following OSSE staff members are the authorized contact persons for this grant competition:

- Marie Hutchins, Grants Management Specialist, Marie.Hutchins@dc.gov

2.5 Applications Due

Applications are due Friday, May 23, 2025, by 3 p.m. and must be submitted through EGMS. **OSSE strongly encourages submitting applications at least one day early to ensure that avoidable technical issues do not cause you to miss the submission deadline. Applicants must agree to EGMS' FY25 Central Data Assurances prior to creating a grant application.**

2.6 Updates

Information and updates regarding the grant competitions will be emailed to all potential applicants that submit a Notice of Intent to Apply to this grant.

2.7 Awards Announcement

Awards will be announced via EGMS, email, and the OSSE website. OSSE will disseminate GANs following the awards announcement.

Section 3: Application

3.1 Application Content

The application in EGMS contains all the following sections or "tabs." Unless noted, each section must be completed in the system as instructed:

- Section 1 – Overview Pages (*informational; nothing to complete*)
 - General Information (*informational; nothing to complete*)
 - Scoring Rubric (*informational; nothing to complete*)
- Section 2 – Contact Information

- Section 3 – Abstract
 - Project Description
- Section 4 – Project Data
- Section 5 – Main Application
 - Data Sources
 - Project Need
 - Project Description
 - Theory of Action
 - Logic Model
- Section 7 – Budget
 - Budget Overview
 - Budget Narrative
 - Salaries and Benefits
 - Professional Services
 - Equipment
 - Supplies and Materials
 - Other Objects
 - Sources and Uses
 - Budget Summary
 - Budget Amendments
- Section 8 – Supporting Documentation
- Section 9 – Assurances
- Section 10 – Submit (*application is not complete until it is submitted through this tab*)
- Section 11 – Application History (*the history of who has accessed and modified the application may be viewed through this tab*)
- Section 12 – Application Print (*hard copies of applications may be printed through this tab*)

Section 4: Scoring

4.1 Review Panel

The grants described in this RFA will be awarded competitively. A panel or panels of external reviewers will be convened to review, score, and rank each application. The review panel(s) will be composed of neutral, qualified, professional individuals selected for their expertise, knowledge, and/or related experiences. All external reviewers must sign a Conflict of Interest statement. The application will be scored against a rubric. The complete rubric can be found in EGMS for review. OSSE may convene any panel to conduct a facilitated discussion of the

reviewers' scores and comments of a particular application. A facilitated discussion provides an opportunity for reviewers to hear other panel members' reasoning for their scores and comments. A reviewer is not required to change their scores or comments after a facilitated discussion.

Upon completion of the panel review(s), the panel(s) shall make recommendations for awards based on the scoring rubric(s). The State Superintendent of Education, or their designee will consider those recommendations, but all final award decisions are left to the superintendent's—or their designee's—discretion. Winning applicants may be required to make amendments to the budget or other application sections to meet grant requirements. A denied applicant may file an appeal of OSSE's award determination within 30 days of receipt of award denial notification on the grounds that OSSE violated a District or federal statute or regulation. Denied applicants may contact OSSE's program contact for information on the appeal process.

4.2 Funding Priority

Funding priority may be given to LEAs that have never received a SOAR-funded competitive facilities grant. OSSE may elect to fund priority projects at a higher level than non-priority projects. If there are more quality applications than available funds, OSSE may elect to fund priority projects instead of one or more non-priority projects that received a higher score.

Section 5: Award Administration

5.1 Decision and Notifications of Awards

In order to be awarded a grant, organizations must establish eligibility by submitting an application to OSSE in accordance with the relevant program statute(s) and this RFA. Each awarded applicant will receive a GAN generated through OSSE's EGMS that will include the award amount, award agreement, terms and conditions of the award and any supplemental information required. Once OSSE has fully approved the application and issued an official GAN, grantees may receive payment for allowable expenditures for which obligation was made during the grant period. OSSE has implemented a reimbursement process for all grantees. Grant award payments are reimbursable on a monthly (and no later than quarterly) basis. Program costs must be paid by the grantee to the payee prior to requesting reimbursement; it is not sufficient for costs merely to be incurred. Compliance with programmatic and fiscal implementation and reporting will be considered in paying reimbursement requests. To receive reimbursement for grant program expenditures, OSSE grantees must complete and submit a reimbursement request electronically using EGMS.

5.2 Audits

At any time, or times, before final payment and during the required record retention period, the District and/or the federal government may audit the applicant's expenditure statements and source documentation.

5.3 Monitoring and Reporting

All awards will be reviewed during the grant period for compliance with programmatic and fiscal requirements. OSSE's Division of Strategic Funding for School Quality uses a coordinated, risk-based monitoring approach. The type of monitoring that the grantee will receive (desktop or on-site) will vary depending on its designation as a high-, medium-, or low-risk grantee.

Please review the annual grants monitoring guidance for more information:

osse.dc.gov/publication/risk-based-monitoring-tools-and-resources.

Monitoring efforts are designed to determine the grantee's level of compliance with federal and/or District requirements and identify specifically whether the grantee's operational, financial and management systems and practices are adequate to account for program funds in accordance with federal and/or District requirements. Failure to maintain compliance with such requirements may result in payment suspension, disallowance of costs or termination of the grant.

The grantee shall be required to cooperate with all requirements and information requests by OSSE relating to evaluation of the program and the collection of data, information and reporting on outcomes regarding the program and activities carried out with grant funds. The grantee shall be required to reply and acknowledge OSSE's information requests within 48 hours and to provide requested information within 10 business days.

5.4 Confidentiality

Except as otherwise provided by local or federal law, no grantee shall use or reveal any research, statistical information, or personally identifiable information (PII) furnished by OSSE for any person or for any purpose other than that for which such information was obtained in accordance with the OSSE program funded. Any PII and any copy of such information shall be immune from legal process and shall not, without the written consent of the person identified in the information, be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any action, suit, or judicial, legislative, or administrative proceeding. The grantee will protect any PII received in administering the grant and follow all applicable laws regarding the protection and use of the PII. Before disclosing PII to any other party, the grantee must first receive approval from OSSE.

5.5 Nondiscrimination in the Delivery of Services

The grantee shall comply with the District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, (DC Official Code § 2-1401.01 *et seq.*) which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, source of income, disability, sealed eviction record status as a victim of an intra-family offense, place of residence or business, status as a victim or family member of a victim of domestic violence, a sexual offense, or stalking and homeless status.

5.6 Conflict of Interest

All grantees shall ensure that no individual in a decision-making capacity will engage in any activity, including participation in the selection of a vendor, the administration of an award, or an activity supported by award funds, if a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest would be involved. A conflict of interest would arise when the individual, any member of the individual's immediate family, the individual's partner, or an organization that employs, or is about to employ, any of the aforementioned has a financial or personal interest in the firm or organization selected for a contract.

5.7 Terms and Conditions

- Funding for this award is contingent on available funds. The RFA does not commit OSSE to make an award.
- OSSE reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if OSSE determines it is in the best interest of OSSE to do so. OSSE shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. OSSE may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable federal or local regulation or requirement.
- OSSE reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the RFA, or to rescind the RFA.
- OSSE shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the RFA. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- OSSE may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services intended.
- OSSE may enter negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations.
- OSSE shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant or subgrant; all applicable federal and District regulations; payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award;

reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by OSSE; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee.

- If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the RFA and any applicable federal or local law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control, and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

Appendix A

Official Intent to Apply Notification

(Due May 9, 2025)

(PDF Fillable Form Available Here)

TO: OSSE Office of Federal Programs and Strategic Funding
opcsfs.funding@dc.gov

FROM: _____
(LEA or Organization Name)

RE: Intent to Apply for FY 2025 Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act
Facilities Grant

LEA or Organization Name: _____

LEA or Organization Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Contact Person Telephone: _____

Contact Person Email: _____

I understand that the deadline for these grant applications is 3 p.m. on Friday, May 23, 2025, and that late applications will not be reviewed.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(LEA Official)

Appendix B

Scoring Rubric

The purpose of the table below is to provide clarity on the phrases compelling, complete, and clear, which appear throughout the remainder of the rubric. Applicants and reviewers should reference this table when reaching sections in the rubric where one of these three words is underlined. Please see the rest of the rubric below.

Criterion/Level	Score Not Assignable	Weak	Good	Strong
Compelling	Inappropriate/off-topic answer; no evidence-based ideas; approach does not seem at all feasible	Approach is somewhat evidence based; significant portions of approach do not seem feasible	Approach is evidence based, though some parts of the proposal may not seem feasible	Highly evidence-based project or approach; shows an extremely detailed and relevant path to success
Complete	No response or information/ information doesn't answer prompt question	Attempts to answer prompt; includes some details	Fully answers prompt; provides relevant details	Answers prompt in depth; extremely detailed
Clear(ly)	Very difficult to comprehend; very little or none of the response is clear	Mostly difficult to comprehend; contains moments of clarity	Answers prompt with clarity and specificity throughout	Highly focused and provides exceptional clarity on the proposed project

Project Data (Maximum 4 points)

Criterion				
The applicant provided a thoughtful description of the current and anticipated enrollment at the facility, including how quantity and/or quality of seats will be impacted by the project.	No – 0	Yes - 4		

Needs Assessment (Maximum 18 points)

Criterion	Score Not Assignable	Weak	Good	Strong
The applicant demonstrated a <u>clear</u> specific and <u>compelling</u> need for the proposed project.	0	4	8	12
The applicant used recent quantitative and/or qualitative data to substantiate the need.	0	2	4	6

Project Description (Maximum 42 points)

Criterion	Score Not Assignable	Weak	Good	Strong
The applicant described the proposed project and activities in detail.	0	4	8	12
The applicant provided a <u>compelling</u> and <u>clear</u> description of the site and/or facility, including the current condition and proposed renovations, if applicable.	0	2	4	6
The applicant provided a <u>clear</u> rationale for why the proposed site and/or facility is suitable for the targeted student body and anticipated enrollment growth, if applicable.	0	2	4	6
The applicant <u>clearly</u> described all financing sources for the project. Sources of financing seem sufficient to complete the proposed project as described.	0	2	4	6

The applicant named all key partners on the project.	0	2	4	6
The applicant included a realistic project timeline and explained how the applicant and each partner will have the capacity and ability to complete the project.	0	2	4	6

Theory of Action (Maximum 6 points)

Criterion	Score Not Assignable	Weak	Good	Strong
The theory of action statement uses sound logic to demonstrate how and why the project will be successful in improving academic outcomes for students and is based on credible research and/or evidence.	0	2	4	6

Equitable Access and Participation (Maximum 6 points)

Criterion	Score Not Assignable	Weak	Good	Strong
The applicant <u>clearly</u> described how it will ensure equitable access to and participation in grant-funded activities.	0	2	4	6

Logic Model (Maximum 12 points)

Criterion	Score Not Assignable	Weak	Good	Strong
All elements of the logic model (SMART goal, inputs, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, and external factors) are	0	2	4	6

<u>complete</u> and well-defined.				
The logic model clearly demonstrates how the proposed project will produce the intended academic outcomes for students.	0	2	4	6

Budget (Maximum 12 points)

Criterion	Score Not Assignable	Weak	Good	Strong
The budget describes specific costs that <u>clearly</u> align with the proposed project.	0	2	4	6
Budgeted costs are reasonable and necessary for the proposed project.	0	2	4	6

Appendix C

Program Specific Assurances

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant, if awarded the grant:

- Will comply with activities necessary to carry out a mandated evaluation of the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) as specified in Section 3011(a)(1) of the SOAR Act;
- Will comply with the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (40 U.S.C. 3141 et seq.), as applicable;
- Will submit semi-annual narrative reports describing the implementation of the proposal as well as its impact on educational outcomes;
- Will expend all funds by the end of the grant period;
- Will seek and receive approval from OSSE before implementing any project changes with respect to the purposes for which the proposed funds are awarded. This includes any changes to key personnel specified in the application;
- Will submit at least one reimbursement request per quarter in which the grant recipient makes an expenditure;
- Acknowledges and agrees that the completion of this application, or the approval to fund an application, will not be deemed to be a binding obligation of OSSE until such time as the GAN is delivered to the recipient;
- Recognizes that OSSE approval of an application does not relieve the public charter school of its responsibility to comply with all applicable requirements;
- Will administer each program covered by the application in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans and applications;
- Will use fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that will ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, federal funds paid to the grant recipient under each program;
- Will make reports to the state agency and to the secretary as may reasonably be necessary to enable the state agency and the secretary to perform their duties and that the grant recipient will maintain such records, including the records required under section 1232f of the General Education Provisions Act and provide access to those records, as the state agency or the secretary deem necessary to perform their duties;
- Will provide reasonable opportunities for the participation by teachers, parents and other interested agencies, organizations and individuals in the planning for and operation of each program;
- Agrees that any application, evaluation, periodic program plan or report relating to each program will be made readily available to parents and other members of the general public; and
- Agrees that none of the funds expended will be used to acquire equipment (including computer software) in any instance in which such acquisition results in a direct financial benefit to any organization representing the interests of the purchasing entity or its employees or any affiliate of such an organization.

Facilities Construction Assurances

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant:

- Considered the probable effects of proposed construction on any district/site/building/structure that is included or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (34 CFR § 75.602)
- Has title or other interest in the site, including right of access, that is sufficient to ensure that they will have use and possession of the facility for 50 years or the useful life of the facility, whichever is longer (34 CFR § 75.603)
- Has sufficient funds available to meet any non-federal share of the cost of constructing the facility (34 CFR § 75.604)
- Begin the approved construction in a reasonable time period after the grant for the construction is made and can complete the project in a reasonable time period and consistent with the approved plans and specifications (34 CFR § 75.605(a) and 75.606)
- Ensures construction is functional, economical, and not elaborate in design or extravagant (34 CFR § 75.607(a))
- May not spend more than 1 percent of the cost of the project on inclusion of works of art (34 CFR 75.607(b))
- Comply with applicable federal, state and local health and safety standards, as well as federal requirements regarding access by persons with disabilities. (34 CFR §§75.609 and 75.610)
- Evaluated flood hazards in connection with the construction; and as far as practicable, avoided uneconomic, hazardous, or unnecessary use of flood plains in connection with the construction, per Executive Order 11988 of Feb. 10, 1978 (34 CFR §75.611)
- Maintain competent architectural engineering supervision and inspection at the construction site to ensure that the work conforms to the approved drawings and specifications (34 CFR §75.612)
- Has sufficient operational funds to operate and maintain the facility once the construction is complete (34 CFR §75.614 and 75.615)
- Designed and constructed facilities to maximize the efficient use of energy and followed the standards of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), if applicable (34 CFR § 75.616)
- Meets all Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements
- Provides the equivalent insurance coverage for real property and equipment acquired or improved with federal funds as provided to property owned by the non-federal entity