



## COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE

IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT

### TEN THINGS TO KNOW

#### ABOUT IDAHO'S COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

1. Idaho's *Communities of Excellence* program is a competitive public charter school grant program funded under the Congressional *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA, Public Law 114-95), which reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965* (ESEA). A public charter school is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution. Public charter schools are open to all students who apply and can not charge tuition. A charter school receiving CSP funds must use a lottery if more students apply for admissions to the charter school than can be admitted.
2. *Communities of Excellence* is committed to: a) increasing the number of quality public charter school seats by 8,650 students, *especially for our most educationally disadvantaged and rural students*; b) support the Idaho Public Charter School Commission in expanding its quality authorizing efforts while disseminating and supporting best practices for other authorizers statewide; and c) evaluate and disseminate widely the successes and lessons of high-quality charter schools to impact the broader education system.
3. Idaho's *Communities of Excellence* consortium partners include: Bluum, the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation, the Idaho State Board of Education, the Idaho Public Charter School Commission and Building Hope. Bluum serves as project lead.
4. Idaho received \$17,111,111 in funding over five years. In September 2019, the grant amount was amended to \$22,472,222. At least 90 percent of these dollars will flow to public charter school subgrantees for school start-up, school replication and school expansion. At least seven percent must be utilized for state-level technical assistance activities, program evaluation/research and technical assistance for schools and state approved authorizers. No more than three percent for Bluum administration.
5. **This is a competitive grant process.** To be eligible an applicant must have an approved charter petition from a state-sanctioned public charter school authorizer and be starting a new public charter school, or expanding, or replicating a high-performing public charter school. Bluum will fund only high-quality plans, and grant determinations will be made through a rigorous third-party peer review process. There is no guarantee that submitting a proposal will result in funding, or funding at the requested level. Proposals that do not reach a minimum score overall will not be funded.

For more information please contact Amy Felton-Toth at [grantsCSP@bluum.org](mailto:grantsCSP@bluum.org) or visit <https://www.bluum.org/idaho-csp-grant>



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6. Idaho's *Communities of Excellence* Charter Schools Program (CSP) will provide subgrants to qualified charter school developers to provide financial support for the initial implementation of expanding, replicating, or opening a public charter school. **Expand means** an increase in the student count of an existing school by more than 250 students or at least two grade levels over the course of the subgrant. **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 additional charter.

**A new charter school** is either a new start-up school that did not previously exist or a conversion school that is a public school that has substantially changed its curriculum, staff and/or school design, either voluntarily or involuntarily, in order to increase student academic performance as part of a turnaround process. A developer for a new charter school must have opened within the past year (Fall 2019) or been approved by a charter school authorizer to open in Fall 2020 or Fall 2021.

7. Idaho's *Communities of Excellence* CSP subgrants are designed to be for a period of up to 18 months for planning and 24 consecutive months for implementation activities leading up to and following the opening of a new school, replication school, or expansion projects.
8. Idaho's *Communities of Excellence* program will have four grant competitions; Spring and Fall of 2019 and Spring of 2020 and 2021. Visit [bluum.org/idaho-csp-grant](https://bluum.org/idaho-csp-grant) to learn more about the competition timeline and available awards. In 2019, Bluum ran two competitions and issued 11 sub grants totaling \$10.38 million.
9. Bluum, in partnership with the Idaho State Board of Education and the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, will provide technical assistance to subgrantee applicants and to those subgrantees that receive grant funding. All subgrantees will receive an onsite technical assistance and monitoring visit within the first 12 months of school operation to ensure activities occur as approved within the grant and for Bluum to gather information regarding future technical assistance.
10. Bluum will ensure that each eligible applicant that receives a subgrant under Idaho's *Communities of Excellence* grant will implement with fidelity the activities described in the subgrantee's application, and to ensure that they adhere to federal rules and regulations and accomplish their performance goals.

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